

Huskers shoot for win in 'rivalry'

Probable Starters:
Nebraska (19-4, 9-2)
Amy Stephens G
Amy Bullock G
Kim Harris C
Ann Halsne F
Maurtice Ivy F

Colorado (16-8, 6-5)
Bridget Turner G
Annan Wilson G
Crystal Ford C
Tracy Tripp F
Molly Wampler F

By Mark Derowitsch
Senior Reporter

Colorado football coach Bill McCartney isn't the only Buffalo coach trying to start a

rivalry with Nebraska.

Nebraska women's basketball coach Angela Beck said Colorado may have begun a new rivalry with the Cornhuskers the last time the two teams played. The Buffaloes defeated Nebraska 84-69 in Boulder, Colo.

"If we want to beat anyone in the conference and if we have a rival, it's with them," Beck said. "Last time, they shoved it in our face. We work and play hard, but we never shove it in anyone's face."

"We didn't take it too kindly."

Beck said Colorado's talent adds fuel to the rivalry, just like the Husker football team's rivalry with Oklahoma.

"Colorado played us very tough here last season," Beck said. "They probably have the most talent in the league. It's very difficult for us to match up with them because they have big guards. We just have to try to do a good job and play with intensity."

But Colorado coach Ceal Barry said the Buffaloes don't have a specific rivalry with Nebraska.

"I think every team is important," Barry said. "From our standpoint, we're struggling to stay in the top half of the Big Eight. Our game against Kansas State (an 86-70 win Wednesday night) was just as important as Nebraska. We can't afford a letdown at this point of the season."

Beck said Nebraska must play good defense to defeat the Buffaloes.

"They have a balanced team and they are a good shooting team," Beck said. "They have one of the better man defenses in the conference and with their depth and talent, it's going to be a difficult game for us."

"But I think our kids are looking forward to it," she said. "We won't have to do very much to get up for it."

Barry said Colorado also must improve on

its defense.

"They have an explosive team," Barry said. "Not many teams in the country can keep up with them offensively, so we have to go out and play better defense."

Colorado, which enters the game with a 6-5 record in the Big Eight and a 16-8 mark overall this season, is led by guard Bridget Turner. Turner, a 5-foot-8 junior from Aurora, Colo., averages 13.5 points per game.

Forward Tracy Tripp and center Crystal Ford average 12.4 points per game for the Buffaloes.

Barry said Colorado needs a balanced attack to win Big Eight games.

"We've got more balance than most teams," Barry said. "We don't have a great player like a Maurtice Ivy or an Amy Stephens. We have to have everyone contribute to win."

The game is scheduled for 8 p.m. Saturday at Bob Devaney Sports Center.

NU softball coach anxious about upcoming season

By Mike Kluck
Staff Reporter

If the Nebraska softball team played all of its games on paper, Coach Ron Wolforth wouldn't be worried.

But since the Cornhuskers play each game on the field, Wolforth is a little nervous.

Wolforth said his nervousness stems from the return of only 14 players from last year's team that compiled a 41-11 record, won its fourth consecutive Big Eight championship and was a semifinalist in the NCAA World Series.

Wolforth said he is also anxious because the Huskers have been ranked as high as No. 2 in the nation. He said the high ranking causes him to be critical during practice.

"I am overcritical at practice because they are a great team and have the chance to compete for the national championship," Wolforth

said, "although we don't have the intensity of a No. 2 team right now."

Wolforth said the preseason ranking has built a positive pressure that is building into a tradition to play well. He said the pressure and tradition can be derived from the Husker football and volleyball programs, both of which are known for their winning ways.

Wolforth said a successful season will rest on the shoulders of senior pitchers Lori Sippel and Donna Deardorff.

Sippel, who was 26-3 last season with a .36 earned run average, holds Nebraska records for most strikeouts with 84, most career shutouts with 41 and most no-hitters with eight. Her 8.65 strikeouts per game and winning percentage of .845 are also school records.

Deardorff, who was 19-6 last season with a .37 ERA, is second in career shutouts with 32.

"Our pitching should be our strong point this year. We have two of

the finest pitchers in the country in Donna Deardorff and Lori Sippel," Wolforth said. "It is their senior year, and if Nebraska is ever going to have a great year, this is it. It should be a big and important year for us to help boost our recruitment in the future."

Wolforth said the Huskers have other weapons.

"We have three people who can steal 80 to 100 bases, and we have three people who can hit the ball a long way," Wolforth said. "Our team will have a combination of speed and power this year."

Wolforth said one of the power hitters Nebraska will rely on is senior Margie Ogradowicz, who hit .315 last season while scoring 46 runs.

Wolforth said Ogradowicz is the best all-around player he has worked with. Ogradowicz is a very consistent defensive player, he said, who can cover all the offensive aspects of the game.

Shortstop Jane Kremer and catcher Ruth Chatwin will also be

relied on heavily this year, Wolforth said. Kremer, who hit five home runs last season, and Chatwin, who collected 15 runs batted in, will provide power to the Husker lineup.

Wolforth said his only concern entering the season is a lack of depth.

Wolforth said Ann Halsne, a freshman who also plays for the Nebraska women's basketball team, will provide a limited amount of quality depth, even though she won't join the team until after basketball season.

Wolforth said Debra Hoffman, a guard for Nebraska, may be added to the roster.

Wolforth said Jill Rishel, Nebraska's only sophomore, can play in the infield or the outfield. He said Rishel will be the Huskers' lead-off hitter because of her offensive power.

Wolforth said Oklahoma State will give Nebraska its biggest challenge for this year's conference championship.

The remainder of the Big Eight is in the midst of rebuilding this season, Wolforth said, which should eliminate them from contention for the conference crown.

Wolforth said the Huskers should know where they stand by the end of March, when Nebraska will participate in three of the premier tournaments in the nation during the first four weeks of its season.

"It is going to be interesting to see how we respond to the challenges," Wolforth said. "These first four weeks will not tell what will happen with the rest of the season, but how we respond. If we come out of the first four weeks as gangbusters, we will be a force to be reckoned with in the conference."

"If we don't come out strong, we could struggle through our conference schedule."

Wolforth said the Huskers have the potential to win the national championship this season if they come together as a team.

Nebraska gymnastics coach isn't concerned with injuries

By Richard Cooper
Staff Reporter

Nebraska men's gymnastics coach Francis Allen isn't worried about not having all-around performers Tom Schlesinger and Kevin Davis at full strength.

He might be, though, in two weeks.

Allen said if the two senior all-arounders are not back in all six events by the beginning of March, the Cornhuskers won't win the NCAA title. The NCAA Championships will be April 14-16 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

"When we have Tom and Kevin in the lineup, we're a high-scoring team," Allen said. "With those two guys in the lineup, we're the best team in the country. I know we are not going to be the No. 1-ranked team going into the NCAA Championships because we haven't been producing the high scores."

Schlesinger and Davis have been bothered by injuries all season. Schlesinger injured his neck while practicing on the parallel bars in early January and injured his right ankle during last weekend's UCLA Invitational.

Davis, who competed in the all-around last weekend for the first time since undergoing arthroscopic knee surgery during the semester break, is now battling a sprained ankle.

The No. 5-ranked Huskers will square off against Minnesota in Minneapolis Saturday. Allen said the Golden Gophers are capable of scoring a 278 and are in a dogfight for second place in the Big Ten with Ohio State.

"Minnesota is a good team and I'm sure they plan on beating us," Allen said. "Since this is a home meet for them, they could score as high as 280, so this is going to be a tough meet for us."

Allen said he will use sophomores Patrick Kirksey and Bob Stelter and freshman Ted Dimas in the all-around. He said all three gymnasts are getting better each week.

At the UCLA Invitational, Kirksey finished with an all-around score of 56.3, while Stelter and Dimas tallied scores of 54.9 and 54.7.

Allen said junior Mike Epperson, who missed last season with a broken wrist, had his best meet of the year at the UCLA Invitational. Epperson averaged 9.3 in the four events he competed in.

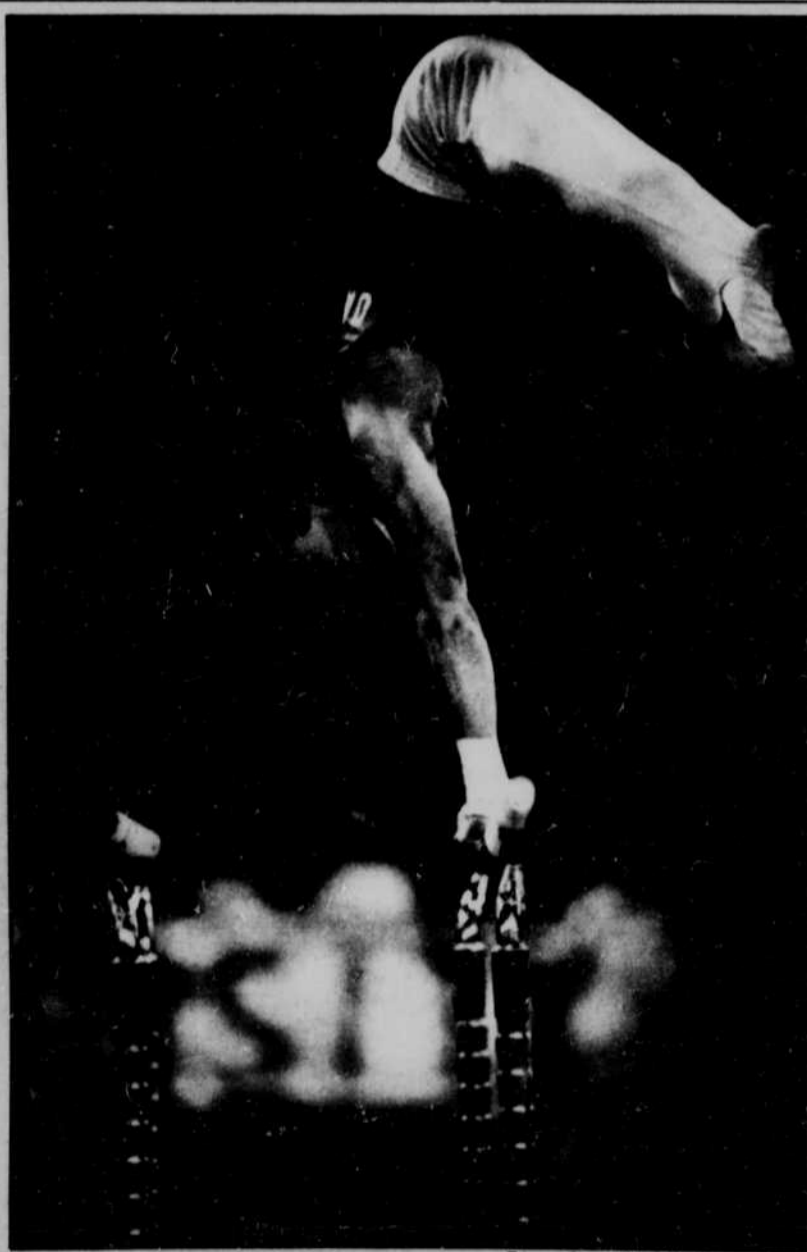
"Mike has made quite a comeback," Allen said. "Last year at this time, I wasn't too sure if he would ever return to gymnastics. But he has worked hard, and he is starting to look like the old Mike Epperson."

Allen said Nebraska will receive stiff tests from Oklahoma and Ohio State in the near future. He said the Huskers will have to practice hard to prepare for those meets.

"We're getting down to the wire as far as getting ready for the NCAA's," Allen said. "Tom and Kevin will probably only compete in two or three events this weekend and then start working hard next week."

"At least our younger guys are getting experience, which I think is going to pay off at the NCAA's."

"I'm not worried yet, and I hope it stays that way."



Doug Carroll/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska's Kevin Davis competes on the parallel bars.

TAC pentathlon meet set for Saturday at the sports center

By Kyle Schurman
Staff Reporter

Athletes from across the nation will invade the Bob Devaney Sports Center Saturday for the Track Athletic Congress' National Pentathlon Championships.

Nebraska assistant track coach Mark Kostek said many of the best men and women athletes in the United States will compete. He said some of the top pentathlon athletes will not attend, however, because this is an Olympic year.

"We are contending with an Olympic year," Kostek said. "We won't see all of the best athletes because the season gets kind of long."

TAC is the national governing body in track and field and will have its indoor championships Feb. 26 at New York City.

Most athletes who will compete in the pentathlon championships are not affiliated with a school, Kostek said. He said freshman Lynne Frey is the only Cornhusker who might compete.

Kostek said Frey will compete in the pentathlon in the Big Eight Championships Feb. 26 at the sports center. Only women compete in the pentathlon during the Big Eight meet.

Kostek said Nebraska wanted to bring the TAC's pentathlon championships to Lincoln because the coaches wanted to show that the pentathlon is a major event.

The women's pentathlon consists of the 60-meter hurdles, the high jump, the shot put, the long jump and the 800. The first four events are the same for the men, but they substitute the 1,000 for the 800.

The meet begins at 8 a.m. with the women's hurdles. The meet is scheduled to last until 1 p.m.