

Hartung's Husker dreams came true

By Richard Cooper
Staff Reporter

When Jim Hartung was 10, Francis Allen gave him a Nebraska gymnastics T-shirt. From that moment on, Hartung said, he knew he wanted to become a Cornhusker.

When that time arrived in 1978, Hartung said, he decided he was going to help Nebraska become the best in gymnastics. During the four years Hartung competed at Nebraska, he helped the Huskers win four consecutive NCAA championships.

Hartung, now in charge of athletic fund raising at Nebraska, said he was used to being on the No. 1-ranked team when he first came to Nebraska.

"I had always competed for the best," Hartung said. "My gym club was the best, my high school was the best. I wanted to stay No. 1. I never expected us to win four consecutive NCAA championships, but I expected us to be the best."

Allen, the Nebraska men's gymnastics coach, said Hartung's credentials were impressive before he came to Nebraska.

During his Junior Olympics career, Hartung won the all-around

title four years in a row. During Hartung's senior year of high school, he was the top-ranked prep gymnast in the nation and was a member of the U.S. Senior National Team.

Hartung said that when he graduated from Omaha South High School, every college that had a gymnastics program recruited him. He said his No. 1 choice was Nebraska.

"I chose Nebraska for several reasons," Hartung said. "First of all, it was close to home. My parents had supported me a lot since I started competing in gymnastics and when I finally did come to Nebraska, my parents went to every meet within a 500-mile radius."

"Also, they had the new Bob Devaney Sports Center and it was one of the premiere gyms in the country," he said. "And finally, I had known Francis since I was 10 years old, and ever since that day he gave me the T-shirt, I had wanted to compete at Nebraska."

Allen said Hartung is the best gymnast to ever compete on the college level.

"I've never had a freshman that has had the kind of impact that Jim Hartung had on us," Allen said. "He just stepped into the leadership

Hartung's Accomplishments

NCAA

22 All-America rankings
11 NCAA Gold Medals

(7 individual, 4 team)

7 NCAA Titles

All-Around (1980, 1981)
Rings (1980, 1981, 1982)
P-Bars (1981, 1982)

Big Eight

26 Medals in 28 Events

11 Big Eight titles
All-Around (1980, 1982)
Rings (1979, 1980, 1981, 1982)
High Bar (1980, 1982)
Pommel Horse (1980, 1982)
Vault (1979)

US Olympic Team

1980 Did not compete due to boycott
1984 GOLD Medalist (Team)
Vaulting Finalist

US World Championship Team

1979 All-Around 9th
1981 Vault 7th, Rings 9th
1983

Tom Lauder/Daily Nebraskan

role of the team which I've never seen a freshmen do."

Hartung said he endured a lot of pressure when he first came to Nebraska.

"It was hard to break the belief that all freshmen are going to crack under pressure," Hartung said. "But I pretty much laid that to rest and nowadays when I talk to the freshmen, I tell them not to worry

about making mistakes and to just go out and perform."

In his first Nebraska meet Hartung helped the Huskers score a national-high of 436.35. He finished in first place in the all-around. The 436 earned the Huskers the No. 1-ranking in the nation.

But the day after the Big Eight Invitational, Hartung was in the gym cutting some foam for the new

tumbling pits, when he cut his left hand. The cut required several stitches which would keep Hartung out of the all-around competition for three weeks.

Nebraska assistant coach Jim Howard said during the time Hartung was injured it was hard to replace him with an all-arounder

See HARTUNG on 10

NU's Keeler tries to shed 'false' tough-guy image

By Mike Kluck
Staff Reporter

An offensive lineman is supposed to be a tough guy on the field, but Nebraska guard Andy Keeler said he likes to leave that image behind when he's not playing football.

Keeler, a 6-foot-3 junior from Omaha Burke, said he earned his tough image after playing in the 1984 Shrine Bowl.

But Keeler said the image doesn't fit his true personality.

"People started to do a little talking, saying that I was a mean guy," Keeler said. "One person says something and it builds into that I am a



Keeler

tough guy and a rebel, which is not true at all. That kind of reputation doesn't help, but it doesn't really matter because I am a tough guy on the football field.

"I am just a regular guy and student, and all the other stuff is not true."

Keeler, who spent last season backing up former Cornhusker guard Stan Parker, said some of the older players on this year's team have helped him become a better player.

"Playing with people like John McCormick, John Nichols and Keven Lightner really has helped me to become a better player," Keeler said. "Last year's line was a good line because they were really equal in ability."

"This year's line may not have the standout players that other teams

have, but our first unit is as good as anybody else. We all give 100 percent every game. We have grown and meshed together as the season has progressed. We have unity and team spirit this year, and you have to have that on the line. We all get along real good, and each game we have been playing a little better."

Keeler started for the 1984 freshman team and then redshirted his sophomore year. He said the redshirt year helped and hurt his play.

"I think coming off my freshman and redshirt year, I got a little stronger and bigger by working out with the weight coaches," Keeler said. "Coming off my redshirt year, I didn't know the system that well and I had a hard time picking the plays up. Finally last spring something started to click and I started picking them up."

Keeler said that although the plays are a major part in an offensive lineman's assignments, consistency is also equally important.

"Our biggest thing is going out there and being consistent every week," Keeler said. "The play won't work if somebody misses an assignment and is not consistent."

Keeler, whose brother Mike was a starting defensive tackle and co-captain for Nebraska in 1983, said the offensive line stays the same throughout the season.

"Our offense varies from week to week on the type of plays we run, but we have basically the same rules for every play," Keeler said.

Oregon coach frustrated by injuries to Ducks' team

DUCKS from Page 7

ing because of the key injuries," Monson said. "It's really visible on the road."

Monson said Oregon's injury problem was very evident in the Ducks' 75-53 loss at Lamar Tuesday.

"We started five kids, and only one of those had any major college experience," Monson said. "It really showed by the amount of turnovers we had."

Monson said one bright spot about his team's injury misfortunes has been the development of junior-col-

lege transfer Frankie Johnson.

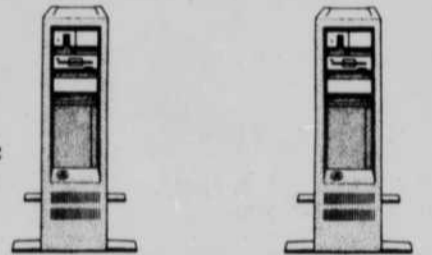
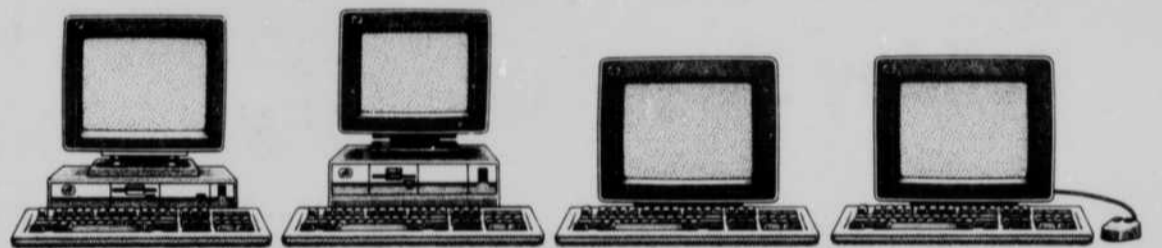
Johnson, a 6-foot-1 guard from Fresno City College in Fresno, Calif., has averaged 12.3 points per game.

The Ducks' roster also includes Brett Coffey, an Omaha North graduate who attended Barton County Community College in Great Bend, Kan., before signing with Oregon.

Nee said Oregon's McArthur Court is a hostile place to play for visiting teams.

"The fans are really close to the playing floor and there will be a good crowd on hand, much like Creighton," Nee said.

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