

# Wrestlers may be in top three

By Chuck Green  
Senior Editor

Two years. That is all that stands between the Nebraska wrestling team and contending for a national championship, said Coach Tim Neumann.

Two years and, of course, some wins. "I don't know if we'll have the people to do that (challenge for a national championship) this year," Neumann said, "but it's very possible for the next season. He said the team could challenge for the top three this year.

Neumann, now entering his third year as Nebraska's coach, had all but two of his top athletes at each weight class return. Bill Ferrie and Gil Sanchez, both of whom earned All-America honors last season, are the Huskers' only losses to graduation. Neumann said both athletes will remain with the team this season as graduate assistants.



Neumann

They and the other coaches will have a lot of talent to work with, Neumann said.

In the 118-pound weight class, Wallace Dawkins, Jason Kelber and Jimmy Sanchez, Gil's brother, return from last season. Neumann said he's considering redshirting Kelber, his starting athlete at that class one year ago.

Terry Cook, who redshirted last year, returns at the 126-pound class. Cook finished second at the Big Eight meet two years ago and posted an open tournament mark of 13-3 last season. Two others at 126 — Dave Droegemueller and Mark Passer — may move up to the 134-pound class, where they will challenge Dave Rowe to be Gil Sanchez's replacement.

In the 142-pound class, the Huskers will rely on Jeff Castro, a transfer from Montana. Castro was an All-America for the Grizzlies in 1986, and Neumann said he thinks Castro has a legitimate shot at the national championship in his class this year.

Andy Latora also returns at 142. Keenan Turner will be the top prospect at the 150-pound class, Neumann said. Turner, a junior, was the National Freshman of the Year two seasons ago and posted a 2-2 record at the national meet last year.

Jeff Coltvet returns to the 158-pound class following a 35-10 mark last season. Coltvet, a junior, also may be redshirted, Neumann said. If so, Coltvet's high school teammate, John Meyers, will contend with Shane Snyder and Brad Volmer

for a starting position.

Scott Chenoweth, a redshirted freshman from Perry, Okla., will start as the top man at 167. Chenoweth was a three-time all-state selection in high school and won the Junior National freestyle championship — the biggest high school meet in the country — in 1986. Another returner at 167, John Cory, may be redshirted this season, Neumann said.

Big Eight Champion Cody Olson returns at the 177-pound class, but may redshirt to make way for Tom Busler and Eric Eggers, Neumann said. Olson posted a 29-15-1 overall record last year.

Sonny Manley and freshman Chris Nelson will battle for the starting job in the 190-pound class, while competition for the top spot in the heavy-weight division will be between Joe Malacek and Mike Radnov. Malacek finished 28-11 last season before breaking his neck during a takedown. Neumann said he's progressed well and should be able to begin the season with the rest of the team.

Radnov finished third in the Big Eight last season with an overall record of 10-7.

Also, Neumann said, Nebraska gained "three other super kids" — Mark Jensen, Matt Rempe and Tucker Thompson. Jensen, from Burwell, was a three-time all-state selection, and Thompson was twice an all-state selection at Chadron. Rempe was one of the top wrestlers in Missouri last season on Harrisonville High School.

Neumann said the Big Eight will have three of the nation's top teams this season: Iowa State — which he said he thinks will be the preseason No. 1-ranked team — Oklahoma and Oklahoma State. Neumann is hoping to join the three among the nation's elite.

"With our lineup this year, we feel that we'll be right with them," he said.

Nebraska's schedule could be the biggest obstacle this season, Neumann said. The Huskers must face 10 of last year's top 15 teams, including a meet against Iowa in Iowa City.

The Hawkeyes have never lost a meet at Carver-Hawkeye Arena.

Neumann said that to win a national championship, a team must place three or four wrestlers in the final round of the NCAA meet. He said that it's very important for Nebraska to "get its foot in the door" this season.

"We have to be in the top three this year, or else we've misjudged how far we've come," Neumann said. "We're looking to bring home some hardware (trophies) this season in preparation for next year.

"We're looking for something bigger then."

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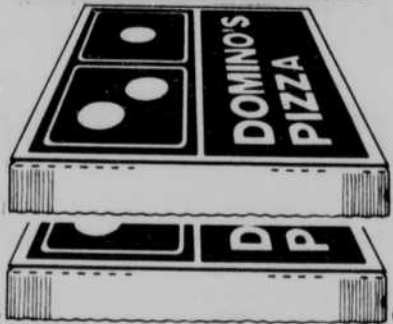
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