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Nebraska-Oklahoma gym rivalry was especially hard on Hartung

HARTUNG from Page 9

that could score more than 55 in the event.

"We didn't have anybody on the team that could take his place and it really hurt us a lot," Howard said. "We still had a pretty good team but we were just missing Jim."

For the rest of the season Nebraska held onto its No. 1 ranking. The Huskers had defeated No. 2 Oklahoma and No. 4 Iowa State two times during the regular season.

But at the Big Eight Championships, Nebraska couldn't dethrone two-time conference champion Oklahoma. Hartung said it was difficult to compete at Oklahoma.

"We have a great arena here at Nebraska because the fans are close to the floor and its well lit, plus the fan support was enormous," Hartung said. "But down at Oklahoma their arena is sort like a pit — it's dark, the fans are far away from the floor and there is never anybody at the meets except our fans that year."

"We didn't like being there more than anything. There were words going on between our coaches at the time so it was a bad atmosphere for gymnastics."

The Huskers went on to win their first NCAA championship later that year by defeating Oklahoma by more than two points.

Hartung said that in the first round of the NCAA meet, he wasn't sure whether Nebraska was going to win.

"(Former Husker) Larry Williams was hurt and Oklahoma was much better in the compulsories then we were," Hartung said. "We were two-tenths of a point behind Oklahoma going into the finals."

"Everything was very tense in the warm-ups for the finals and they seemed to be more uptight then we were. One of the boosters sent Francis a singing telegram and at the end, he was presented with a wrench because the year before, the Oklahoma coach had called the rest of the gymnastics teams a bunch of plumbers because they plumb through their routines. It caused everybody to just loosen up."

Hartung said his two favorite years were 1979 and 1981 because everything went right. He said Nebraska's defeat of Oklahoma in front of 8,500 fans in 1981 is the NCAA meet he remembers the most.

"I loved to perform in front of the large crowds, and when we stepped out onto the floor that year, the crowd just went crazy," Hartung said. "But I finally beat (former Oklahoma gymnast) Bart (Connor) in a major competition and that was a big thing to me."

Hartung said he and Connor had

a rivalry going in 1981.

"By '81, me and Bart had a little personal battle going," Hartung said. "What really hurt me was before I came to Nebraska, me and Bart were pretty good friends and that slowly deteriorated over the years. It's almost like I had to hate Bart to get fired up enough to beat him."

Hartung said the rivalry got intense during the 1979 Big Eight meet.

"I remember a guy on the team, Kirt Fredrick, who was about 6 feet tall," Hartung said. "He needed the high bar adjusted and Oklahoma's coach said no. I think that's the closest I've ever seen Francis and (former Oklahoma coach Paul Zielt) almost getting in a fight."

Hartung said he will never forget the four years that he competed at Nebraska. While competing for the Huskers, he won seven individual NCAA titles and a combined 11 NCAA Gold Medals. In 1982, he was awarded the Nissen Award, which is awarded to the nation's top senior gymnast.

"I grew so much as a person in those four years that it helped to succeed in other things," Hartung said. "For now, those four years were some of the happiest days of my life, and I hope Nebraska will continue to have the reputation of being the best gymnastics program in the United States."

NU swim team hopes to stay unbeaten

By Jeff Apel
 Senior Editor

Nebraska men's swimming coach Cal Bentz will be trying to continue his season-long dominance when the Cornhuskers face Utah today at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Bentz, whose Huskers have rolled to a No. 10 ranking this season while compiling a 2-0 record, said Nebraska will have to perform to the best of its ability to defeat Utah. He said the 3-0 Utes pose problems because they possess several outstanding swimmers.

"They have some fast people," Bentz said, "so we need to be ready."

Bentz said the meet is also important because the Huskers will be chasing several NCAA standards that eluded them during the Husker Invitational last weekend. He said he would

like to see Sean Frampton qualify in the 100-yard backstroke and Nebraska's 800-yard freestyle relay team also meet its NCAA standards.

"Our feeling is we like to move forward," Bentz said. "So we would like to get the cuts out of the way."

Bentz said the meet may help the Huskers make their cuts because they will be focusing strictly on Utah. He said that during the 10-team Husker Invitational, it was easy for Nebraska to focus on the team race rather than individual performances.

"In a big meet like we had last week sometimes your times can get fragmented and you can get into your own thing," Bentz said, "but in the smaller meets you have to focus in on the competition."

Bentz said he hopes Nebraska's victory over No. 8-ranked Arizona State at the Husker Invitational shows

coaches across the nation how powerful Nebraska is. He said the times that some Huskers swam would get some attention.

"I think the times will be as important as the win itself," Bentz said.

Utah coach Don Reddish said he was impressed by the times Nebraska has posted this season. He said the Utes will need to be in top form if they are going to defeat Nebraska.

Reddish said Nebraska will enter the meet as the favorite even though Utah hasn't lost a dual meet in two years because the Huskers are tapered. Tapering is a process in which swimmers hope to reduce their times by shaving and resting.

Reddish said the Utes won't taper until the Western Athletic Conference meet in March.

"It's just a difference in coaching philosophies," Reddish said.

Forward Vick accepts leadership role as young Huskers battle age dilemma

The players should have known they were in for a tough practice. Nebraska coach Danny Nee showed up wearing black. All black.

Nee decided a few players were loafing in three-on-two drills. He'd had enough.

"All right, everybody on the line except for Derrick (Vick) and E.J. (Eric Johnson)," Nee said. "We're going to run."

Vick, Nebraska's top returning scorer, and Johnson, a transfer from Baylor who is a starting guard, stood on the side taking turns at the drinking fountain.

more this year because I'm one of the top returning men," Vick said, "and also because we have a lot of young guys. He has to look to the seniors for leadership until the freshmen come around and mature. I've accepted this role."

Nee said that for the Cornhuskers to win this year, Vick will have to score and guard Henry Buchanan will have to run the team.

"We're going to have to build around them," Nee said. "No two players contributed more than Buchanan and Vick going down the stretch and in the NIT. They were both big game players for us."

And Vick should be again. Nee has said Nebraska will run even more this season than they did last year. At 6-foot-6 and 200 pounds, Vick's mobility should help him score more often off the fast break.

"That's a way of getting me open, and I can do what I want," the senior forward said.

tional Junior College Tournament.

Vick said he liked Nee immediately and wanted to play his up-tempo style. Nee hired Vick's junior-college coach, Gary Borgen, but Vick said that had nothing to do with his decision to become a Husker.

"I decided before he said he was going to Nebraska," Vick said. "Well, I didn't really decide it, but I had a feeling I was going to like it up there with the new coach and his persuasion-type of recruiting and his honesty."

Borgen said Vick has improved since he coached him in junior college.

"He's developed. It's a little different type of a style," Borgen said. "He's the kind of guy you watch the whole ball game and you don't see a lot of stuff, and then all of a sudden the game's over and he's got his 12-15 points and his eight or nine rebounds."

This season, Vick said, he knows he's going to get a lot more attention from opponents. He said he's ready.

"I'm looking forward to that challenge," Vick said. "Everybody really knows about me now. I'll be heavily guarded. If I do a lot of scoring, then I'll know I've improved over the years because now everyone will be keying on me."



Vick



Kent Endacott

Vick took off during the National Invitation Tournament last season, leading the Huskers to a third-place finish. He was named to the All-NIT first team. This season, he said, big things are expected of him.

"He (Nee) is looking to go to me

Endacott is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan sports reporter.