

Pole vaulter prepares for NCAA meet

By Jeff Korbelik

Junior pole vaulter Glen Loontjer, UNL's only competitor, will join track and field qualifiers from all over the country to participate in the 1983 men's indoor championships, March 11 and 13 in Pontiac, Mich.

"I had a pretty good layoff," Loontjer said. "I have been taking it easy, priming for the meet."

Loontjer is ranked 17th out of the 20 participants competing at the Silverdome with a vault of 17-3/4 which he cleared in the first meet of the season against Southern Illinois January 29.

The starting height will probably be 16-10 or 17-0, and Loontjer explained that it will probably take a vault of

17-2 or 17-6 to get in the finals on Saturday because 12 competitors will be eliminated on Friday.

"I can get in if I can get a little lucky," Loontjer said. Five people from the Big Eight will be vaulting, including NCAA-leader Jeff Buckingham (18-7/4) of Kansas and second place vaulter Joe Dial of Oklahoma State (18-4).

"A quarter of the people are from the Big Eight, making our conference look pretty awesome," Loontjer said. "I wish there wasn't (that many). The Midwest is the cream of the crop (for vaulters)."

Of the five competitors from the Big Eight, Loontjer finished fifth with a height of 16-8.

"I was kind of disappointed because I was jumping well at the early heights, and I wished I could have jumped better," Loontjer explained.

Although Buckingham and Dial are the leading vaulters this year, Loontjer feels that Indiana's Dave Volz and Kansas State's Doug Lytle should be favored due to the "board" runway in the Silverdome. The runway is a little slower than the runway in the Sports Center, making it more difficult for people who have a lot of speed.

"Lytle is a power runner and will be able to work the runway," Loontjer said. "It is kind of bad to have it on the board, but a lot of people are used to jumping on both."

Last year Loontjer's best vault was 16-3 indoors and 16-5 outdoors, making this year's vault nine inches better.

"I have improved my technique from last year," Loontjer explained. "I'm a little bit faster, but mainly it is my technique."

Nebraska qualified people in two other events: the one-mile relay and Mike Cielocha in the 600-yard dash. But these competitors will not be making the trip because their qualifying times did not fall under the allowed limit.

Cielocha was notified Tuesday, the day before he was to leave, that he would not be competing. He finished 23rd and the NCAA took the top 20 qualifiers. His time was five one-hundredths off the final accepted time. Also, the NCAA converted 500-meter times into 600-yard times and some competitors ran on oversized tracks this year.

"It is a bad deal to qualify and end up not going," Cielocha said. "Running on oversized tracks makes it a little bit easier to run and 500 meters is not running the full 600-yards."

"I can run as well as anybody out there," Cielocha said. "But I'm at a disadvantage because I didn't run on an oversized track. There is no sense in setting a standard if they are only going to take 20 people."

"It is bad that I am a senior in an experimental year (the NCAA is experimenting with the combination of men's and women's championships)," Cielocha explained. "I was caught in a bad situation. It gets you mad but there is nothing I can do about it."

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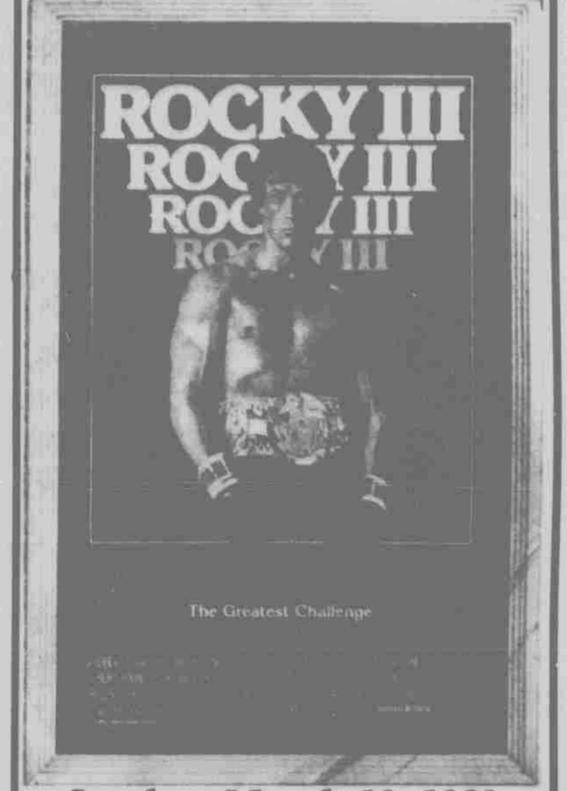
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