

Sports

Huskers 'pin' hopes on young wrestlers

By Doug Carroll
Staff Reporter

Nebraska wrestling coach Bob Fehrs said his young, but experienced squad will be "much improved this year."

Fehrs entered last season knowing that it would be a rebuilding year after losing some of his best wrestlers to graduation, he said. But he didn't anticipate an injury-riddled team that would have seven freshmen in its lineup. Freshmen usually aren't ready to wrestle in varsity competition when they first arrive on campus, Fehrs said.

Although he still has a young squad, Fehrs said there is a possibility of his team making it into the top 20 nationally, and possibly the top 10 by the end of the year.

Having a lot of freshmen wrestling on the varsity last year will help this year's squad because they gained a lot of experience, Fehrs said.

"Having gone through the gauntlet, they know what it takes," he said.

The wrestling team has been practicing since September and Fehrs said that "for this time of year, the intensity level has been up."

Fehrs said that Oklahoma is favored to win the Big Eight title this year. Oklahoma returns all but two wrestlers from last year's team, which finished second at the NCAA tournament. The Sooners also have several excellent redshirts, Fehrs said.

Nebraska opens its Big Eight schedule Nov. 15 at Iowa State.

Only five Big Eight schools have wrestling teams. Kansas, Kansas State and Colorado don't field squads. However, the Big Eight has been among the toughest conferences in the country, Fehrs said. Big Eight schools are always near the top of the wrestling ratings, he said.

The following is a rundown of Nebraska's wrestling team by weight class.

Freshman Randy Headrick is listed as the only eligible wrestler at 118 pounds. Headrick is a Colorado state high school champion and won the Western Regional Tournament this summer.

At 126 pounds, sophomore Terry Cook returns after finishing fourth in the conference meet and qualifying for nationals last year. Fehrs said Cook has matured since last year. He said Cook is not a "big" 126-pounder, but he will be stronger than he was last year.

At 134 pounds, Gil Sanchez returns after a redshirt season and will provide some leadership, Fehrs said. Sanchez, a junior, and Chris Marisette, a senior



Dan Dulaney/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska wrestling coach Bob Fehrs, right, gives instructions to Brian Dart (top) and Ron DeBoer during practice Tuesday afternoon at the Bob Devaney Sports Center. Dart is a freshman and DeBoer is a sophomore.

who is listed at 142 pounds, may "flip-flop" during the season in order to give each other a break from dieting, Fehrs said.

Mike Balestrini is looking good as a challenger for Marisette at 142, as is Tim Kenney, Fehrs said.

Fehrs said he would "probably tab" sophomore Keenan Turner as the top wrestler at 150 pounds. Turner qualified as an NCAA wild card entry last year and finished with a 25-14-0 record. He was also a first-team selection to Amateur Wrestling News' freshman all-star team.

Another challenger for the top spot at 150 is junior Bill Ferrie, who was also a wild card entry last year. But a minor shoulder injury will keep Ferrie out for "at least a month," Fehrs said.

Jeff Colvet leads the list of possible

starters at 158. Sophomores Bill Merrill and John Myers will also challenge. Colvet won eight of his last 10 dual matches last year as a freshman and qualified for the NCAA Championships.

Sophomore Dan Boardman, a starter last year, returns at 167 pounds after compiling a 14-14 record. Ron DeBoer, a redshirt freshman from Firth, may also wrestle at this weight, Fehrs said.

At 177 pounds, Fehrs said that Cody Olson will probably start, although "a couple of people appear to be coming on," Fehrs said. He said Ron DeBoer may also challenge here.

Fehrs said the 190-pound class is "the most improved weight." Injuries last year caused it to be very weak, he said. But both Mike Traynor and Joe Malecek, who were recruited for this weight class, have what Fehrs said is

"the potential to be excellent college wrestlers."

Gary Albright returns at the heavyweight class for his final year of wrestling. Fehrs said Albright is looking better than he has the last couple of years. "He's got an excellent attitude this year," Fehrs said.

Albright finished second at the 1984 NCAA tournament and will benefit this year from having three other heavyweights to practice with this year, Fehrs said. One of them, assistant coach Keith Hanson, was last year's Division II heavyweight champion. Having other heavyweights around will give Albright a chance to work out with people the same size his opponents will be, Fehrs said.

Nebraska opens its season Nov. 9 at the Bison Open in Fargo, N.D. Fehrs

said it is a "real good tournament" to start the season with.

About 350 wrestlers will be competing in the meet. Although the competition is mainly Division II schools, Fehrs said they are some of the best in the nation in their class.

Since it is an open meet, teams are allowed to enter more than one wrestler in each class. Fehrs said he plans to take the first and second seeded wrestlers at each weight class to the meet. He said he "won't know the positions for sure until the challenge matches start."

Challenge matches determine who will wrestle at each weight class at upcoming meets. The first one will be Nov. 3.

Nebraska's first home meet will be the Husker Duals on Dec. 7.

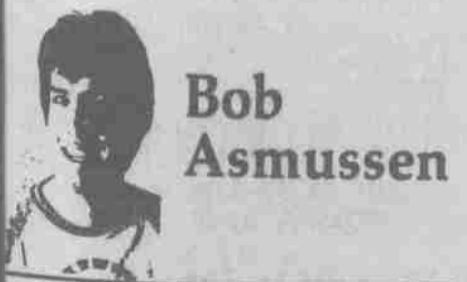
Columnist makes early picks

Huskers to crush Lions in Orange Bowl

The bowl season is drawing near (well, sort of), so it's time to pick who's going to go to which bowl game.

I have two reasons to pick the bowl match-ups this early.

First, I want to be the first one to get my picks on the line. It might look foolish in a month, but that's half the fun of these bowl prediction columns.



Bob Asmussen

Second, the bowl representatives are scouring the backroads of the United States in search of the perfect team. Several bowl representatives were in the press box for Nebraska and Colorado Saturday.

Until conference titles are assured, the bowl representatives will watch the teams in each conference in hopes of luring teams to their particular bowl.

The selling of the bowl games them-

selves has become big business. The Fiesta Bowl now is sponsored by Sun-kist and will be known as, unofficially mind you, the Sunkist Fiesta Bowl, or something similarly disgusting. Maybe the Cotton Bowl will be sponsored by Texas Instruments and call itself the Calculator Bowl. Maybe NBC will pick up on the popular success of its television shows and change the name of the Orange Bowl to the "Miami Vice" Orange Bowl. Perhaps Ted Turner will purchase the Peach Bowl and change its name to the Captain Courageous Bowl or the Atlanta Braves/CNN/United Artists Owner Bowl.

Enough of the name changes, let's get to picking those bowl games.

Orange Bowl: Nebraska vs. Penn State. At last look the Orange Bowl was played on a regulation field, too bad for Penn State. The Nittany Kitties were meowing by teams at an average of four points a game until they trashed West Virginia 27-0. Nebraska will win the Big Eight and when they beat the Nittany Lions on the regulation field they will give Tom Osborne his much deserved first national title.

Rose Bowl: Ohio State vs. UCLA. Calm down Iowa fans. The

Hawks simply aren't going to win the Big Ten. Ohio State is the best team in the conference and Iowa is the luckiest. UCLA has sort of gone unnoticed in building a 6-1-1 record. The tie was against Tennessee after the Vols had built a huge lead. Of course, once it comes to playing this game, tradition will dictate that the less-talented Bruins will easily beat the Buckeyes. Maybe Iowa will be glad it isn't here.

Cotton Bowl: Baylor vs. Miami. They'll probably have to change the name of this bowl game to the Who Cares Bowl. Miami would be in great shape for an Orange Bowl bid except they were there two years ago and were a real drain on the city's expected financial bonanza. Baylor has a good team and one of the country's best coaches in Grant Teaff. Higher profile teams like Arkansas and Texas simply don't have the offense to stay with Baylor. Look for this game to be one of the most exciting of the day, probably not the most watched but the most exciting.

Sugar Bowl: Auburn vs. Iowa. This is a match-up that everyone but Hayden Fry will love. Auburn has a high-powered offense led by Heisman Trophy winner Bo Jackson. Iowa also has an

explosive offense led by quarterback Chuck Long and running back Ronnie Harmon. But for Iowa to play in this game, it will mean the Hawkeyes will have to lose. That's why Hayden Fry will be unhappy. Ohio State should burst Hayden's bubble this week, but if it doesn't there is always Purdue or Minnesota.

Fiesta Bowl: Air Force vs. Oklahoma. Oklahoma has got its offense back in gear with freshman quarterback Jamelle Holieway. But, when it comes down to the game with Nebraska, look for the freshman to crack under pressure and Nebraska to win. Turnovers have been the problem for Oklahoma in the past and with a freshman at quarterback they will probably continue to be a problem. Air Force, thankfully, won't be forced to play in the Holiday Bowl. The Falcons will likely be undefeated going into the Fiesta Bowl. With a win against Oklahoma, Air Force will have a legitimate claim to the national title. Don't hold your breath though, the Sooners should rebound from its loss to Nebraska.

Gator Bowl: Michigan vs. Arkansas. Michigan coach Bo Schembechler wants to be at this game

about as bad as he wants to get Dutch Elm disease. He'll take out his frustrations on the poor defenseless Razorbacks, who fooled themselves into thinking they would win a national title. Think again guys.

Liberty Bowl: Illinois vs. Florida State. Illinois, after a horrendous start, will be happy to spend the holidays anywhere but Champaign-Urbana. Florida State was cruising along until Auburn and Mr. Jackson blew them out in the fourth quarter. The Seminoles will likely lose to Miami as well.

Florida Citrus Bowl: Texas vs. Notre Dame. Whether or not this game and a hot finish save Gerry Faust's job is still up in the air. The Irish blasted Southern Cal and that was a good sign. Another good sign would be a win against a Texas team that can't move the ball, but at the same time won't allow anyone to move the ball against it.

Peach Bowl: Kansas vs. Georgia Tech. Both these teams were thinking they'd be in better bowls than this one at the beginning of the season. But Kansas blew any thoughts it had of

Please see BOWLS on 10