

Women's track team hosts invitational

By Jeff Korbelik
Senior Editor

Last year, 20 women qualified for the NCAA indoor track championships during the Frank Sevigne Husker Invitational.

This year Nebraska coach Gary Pepin said he expects to see just as many qualifying marks as 500 athletes from 31 schools compete in this year's men's and women's invitational at the Bob Devaney Sports Center this weekend.

"There will be a lot of qualifying times, I just hope some of our athletes get those times," Pepin said.

Only three Nebraska women have qualified for the national meet. All three did it during last weekend's triangular meet in Wisconsin.

All-American Angela Thacker qualified in the 60-yard dash, Tammy Thurman in the high jump and Michelle Milling in the 500 meters.

Despite finishing second behind host Wisconsin, Pepin said he was

pleased with his team's performance. Finishing second "didn't bother me a lick," Pepin said. "Those meets aren't important score-wise."

He said he used the meet to run his athletes in different races. He also didn't take any of his distance runners from the mile on up.

The Invitational features some of the top talent from around the country, meet director Mark Kostek said. He said the Invitational, a unscored meet,

is gaining prestige and is considered one of the top invitationals by Track and Field News.

"Nebraska has outstanding facilities and has always had a team that is up and coming," Kostek said in explaining the meet's popularity. "The track is known for producing top times."

The women's portion will feature Southern California's triple jumper Wendy Brown. She is last year's defending indoor champion. Iowa State's

Nawal El Moutawakel is an Olympian gold medalist in the 400-meter hurdles. Kansas State's Rita Graves is All-America in the sprints.

Field events competition begins Friday at 6 p.m. Saturday's competition begins at noon. Seating is general admission and tickets cost \$3 Friday evening and \$5 Saturday afternoon. Saturday's tickets will also admit you to the Husker wrestling quadrangular beginning at 2 p.m. in the arena.

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Tragedy-stricken KU meets ranked Huskers

By Jeff Apel
Senior Reporter

The circumstances at Saturday's Kansas-Nebraska women's swimming dual will be different for the Jayhawks.

Kansas, ranked 19th in the latest collegiate swimming poll, last faced the Cornhuskers just after the death of All-American Tammy Pease in an auto accident.

The impact of that tragedy, Husker coach Ray Huppert said, was obvious as Nebraska defeated the Jayhawks by 170 points in the Husker Invitational.

'...Life resumes, so we're sure they will be more ready for us this time...'

— Huppert

"What happened at Kansas (death of Pease) was a tragedy and unfortunately nothing has changed," Huppert said. "Everyone down there had to deal with it both individually and as a team. But life resumes, so we're sure they will be more ready for us this time than they were the last time we faced them because they know they have the talent to beat us."

Huppert said that although the 14th-ranked Huskers are favored to win the meet, he is expecting a close battle since this will be the third time this season the two teams have faced one another.

The meet, he said, is important in terms of psychology.

"Whoever wins this meet will have a psychological advantage when we face one another in the Big Eight championships," Huppert said. "There's no question that Kansas feels they have the talent to beat us so we have to swim well or else we will get beaten like a drum."

Kansas coach Gary Kempf said that revenge will not be on the minds of the Jayhawks when they face Nebraska.

Kansas, Kempf said, treats every meet separately.

"This is just a dual meet, which serves as preparation for the Big Eight Championships," Kempf said. "There's no intense rivalry between the two schools so we don't treat it as anything special."

Kempf said that it is difficult to point to any particular areas where either the Jayhawks or the Cornhuskers would have a decisive talent advantage over one another.

Nebraska, he said, has some great individual talent in Dana Powers, Emily Ricketts and Erin Hurley, but Kansas has some strength to match.

"Kansas is a damn good team and Nebraska is also a damn good team," Kempf said. "Every race is going to be close."

Kempf and Huppert said that it won't be either an advantage or a disadvantage for either team to have the meet in Lawrence, Kan.

Every pool is 25 yards in length, Kempf said, although Huppert said that leaving the friendly confines of the Bob Devaney Sports Center will be tough in one respect.

"The Bob Devaney Sports Center is the finest swimming facility for miles around," Huppert said. "Kansas doesn't have a bad pool, although their facility isn't comparable to the Bob Devaney Sports Center."

Huppert said the only Cornhuskers who will be held out of the meet because of injuries are sophomore Renee Coffman and junior Kenya Kelly.

Both Coffman and Kelly, he said, are sidelined with shoulder injuries.

"We're real pleased to get both Shawn Liston and Lisa Ramus back from injury," Huppert said. "Both of them have come back and done a super job for us so we're looking for contributions from them."

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