

Sports

Huskers prepare for College World Series

By Jeff Korblik

In the Nebraska softball press guide, first year coach Wayne Daigle said his 1984 goals for his team included playing in the Big Eight conference championship game, and "anything else, like the NCAA's will be just icing."

Icing it is as Nebraska and seven other teams will be in Omaha this week competing in the NCAA championships (College World Series) beginning Wednesday at Seymour Smith Field. The Huskers will open against the Northwest regional winner Fresno State, Thursday at 8:30 p.m.

The Huskers, 37-11, qualified for the World Series after defeating third-ranked Oklahoma State in the Midwest regional, a team they had beaten twice two weeks ago for the conference crown. Nebraska won the best of three series with two extra-inning games, an 18 inning 3-2 victory Saturday, and a 14 inning 2-1 victory Sunday.

Daigle said playing the extra inning games did not

wear his team out for the upcoming tournament.

"Actually it did us good to play in a couple of pressure games," he said.

Daigle said he doesn't know who he will pitch against Fresno State; it depends on the scouting reports he gets back. He said either senior Sandy Wolterman, who has been plagued by a shoulder injury most the season but is healthy now, or Mori Emmons, 22-4, will get the starting assignment.

Fresno State will be one of three California teams participating in the World Series. The others are UCLA and Cal-Poly Pomona. Texas A&M, Adelphi, Northwestern, and Utah State round out the tournament field.

Texas A&M earned an at large berth after they defeated Cal-State Fullerton, a team that held the number one spot in the ratings all year long. Nebraska has lost to A&M four times this spring, but beat them once early in the fall. If the Huskers should win Thursday night's game they will meet the winner of the Texas A&M vs. Cal-Poly Pomona game.

Daigle said he believes that the Huskers can win the Series and that the team is feeling great after winning the regional.

"They are on cloud nine right now and we'll let them stay up there a few days until Thursday," he said.

Daigle said by having the tournament in Omaha he hopes it will serve as an advantage. He said he has been pleased with the support his team has received this year.

All year long Daigle has been asked if he has been surprised by the team's performance this season, especially after last season when trouble arose between the players and last year's coaching staff.

"Of course, I'm surprised," he said. "I don't think anybody wouldn't be surprised."

Daigle said the reason for the turn around lies in the attitude the women have.

"They are close and they have been through a lot," he said. "Their attitude has carried them through in the close situations."

UNL heptathlete Clark aims to win at NCAA

By Mike Reilley

Experience is a precious commodity in college athletics today, but in the case of Nebraska heptathlete Deb Clark, it isn't necessarily a prerequisite for success.

Clark, a freshman from Woodstock, Conn., had never competed in the heptathlon until winning the Kansas Relays this spring. Her first ever heptathlon score ranked second in the nation among collegiate women.

"My high school was never competitive in anything like the heptathlon," Clark said. "But last summer I attended the Lake Placid Olympic Development Camp and began training for it up there."

Clark's initial performance in the heptathlon earned her a trip to the NCAA Outdoor Championships June 2 in Eugene, Ore.

Winning the NCAA meet is the initial goal Clark set for herself. "If I can't win it, I'd at least like to place in the top three," she said. "My real goal is to make the Olympic team."

Nebraska Head Track coach Gary Pepin was quick to praise Clark's first season with the Huskers.

"Deb has excelled above and beyond where she was when the season started," Pepin said. "She attained a really high level for a freshman."

Besides Clark, ten other individuals and two relay teams will represent Nebraska at the NCAA Championships.

The Nebraska women's track team, which breezed to a first place finish at the Big Eight Outdoor Championships, will be relying heavily on sprinters Angela Thacker and Rhonda Blanford, who have each qualified in three events.

Thacker and Blanford have both qualified in the 100 and 200 meter runs. Blanford is eligible to compete in the 100 meter hurdles while Thacker is a long jump qualifier. Both athletes run a leg on the 4 x 100 relay team which will be competing in Eugene.

Coach Pepin said he is uncertain whether his dynamic duo will enter all of the events they have qualified for. "I'm not sure where Angela and Rhonda will be competing," said Pepin. "We haven't decided on our entries yet."

Jennie Badami, Marcia Tate and Nicole Ali are qualifiers in the 400-meter run. Badami and Ali established qualifying marks while finishing third and fourth, respectively, at the Big Eight Championships.

Heather Smith will represent Nebraska in the high jump and the 4 x 400 meter relay team, which shattered the Big Eight record with a 3.40.25 clocking, will also be at the NCAA meet.

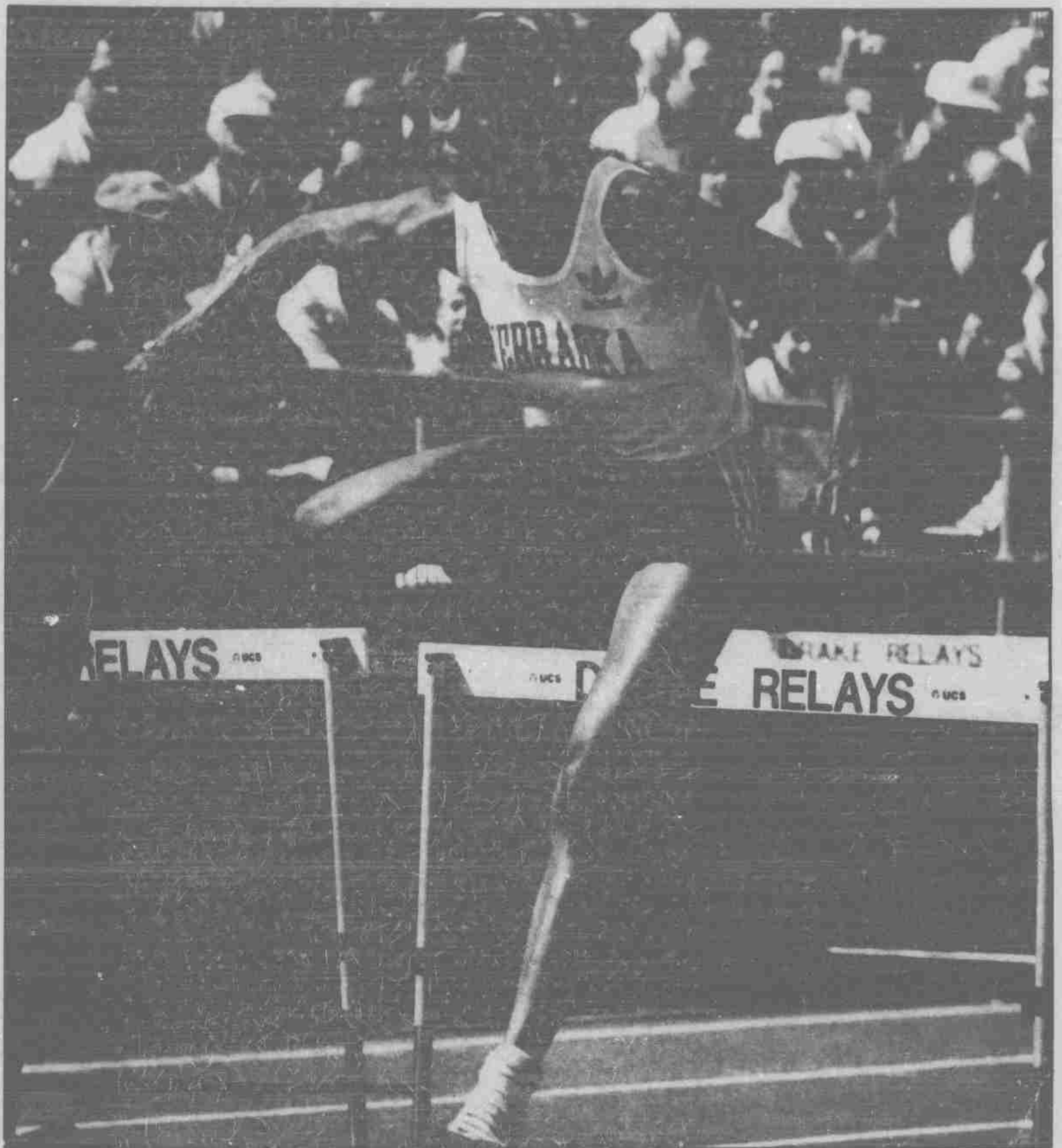
Pepin feels the Husker women could be in the thick of the race for the national title. "I hope our women's team can get into the top ten," Pepin said.

Individually, Pepin said the Huskers have the potential to garner some gold medals. "I think Deb, Angela, Rhonda, and our 4 x 100 relay team all have a shot at winning," Pepin said.

The men's team, which finished second to Iowa State at the Big Eight Championships, will send four athletes to compete in three events at the NCAA's.

The Huskers will be sending Ed Ross in the 110-meter high hurdles, pole vaulter Glen Loontjer, and high jumpers Darrin Burton and Jeff Loescher to Eugene.

Pepin said the men's team will focus more on individual performances than team scoring. "We really haven't qualified enough men, but we hope to get some individuals to score some points for us," he said.



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Rhonda Blanford, like several Husker tracksters before her, clears national qualifying hurdles.

Huskers rank high in sports finals

With their seasons drawing to a close, UNL sports teams took their conference "finals" and received several passing grades.

Conference and regional tournaments saw Nebraska finish first in women's softball and track, second in men's track and third in baseball.

The defending outdoor champion, UNL's women's track team held on to their title by beating Kansas State 156 points to 108.

Rhonda Blanford received the highest marks for her performance, as the junior from Denver raced to five gold medals.

Nebraska also placed first in the long jump, where Angela Thacker jumped 22-4/4 and in the Heptathlon as freshman Debbie Clark accumulated 5,540 points.

The UNL softball team, which defeated Oklahoma State for the Big Eight title on May 5, swept the Cowboys in two games to qualify for the College World Series in Omaha.

Nebraska's men's track team finished second to Iowa State, 146-106, in the Big Eight finals. Huskers

Glen Cunningham and Ed Ross captured the only first place medals for Nebraska. Cunningham won the 800-meter run, while Ross took the 110-meter high hurdles.

The Nebraska baseball team entered the conference post-season tournament with a 45-18 record and a national ranking. But after stopping Oklahoma 15-7 in the opening game of the tournament, UNL dropped the next two games 7-3 to Oklahoma State and 5-3 to Oklahoma to bow out of the double elimination tournament.

Husker catcher-relief pitcher Bill McGuire earned All-Big Eight honors at both positions and was joined on the All-Big Eight team by teammates Mike Duncan (first base) and Scott Hooper (third base). Nebraska finished their season 46-20 but failed to receive a bid to regional competition to qualify for the College World Series.

The Nebraska doubles team of Jim Carson and Craig Johnson made it to the qualifying round of the NCAA men's tennis championships in Athens, Georgia. But the two fell to Steve Bickhan and Tim Cass of New Mexico 6-2, 6-2.