

NCAA tuneup Effort pleasing despite hopes for third place, Neumann says

By Tim Hartmann
Staff Reporter

Although Nebraska's wrestling coach Don Neumann had hoped for a third-place finish at the Big Eight Championships last Saturday, he said he was pleased with the effort his team made to take fourth place.

"I was disappointed we didn't beat Oklahoma (which finished third), but I think you have to be realistic about your goals," Neumann said. "There are 10 weight classes, and nine of our 18 guys wrestled to his head. We had figured that if everyone wrestled to his head we would beat Oklahoma, so we came close."

The meet was the last for Nebraska before the NCAA Championships, which will be held in College Park, MD, March 18 through 21. Neumann said the Big Eight meet served as a good tuneup for the NCAA's.

Neumann said he was especially pleased with Gody Olson and Bill Ferris. Olson became the first Nebraska wrestler since 1954 to win his weight class when he took home top honors in the 175-pound class. Ferris finished third in the 165-pound class despite missing two

weeks with injuries before the Big Eight meet.

Gil Sanchez lost to No. 2-ranked John Smith of Oklahoma State in the 145-pound final, but Neumann said the match was much closer than the 11-3 score indicated.

"We (Nebraska) wrestled five minutes each round," Neumann said. "In the third period (the kind of fall apart), but that was due more to our strategy than to the way Gil wrestled."

Entering the third period, Sanchez trailed Smith 4-1, although Neumann said he thought the score should have been 3-3 because of a disagreement in officiating. Sanchez chose bottom, but Smith allowed him to get an escape point and stand up. Nebraska would have preferred that Smith wrestle Sanchez from the down position, and Neumann said if the two meet again Nebraska will use a different strategy.

Another Nebraska wrestler who lost's close match was Mike Traynor at 190. Jim Gill of Oklahoma State defeated Traynor on a 3-2, 1-1 points decision in the semifinals.

"The official thought the Oklahoma State's kid's style was more offensive," Neumann said.

Traynor came back to win his consolation match and qualify for the NCAA Championships. Ferris, Olson and Sanchez also qualified by finishing in the top three positions in their class. Andy Larson in the 145-pound class, John Cory at 167 and heavyweight Mike Radney also qualified as wildcards.

Neumann said if Ferris and Sanchez team to captain, perform well at the NCAA meet, Nebraska should finish high.

"I think if Sanchez and Ferris can get in there and place and we can get a few wins from the other guys, we can finish in the top 10," he said.

Oklahoma State and Iowa State, the teams that tied for first at the Big Eight meet, both have a shot at winning the national title, Neumann said.

"I think it's going to be a dogfight between those two and Iowa and Penn State," Neumann said. "I wouldn't count either of those two (Big Eight) teams out because they are both bringing full squads."

Iowa State and Oklahoma qualified all of their wrestlers for the NCAA meet.

Robinson's Olympic hopes

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Robinson said she needs to concentrate on two jumpers in particular to win: Wendy Brown and Evette Base of USC.

"They're both people I've jumped against since 10th grade," Robinson said, "so I'm real familiar with their styles of jumping and how they do in big competitions."

Although concentrating on the NCAA championships as the task at hand, Robinson said, she is thinking about the upcoming outdoor season. She said her goals are to make 44 feet in the triple jump and break her personal best of 20 1/2 feet in the long jump.

Robinson said her training is carrying her closer to meeting those goals.

"My drills and strength work, in contrast to last year, are coming along really well," Robinson said. "There's just some technical matters that I need to clean up before I can get into the 44-foot range consistently."

Robinson said her consistency is one of her primary concerns for the upcoming season.

"We started in December and I jumped 41-8," Robinson said. "I didn't come back to 41 until February. There was a lapse there, and then I came back to 41-11 in March."

Robinson said she expects to improve as the season progresses. Her problem has been jumping only to the level of her competition and not to the limit of her ability, she said.

Robinson, who transferred from El Camino, Calif. Junior College last year, was elected as a team captain this season. A first-year team member has never before received that honor, she said.

"I believe that the family structure that we've built on the team has a lot to do with it," Robinson said. "I think of everybody on the team as my close family members. Being away from home you have to do that."

After graduation, Robinson said, she is setting her sights on the 1992 Olympic Games. The triple jump is not an official event yet, but it probably will be by 1992, she said.

Gymnasts twist Cyclones

By Rich Cooper
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska women's gymnastics team added another record to its string as the Cornhuskers defeated Iowa State 185.8 to 173.6 Friday night at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

The Huskers set a new sports-center record for team score.

Nebraska ranked No. 7 in the nation, raised its team average to 185.1. Nebraska coach Rick Walton said the average is the fifth or sixth best in the nation.

Nebraska, led by sophomores Crystal Savage and Jeaneane Smith, swept every event. Savage won the all-around with a 37.6 and Smith finished second with a 37.2.

Walton said the Huskers started well in the first two events, scoring a 47.1 on vault and 47 on uneven bars, but on the next event, balance beam, four Huskers fell, and averaged 9.0.

Walton said if the Huskers had scored a 47 on beam they probably would have scored a 188 all-around.

"We started real well on the first two events, probably the best we had done all year on those events," Walton said. "When we came to beam, we went from great to just average."

"When a team has a good set on beam they usually are going to have a good score," he said.

Walton said he was particularly happy with freshman Michelle Bryant's performance.

The freshman from Blue Springs, Mo., scored a 9.4 on bars, 9.2 on beam and 9.25 on floor exercise. Before the end of the season, Walton said, she has a strong chance of becoming an all-arounder once she settles down on the vault.

Walton said next weekend's meet against Missouri will be important because the Huskers haven't put together a complete meet where there was a team average of 47.

"We are getting better," Walton said, "but we have not peaked, and the next four meets we are going to need solid performances to get into the final six teams at the NCAA Championships."

Walton said last year's meet against Missouri was a good meet because both teams scored their highest scores of the season. Since this is the last home meet of the year, Walton said the Huskers should score their best of the season.

The men's team was in Ames, Iowa, this weekend for the Big Eight Triangular against Iowa State and Oklahoma. Coming into Friday night's meet the Huskers had not defeated the Sooners in Big Eight competition.

But Friday night Nebraska changed that and defeated the Sooners 280.95 to 278.25. Iowa State finished with a 257. For the third consecutive meet, Nebraska's Tom Schlesinger won the all-around with a 57.2. Teammate Kevin Davis finished second with a 57.0, and Oklahoma's Mark Steves was third with a 56.25.

The Huskers won the meet when Neil Palmer and Davis tied for first with a 9.7 on the high bar. Freshman Bob Stetler finished first in the floor exercise with a 9.65 and finished second on vault with a 9.4.

Next weekend Nebraska will travel to Minneapolis to take on Minnesota and Wisconsin in a triangular meet.

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