

# Tennis team has high hopes for year

By Tom Schipporeit

Coming off its best season in 36 years, the UNL men's tennis team heads into the fall season concentrating on preparing for conference competition in the spring. The team tied for third in the Big Eight Tournament last year.

The fall season, consisting mostly of open tournaments and only two dual matches, provides the players a chance to refine their skills while the results don't count toward the team's official record. It also gives the coaches a chance to evaluate talent.

"The fall season gives us a good indication of who's played and practiced the most over the summer. It gives me a good idea of who'll play in the top spots in the spring," Coach Kerry McDermott said.

The Huskers, who were 3-4 in Big Eight duals and finished fifth overall in the conference last spring, return all six of their singles players for the upcoming year. The two top singles players, Craig Johnson and Jim Carson, are both sophomores from Lincoln. The pair also form the No. 1 doubles team. Juniors Dave Schultz and Brian Edwards, along with sophomores Ridge Schmidt and Doug Elsass, fill the final four singles positions.

"These are the same guys who placed third in the conference tournament. With a year of experience under their belts, they know what to expect now," McDermott said.

One of the top recruits on this fall's squad is Ashwin Vassan from Bombay, India. Vassan played junior college tennis in Florida last year. McDermott checked with a tennis academy where Vassan was playing, and the academy recommended him for a scholarship.

"He's going to help us out a lot. He's a real team player," McDermott said.

John Schuele, the Nebraska Class A state champ last year from Millard North, and Tony Sloboth, the state runner-up from Omaha Gross, are McDermott's other top recruits.

"Most of these guys have been winners in high school, and all have the desire to have the best team and work for it," McDermott said.

The Huskers view the fall season as an opportunity for practice and improvement. But intense practice and matches can cause injury problems. According to McDermott, Edwards has pulled tendons in his wrist and is playing at about 80 percent. Pulled hamstrings, tendonitis in the serving shoulder and cramps are common tennis-related ailments.

Overall, the Huskers start the fall relatively injury free, and their outlook for the season and the whole year is positive, McDermott said.

The Huskers start play Friday in the Indian Creek Labor Day Open at Overland Park, Kansas. The tournament is open to players from area colleges, with no team results kept. The squad will take on Kansas and Kearney State in October, the only dual matches of the season.

With the light schedule, consisting of no official competition, McDermott places little emphasis on winning.

"It's not that important, especially in the fall. I don't like to think that you have to win. We have a philosophy on winning: If you can walk off the court knowing that you gave 100 percent, whether you win or lose, then you did well and should feel good about it," he said.

# Fractured spine pins wrestling coach

By Mark Krause

July 26, 1982, is a day Nebraska wrestling Coach Bob Fehrs will remember for a long time.

On that date, Fehrs was piloting a four-seat single-engine Piper airplane that crashed just north of Oklahoma City.

Fehrs, along with his son, Gary, and his son's friend, Steve Weisser, were traveling to an all-star wrestling meet and clinic. When Fehrs was attempting to land the plane, he overshot the runway and lost control of the craft.

The two passengers escaped without any serious injuries, but Fehrs received a compressed fracture in the lower portion of his back.

Fehrs puts the medical jargon into simpler terms and says he has a "broken back."

Fehrs was released from the hospital about two weeks ago and is wearing a body cast from his chest to his waist. Despite some discomfort, Fehrs said he is doing well. "I'm starting to progress somewhat," Fehrs said.

The Husker coach, who enters his fifth year at UNL with a 57-27-2 record, said he plans to resume his coaching duties in a month.

"Coach (Kelly) Ward will carry the ball for about a month," Fehrs said.

Fehrs doubts whether his absence will affect this year's Husker team, he said.

"Some adjustments will have to be made, but I see no adverse effects on the team," Fehrs said.

One of the adjustments will be a refrain from wrestling students during practice, something that normally is part of his coaching techniques.

"I've still got a big mouth. I can still yell a lot," he said.

When Fehrs does resume his coaching duties, he will be working with a team he thinks could be better than last year's Husker wrestlers who finished sixth in the NCAA tournament.

All the team's starters returned except Johnnie Selmon and "barring unforeseen circumstances, we should be better than last year," he said.

"From 142 pounds on up we are going to be very strong," Fehrs said. Returning to wrestling in the upper-weight divisions are Ray Oliver, Jim and Bill Scherr and Gary Albright.

Fehrs is enthusiastic about the return of Al Freeman at 142 and 150 pounds, he said. Freeman, a senior from Griswold, Iowa, was redshirted last year after an impressive junior year.

"He has a lot of experience and should really step in and go to town," Fehrs said.

In addition, the lower weight classes should be much improved, Fehrs added.

Conditioning drills for the season, which begin Nov. 6 with the Great Plains Tournament in Lincoln, are expected to start by the end of this week, Fehrs said.

In the meantime, Fehrs is anxious to get back to the mats, he said.

"This sitting around and laying around gets old fast," he said.



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