

Husker wrestlers to face top-ranked teams at meet

By Chuck Green
Senior Reporter

Not many people can accuse Nebraska's wrestling team of facing a weak, unchallenging schedule.

The Cornhuskers, ranked No. 18 in the latest wrestling polls, travel to Stillwater, Okla., this weekend to compete in the Cowboy Duals, which will feature No. 1-ranked Oklahoma State and No. 2 Arizona State. The meet will mark the third time this season that Nebraska has faced a No. 1-ranked team.

"It seems like they wait and see who Nebraska wrestles next, and then put them at No. 1," Husker wrestling coach Tim Neumann said.

Boise State, Brigham Young and Clemson will round out the six-team tournament. Missouri and Illinois originally were scheduled to compete, but withdrew.

Neumann said the Huskers should have little trouble defeating any team other than Oklahoma State and Arizona State at the meet.

"We've obviously got to beat some people we haven't beaten before," Neumann said. "Against Oklahoma State, I think we're favored in two matches, and there are four or five others that are considered tossups, and it's the same with Arizona State."

Neumann said Oklahoma State's combined individual records from dual meets this season is 191-31, and Arizona State's is 126-28. He said the Sun Devils are "the best dual team in America right now."

Oklahoma State's top wrestlers include John Smith, at 134, who has only one loss in the last three years — to former Nebraska All-America Gil Sanchez last season. At 158, Vince Silva leads the Cowboys with a 23-1 record.

Nebraska's Jeff Coltvet will challenge Silva this weekend in a match Neumann said could decide the top seed in that weight class at the Big Eight Tournament.

Arizona State's best wrestler is Zeke Jones at 118. Jones is 16-0 and ranked third in the nation. The Sun Devils have wrestlers ranked in the top eight in the nation in every weight class from 167 on up.

Neumann said winning the Cowboy Duals would place Nebraska in the top five in the next polls, but that isn't his primary concern.

"There are so many individual matchups that are important," Neumann said. "We've got a lot of athletes right on the brink of wrestling really well, and that's what I'm looking for. I'm not so much concerned with winning as I am with how well our kids perform."

Last weekend, Nebraska defeated North Dakota 28-6, lost to North Dakota State 24-16, then lost to No. 7-ranked Minnesota 20-19. The North Dakota teams were the top two teams in Division II.

Neumann said last weekend's meets actually showed him how well his team is developing this season, despite the losses.

"After a grueling week of practices and late-night trips from meet to meet, it's shown me that our kids have a lot of character," Neumann said. "We're really coming on."

Neumann said injuries have slowed the Huskers this week. Jeff Castro, Nebraska's top man at the 142-pound class, suffered a broken rib and may be out for the season. In addition, Neumann said, Terry Cook dropped from 126 to 118, and Wallace Dawkins, Nebraska's only senior this year, has changed to 126 from 118, where he is undefeated this season.

Nebraska expected to win season's first track meet

By Richard Cooper
Staff Reporter

Drake track coach Bob Erhart knows he will be in a no-win situation when his men's and women's track teams compete against Nebraska, Wichita State and Barton County (Kan.) Junior College Saturday at the Bob Devaney Sports Center Track Complex.

But Erhart said he'll still be happy if some members of his teams can win a few events in the triangular meet. The meet, which will open Nebraska's season, begins at noon.

"It's always good to compete against a good team like Nebraska," Erhart said. "We know there is no way we can win the meet, but we have some individuals who should challenge strongly for some events."

Erhart said the Bulldogs can do nothing but benefit from competing at Nebraska because of the caliber of the Cornhusker athletes and the quality of the facilities.

"Nebraska's indoor track is one of the fastest in the nation," Erhart said. "Every time we've competed there our kids have come out with better times."

Erhart said Drake's top athlete is senior long and triple jumper Todd Crawford, a transfer student from Bradley University in Peoria, Ill., Crawford has recorded jumps of more than 25 feet in the long jump and 50 feet in the triple jump.

Erhart said Kevin Little, who was the Missouri Valley Conference Champion in the 300-meter competition last season, should also contend for a first-place finish. He said Shane Bunger and Dea Ohuhau should provide strong competition in the 600- and 800-meter runs.

"We have some runners who can run with Nebraska and who could win some events," Erhart said. "It will be a good experience for our team."

Wichita State assistant track coach Mike Wade said the Shockers are on the upswing. Although Wichita State doesn't expect to win the meet, it hopes to learn something from it, he said.

"We think it's a good idea to compete at Nebraska because we'll get nothing but a positive experience from it," Wade said. "We won't put any pressure on our kids to win the meet because we know they can't, but the track is fast, so maybe we'll get some NCAA qualifying times out of it."

Wade said the Shockers' top runner is former Nebraska runner Phillips George. George, who transferred to Wichita State in 1986, will compete in the 60- and 300-meter dashes.

Wade said the Shockers are strongest in the distance events. The Wichita State men's and women's cross country teams won the Missouri Valley Conference Championship in the fall.

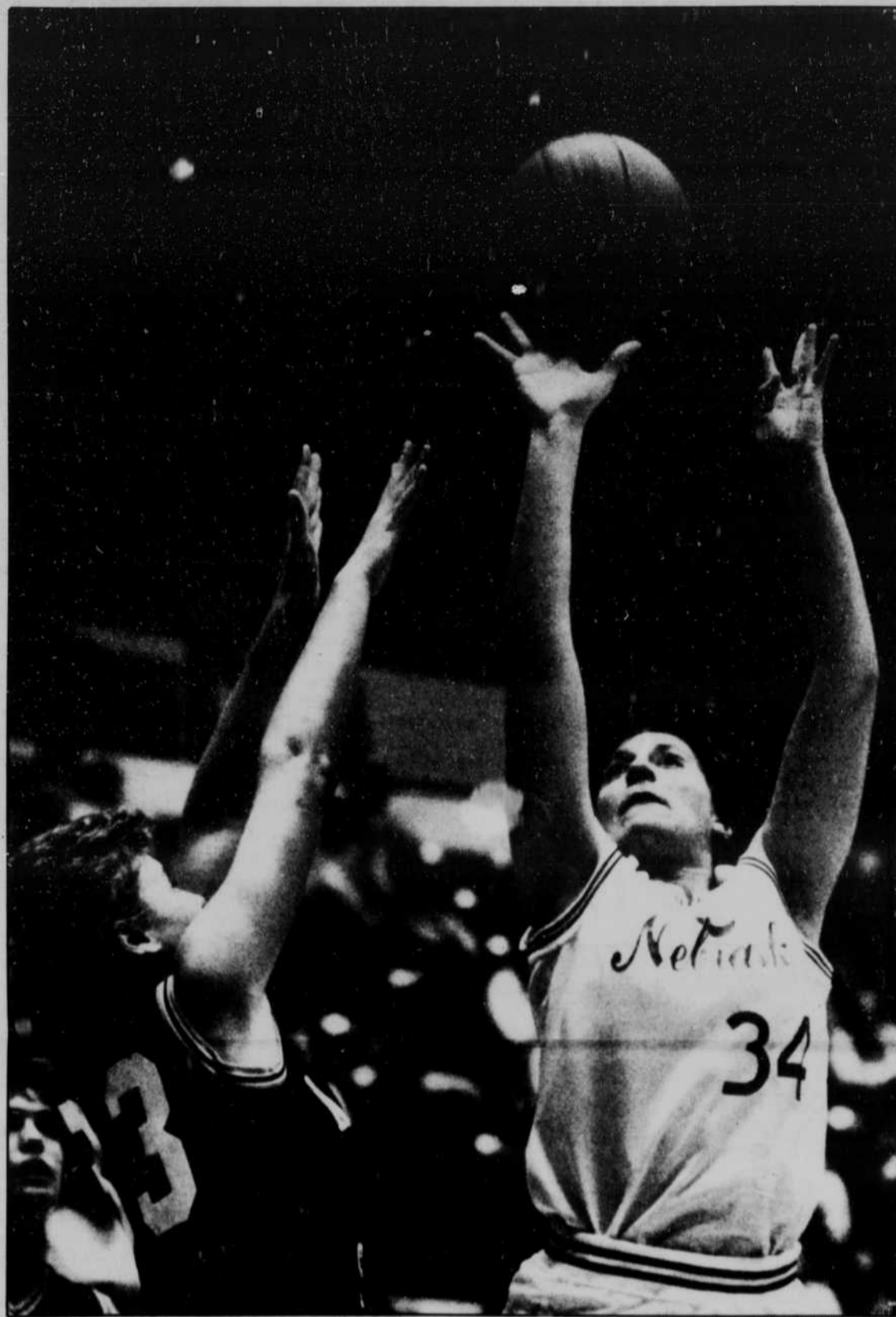
Wade said Wichita State's top distance runner is South African Tjaart Van Nieuwenhurizen. He said Nieuwenhurizen is capable of running a sub-four-minute mile.

Nebraska track coach Gary Pepin said Wichita State should give the Husker distance runners a good test. He said senior Jean Verster, a two-time All-America in cross country, will not compete because he has used up his eligibility in indoor track.

Pepin said middle-distance runner Regis Humphrey, who is being bothered by a knee injury, and Bob Jelks, troubled by a sore hamstring, also won't compete.

Pepin said the meet is a good way to begin the season because all three teams will give the Huskers some good competition.

"All three teams have some good individuals who should be very competitive," Pepin said, "but I think point-wise we should win the meet."



Butch Ireland/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska center Stephanie Bolli shoots over Kansas State's Diana Miller.

Cornhusker coach hopes ranking will help her team in the Big 8

Probable Starters:

Nebraska (13-2, 3-0)
Amy Stephens G
Pam Fiene G
Stephanie Bolli C
Maurice Ivy F
Kim Harris F

Kansas (11-5, 1-2)
Lisa Dougherty G
Lisa Braddy G
Deborah Richardson C
Lisa Baker F
Mesho Stroughter F

By Mark Derowitsch
Senior Reporter

Being ranked among the nation's top 25 teams may not be beneficial to the Nebraska women's basketball team.

But Nebraska coach Angela Beck said she hopes being ranked No. 25 by USA Today will add more motivation to the Cornhuskers than their opponents.

"I kind of feel that once we were ranked in the top 25, we would give a sigh of relief because we were eager to get there," Beck said. "I'm hoping it will give us a little more incentive than the other teams we

play. Now, everybody will be out to beat us."

Beck said one team that will be out to beat the Huskers is Kansas. Nebraska faces the defending co-Big Eight champion Jayhawks Saturday at 11 a.m. at Allen Fieldhouse in Lawrence, Kan.

"Kansas is a very strong team," Beck said. "We'll need to keep the game under wraps and during crunch time perform well to win the game."

Beck said one advantage the Huskers have is they've been winning on the road this season. Nebraska, 13-2 overall and 3-0 in the Big Eight, opened its conference season with a 91-87 win against Iowa State at Ames, Iowa.

"I think we've played very well on the road this season," Beck said. "I think we've played better on the road than we do at home at times, and I don't know why."

Beck said Nebraska's 3-0 start in the conference will give the team confidence during its three-game road trip. After facing Kansas, the Huskers will travel to Norman, Okla., to face the Sooners next Wednesday and then will play Colorado on Jan. 30 in Boulder, Colo.

"I was hoping we could get off to a quick start," Beck said. "Our goal was to be 3-0, and that will help during our road trip. It was good to get three wins under our belts before we took to the road."

Nebraska guard Sabrina Brooks said she isn't surprised by the Huskers' fast start.

"I think it's confidence," Brooks said.

Beck said the Huskers must stop guard Lisa Braddy and center Deborah Richardson to beat Kansas. Braddy, a 5-foot-7 sophomore, is averaging 8.8 points per game, and Richardson, a 6-4 junior, is averaging 10.4 points and 8.3 rebounds per game.

"We have to contain Braddy offensively," Beck said. "She's a good point guard and is very quick. Against Richardson, we're going to have to dead front her. She's slower, so we'll have to use our quickness and keep her off balance."

"She's a major concern," Beck said the Huskers must also react to Kansas' pressure defense. "Offensively, we'll have to handle their man-to-man press," she said. "They run a lot of junk defenses, and we'll have to react to them."