

# UNL cross country team qualifies for women's NCAA championships

By Rich Cooper  
Daily Nebraskan Staff Reporter

After an up and down season, the UNL women's cross country team is going to the NCAA Cross Country Championships for the first time.

The women finished third at the district meet Saturday, the highest a Nebraska women's team has ever finished. Laura Wight led the team with a seventh place finish. The sophomores from Letchworth, England, covered the 5,000-meter course in 16:59.

Coach Jay Dirksen said the key to the third place finish was the strong running of Karlene Erickson, Mary Amen, and Jill Noel. Erickson took 10th with a time of 17:13.4, Amen finished 11th with a time of 17:15.4 and Noel came in 15th with a time of 17:26.3.

"I am so excited," Dirksen said. "I knew that our women would rise to the occasion and run a great race."

Dirksen said the team race was close. Kansas State won the overall team title with 53 points. Missouri finished second behind the strong running of Andrea Fisher and Sabrina Dornhoefer. Fisher won the individual title with a time of 16:14.3, and Dornhoefer placed fourth.

"The reason Kansas State beat us is because they have a better fifth man, and Missouri beat us because they have three outstanding front runners," Dirksen said.

The meet marked the first time the Huskers have ever defeated Iowa State. Iowa State women's coach Ron Renko said his team had too many things to overcome. Margaret Davis and Bonnie Sons, Iowa State's best runners, were hampered by injuries, Renko said. Their number four runner, Sheryl Maahs, suffered from an unusual toenail infection.

"It is really frustrating when we cannot do anything about injuries," Renko said.

For the second consecutive year,

the men's cross country team will have an individual runner going to the NCAA Championships.

Kurt Russel placed fourth in the district meet. Russel covered the 10,000-meter course in 30:39.6. Yobes Ondieki won the men's individual title by covering the course in 30:13.1 but Brent Steiner of Kansas gave Ondieki a run for his money, finishing only four seconds behind.

Dirksen was happy with Russel's performance. He said Russel improves in every race he runs.

The men's team finished fifth overall.

Dirksen said his team ran a good race, but he said he thought the team did not have enough depth to compete with the other teams in the conference.

Iowa State won the overall team title, but the team was closer than expected. Colorado finished only 12 points behind Iowa State. Those two teams will go the NCAA Championships Nov. 19 at University, Penn.

## Cards & Letters

I've been involved with athletics since I entered my first foot race at age five. I've played all sorts of sports from lacrosse to ice hockey. Some I play well, others I wish not to discuss. Along the way, I've picked up the rules and learned to live with them. I've played organized football since I was 10. So through the years, the rules have been safely tucked away in the back of my mind. Every once in a while, my curiosity catches up with me and I question a call. The officials in the NFL and NCAA are professionals, they very rarely make mistakes, although it may seem as though they make millions. But, in the NCAA and NFL there is no protest of calls procedure which we do have in the intramural system of UNL.

Of course, I do not expect a \$3.45 per hour official to be at the caliber of a real professional, but obvious fouls or infractions of the rules need to be mastered before a rec official takes the field. I realize that the officials do get the chance to test their skills and knowledge of the game before the season ever begins. The rec office holds pre-season games in which they invite students to participate in games so that the officials can practice.

Through co-rec and men's flag football, my curiosity hasn't been at rest. Not only in my games, but in games I've watched I've seen

some of the worst officiating. Granted, I've seen some great performances by certain officials and they are a credit to their job. The game seems to flow so much easier when you know you have a good team of officials. My question is why, by the time the playoffs roll around, that the less knowledgeable officials aren't weeded out? In the NFL and NCAA, officials do the playoffs and bowl games are rewarded with these post-season jobs because of their regular season performances. Why doesn't a merit system occur in intramurals? I'm sure that by the time the playoffs roll around, the rec office has a good idea who the less knowledgeable officials are. Besides, by the time the semifinals come around, there should have been some merit system established.

I play for Abel Eight. In our two previous playoff games, the officiating was good and calls were made quickly and efficiently. Naturally, when my team entered the semifinals, I, as well as my teammates, expected the same caliber of officiating.

But, to my surprise, we met up with three officials who were not quite adequate to put it nicely. Time and time again, they couldn't make up their minds on what to call. Being that it was a playoff game and an important game to my teammates, we protested two obviously ridiculous calls. Both

occurred on scoring drives, one keeping our opponent's alive, and the other killing our chance in the closing plays to tie the game. Both involved interpretation of the rules. One concerning pass interferences, and the other involved the forward pass rule. On fourth and goal, with four plays left in the game, a lateral to a halfback and then a halfback pass into the end zone was viewed as two forward passes. The touchdown was acknowledged by two of the three officials. After screams by the defense, the officials discussed the possibility of the halfback being past the "bean bag." They turned that call down and waited for more intimidation by the defense in order to discuss a two forward pass possibility. This time the defense won and we lost the game. On both plays, the stories changed by the time they reached the rec office. Our stories didn't change, but those of the officials did. Why is there an appeal process if the decision is based on the word of the official? An official isn't going to admit he was wrong in fear of losing their job (which isn't even jeopardized). Honesty plays an important role in the appeal process and we of Abel Eight held up our part of the bargain. We believe we've been treated unjustly and deserve a chance to play the semifinal over.

William A. Davoson, Jr.  
Abel Eight vice president  
Political Science

## Rowing team starts training

The UNL rowing team starts winter training today, trading oars for running shoes and barbells.

Off-the-water workouts, primarily weightlifting and running, will be supplemented with rowing at the team's indoor rowing facility at 1000 N. 16th St. The indoor tank, a concrete reservoir with a custom-built 10-station rowing platform, allows rowers to sharpen their technique long after the lakes are frozen over.

At least once each week, weather permitting rowers will run stairs at Memorial Stadium.

The team will hold an organizational meeting tonight at 5 p.m. at the crew boathouse 1000 N. 16th St. Rowing coach Chip Purdom said anyone interested in joining the crew is welcome to attend.

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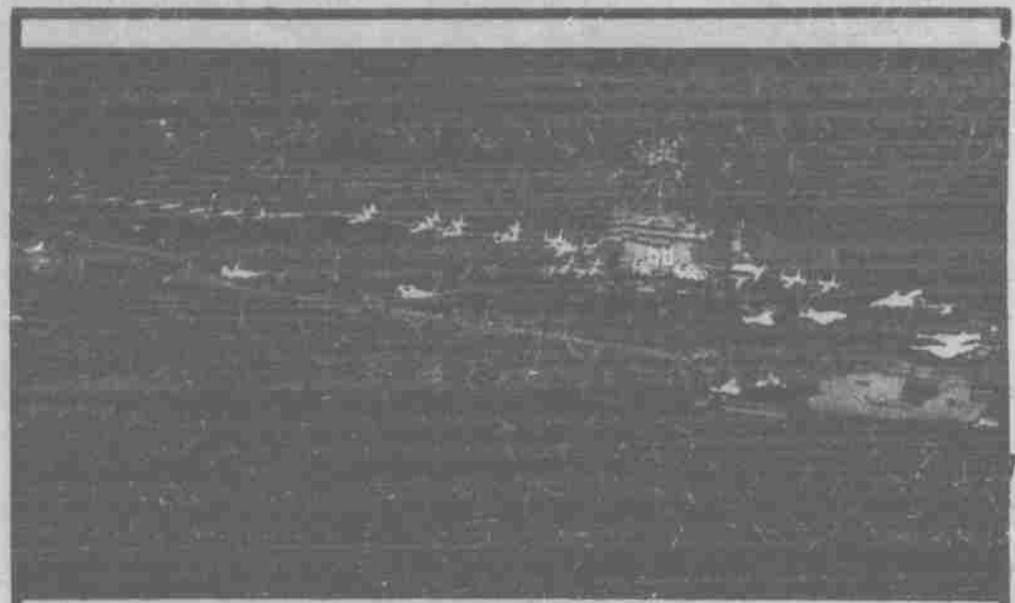
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