

Cornhuskers remain Big 8 indoor track champions

By Kyle Schurman
Staff Reporter

Nebraska's men "cranked it up a notch" Saturday, and it paid off as they joined the Cornhusker women in winning the Big Eight indoor track championships at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

The title was the ninth-straight for the Nebraska women, while the Husker men won their second straight title and third in four years.

Nebraska track coach Gary Pepin said that having both teams claim indoor titles for the second straight year was satisfying.

"(Two wins are) a lot more special because you're so tied up with the two teams they're like a family," Pepin said. "If one half of the family isn't as happy, it's not as much fun."

Pepin said he wasn't sure the men would not be able to defend their conference title.

"I was really worried and uptight all the time about the men's meet," Pepin said. "I knew we had to click on all cylinders and have a great team effort."

Pepin said sophomore Frank Graham clicked the most when he pulled off an upset in the mile by winning in 4:08.2. Pepin said Graham's win may have been the spark that carried Nebraska to the title. The Huskers defeated second-place Iowa State 114 2/3-96 1/3. Oklahoma was third with 81 1/3 points, and Kansas State finished fourth with 69.

Nebraska also won the women's portion of the competition, as the Huskers scored 156 points to easily outdistance second-place Missouri, which finished with 83 points. Iowa State was third with 63 points, followed by Colorado with 55.

Pepin was impressed by the performance of Graham.

"Graham just ran super," Pepin said. "The mile really helped and brought up the whole team's spirit. It always kind of sparks the rest of your team when a kid wins an event he's not supposed to. We had hoped to place well (in the mile), but we didn't expect that."

Graham said he was a little surprised he won. "I didn't think I had enough confidence to win it," Graham said. "But when I was in front I said, 'Frank, you can win this.' It just really helps to motivate the team."

Graham injured his hip last year and did not compete in the Big Eight championships.

"I thought of this year as a year to redeem myself, and this is it," Graham said as he held up his gold medal. "What I've just done shows what a little extra effort can do."

Graham joined Bill Trott, who won the 55-meter dash, and James Blackledge, who won the high jump, as Nebraska's individual champions.

Trott said the fact that Missouri's Victor Edet had beaten him in the 55 at last year's conference meet helped motivate him. Trott won in 6.22 seconds, while Edet was third with a time of 6.29.

"I didn't get a great start and I had to come back," Trott said. "Last year, I had a great start, but (Edet) came back on me. When I got behind this time all I could think about was last year."

Trott, who has qualified for the NCAA Championships Mar. 11-12 in Oklahoma City, Okla., said he thinks he can do well there.

"Right now, I've got the speed," Trott said, "but I've got to focus on some little things."

Blackledge said he was disappointed with his jump of 7-feet-1/4, but was glad he won because Nebraska needed the points.

"For me, it's important to do well for the team," Blackledge said. "That's all this meet is

about for me. I would've liked to jump higher, but high jumpers always want to jump higher."

Nebraska's Bob Jelks, the defending conference champion in the 300, finished second Saturday to Missouri's Izaiq Adeyanju by one-hundredth of a second. Jelks said he has been trying to recover from a pulled hamstring in his left leg. Saturday's 300 was his first individual event this season.

Jelks said he was confident Nebraska would win the conference title.

"It seems like everyone has picked it up a notch," Jelks said. "I didn't win, but as long as the team wins, that covers it up. We've just kind of nickel-and-dimed it."

Nebraska earned three second-place finishes, two third-place finishes and eight fourth-place finishes. The Husker coaches said before the meet that the lower-places would be important to Nebraska's chances of winning the meet.

"Coming into this meet, originally, we had to have good efforts up and down the line," Pepin said. "We had them."

Pepin said the Nebraska women did not have to work as hard to win their half of the meet.

"With the women's steam, we felt like we had such a strong team, even if we had a couple of events not go well, we could still win," Pepin said. "This women's team is one of the best we've ever had here and this was another great meet."

The Husker women scored in all 17 events and had seven individual champions. The Huskers now want to do well at the NCAA championships, Pepin said.

"We've got a chance to go to the NCAA meet and certainly be a top-10 team," Pepin said. "We maybe can be better than a top-10 team."

Nebraska's Linetta Wilson won the 400.

Wilson was named the women's most valuable performer for the second-straight year by members of the media that were present. Iowa State's Barnaba Korir, who won three events, was named as the men's most valuable performer.

Wilson said she was focusing more on the NCAA meet because of the lack of competition at Saturday's meet.

"I was basically looking for a team win," Wilson said. "I'm focusing on nationals and I ran a relaxed race. I didn't have much competition."

Even though Wilson ran a 53.58 in the 400, which was more than one second slower than her sports center record of 52.52, she said she was pleased with her race.

"People run a lot better under competition," Wilson said. "On the last straightaway I didn't hear any yelling, so I kind of started relaxing."

Wilson said Nebraska's women should do very well at the nationals.

"I think we've got a chance to win it if everyone goes in with a real positive attitude and is healthy," she said.

Nebraska's Karen Kruger jumped 21-1/2 Friday to win the long jump, and she ran 6.91 to finish second in the 55 Saturday. She said she was disappointed with the 55 because she ran a 6.85 in the preliminaries Friday.

"I'm happy, though," Kruger said. "I jumped really well. I did my job and I'm satisfied."

The other Nebraska women's individual champions were Toyia Barnes in the shot put, Renita Robinson in the triple jump, Michelle Milling in the 600, Tammy Thurman in the high jump and the 1,600-relay team of Beth Webster, Sharon Powell, Lisa O'Connell and Wilson.

Cornhuskers fall to Cyclones

By Tim Hartmann
Senior Reporter

Henry T. Buchanan's last-second jump shot against Iowa State didn't fall, but the faces of the Nebraska team did.

"If it goes down, I'm all smiles," Nebraska coach Danny Nee said.

Instead, the Cornhuskers suffered an 85-84 loss to Iowa State Saturday afternoon before a season-high 14,555 fans at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Nebraska took an 84-82 lead with 1:03 left in the game when Richard van Poelgeest, who led the Huskers with a career-high 19 points, hit two free throws. Iowa State tied the game 10 seconds later when Jeff Grayser also converted a pair of free throws.

Nebraska then held the ball until guard Eric Johnson missed a 10-foot

jump shot with 17 seconds remaining. The Cyclones got the rebound and Nebraska's Beau Reid fouled Mike Born while attempting a steal.

Born, a transfer from the University of Nebraska-Omaha, had not missed a free throw in 11 Big Eight games. He said he did not mind shooting a pressure free throw in front of a hostile crowd.

"I kind of like those situations, because it's you against the crowd, you against the world," Born said. "I've been using the same free throw style for about the last 10 games. I've been trying to concentrate and relax and it worked tonight."

Born made his first free throw, but missed the second to give Nebraska 13 seconds to win the game. Nee said the 13-foot shot Buchanan took was

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Nee to sign Indiana recruit

By Mark Derowitsch
Senior Reporter

An Indiana high school basketball player has announced he will sign a national letter of intent to attend Nebraska.

Eric Dolezal, a 6-foot-3 guard from La Porte, Ind., made an oral commitment to Nebraska Friday. Dolezal averages 24.5 points and 8.3 rebounds for La Porte High School. He was selected to the Indiana all-state team as a junior.

La Porte High School coach Joe Otis said Dolezal knew all along where he wanted to go.

"He wanted an opportunity to play as a freshman," Otis said, "and he thinks he'll be given that chance. All along, Nebraska was the kind of place he really wanted to go."

La Porte is ranked 14th in Indiana, where there are no class restrictions. La Porte ended its regular season with a 17-3 record, its best finish ever in its 40-year history.

Otis said rapport with Nebraska coach Danny Nee and assistant coach Lynn Mitchem allowed Dolezal to make a commitment to Nebraska.

"I think coaches Nee and Mitchem had a lot to do with it," Otis said. "He really developed a good relationship with Lynn. Also, Nee's success at Ohio where he turned the program around convinced him on

Nebraska.

"He's also had an attraction to play in the Big Eight and in a big-time basketball conference."

Otis said Dolezal, who was recruited by Toledo and Evansville, has the athletic ability to compete in the Big Eight.

"He's an excellent athlete," Otis said, "and it seems like the Big Eight is a conference full of great athletes. He fits the Big Eight mold."

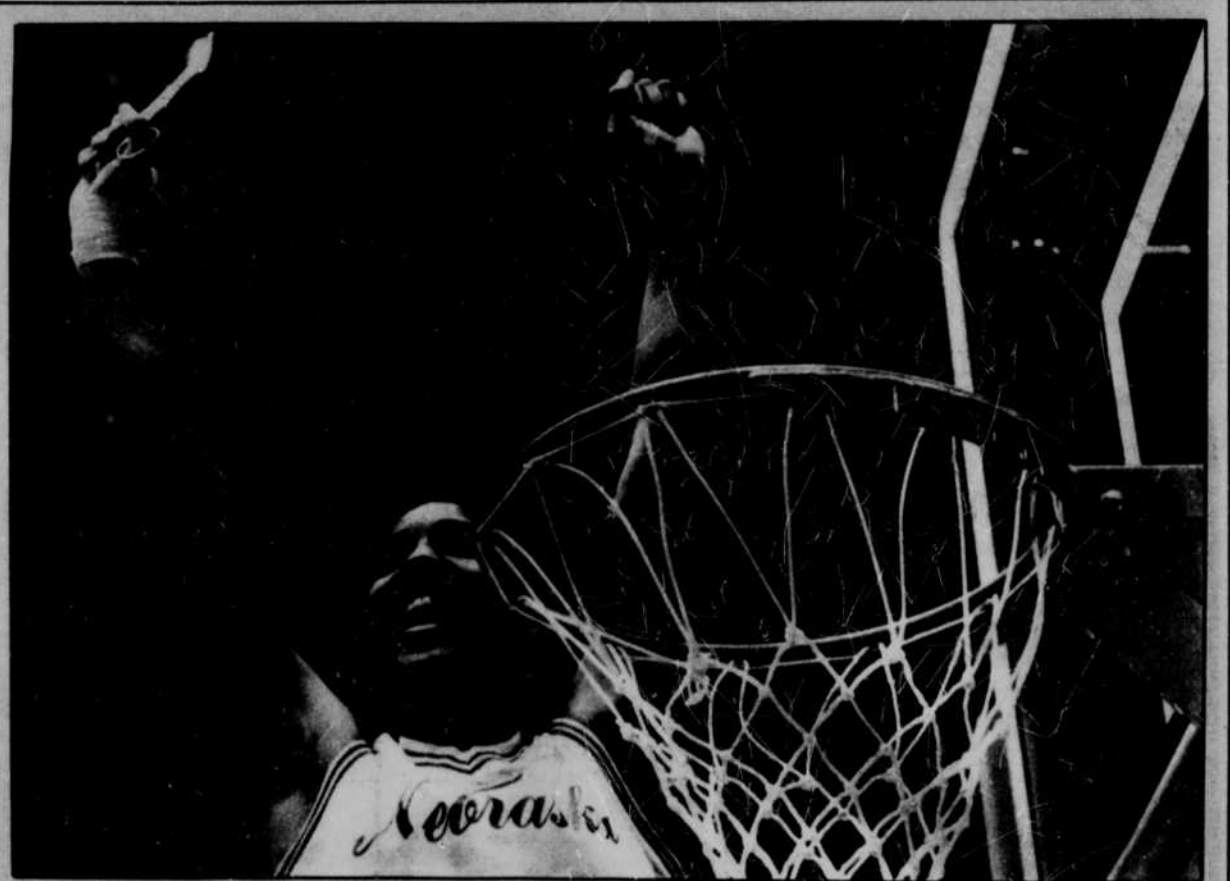
Otis said Dolezal, who also runs track and played football for La Porte during his sophomore year, will have an immediate impact on the Nebraska program. He said Dolezal will not be effected by the academic requirements set by Proposition 48 because he has a B-average.

Otis said Dolezal's hard work in the off-season will help him at Nebraska.

"He's a kind of kid that always does everything to improve in the off-season," Otis said. "He's also used to pressure. I don't think it'll take him long to adjust to the Big Eight."

Otis said Dolezal has been mentioned for Indiana's Mr. Basketball award, which goes to the state's outstanding prep player.

"He'll be in the running depending on how our team does in the state tournament," Otis said. "He has already been voted to a number of all-state teams, though."



Maurice Ivy celebrates after wrapping up a victory over Iowa State.

Ivy: Championship has a nice 'ring' to it

By Mark Derowitsch
Senior Reporter

Four years ago, Maurice Ivy had dreams of leaving Nebraska with a ring. But not just any ring.

Ivy wanted a Big Eight championship ring.

Saturday night, Ivy's dreams came true — the Nebraska women's basketball team won its first conference championship by defeating Iowa State 89-77 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Ivy, a senior from Omaha, said that when she came to Nebraska, her goal was to lead the Cornhuskers to the conference title.

"It took four years to do it, but we got it right now and it feels great," Ivy said.

Ivy scored 22 points to lead the Huskers, who ended their regular season with a 21-5 record overall and an 11-3 mark in the Big Eight. Nebraska coach Angela Beck

said she didn't know how Ivy would react to the Huskers' first conference crown.

"I was kind of worried about her trying to take everything into her own hands because she probably wants this title more than anybody," Beck said. "I thought she played a great game. She played great defense. I thought she really ignited us tonight."

"She was the spark we needed," Beck said her worries that the Huskers might be too emotional for the game were unfounded.

"I thought they handled everything well," she said. "The scene was set, the stage was set and we had to perform."

Iowa State coach Pam Wettig said Ivy was one of the differences in the game. Besides her 22 points, Ivy scored five steals and had nine rebounds.

"Ivy's a great player and her quickness has always been a fac-

tor," Wettig said.

Another Husker senior, Pam Fiene, said the championship compensates for the disappointing times in the past four years.

"This makes up for all the hard work, the bad times and the trying times," Fiene said. "I've completely forgotten about those bad things now."

Iowa State jumped out to a 5-2 lead early in the first half on a 10-foot jump shot by Etta Burns and free throws by Shelly Coyle and Tracy Horvath.

The Huskers took an 8-7 lead with 16:13 left in the first half on a layup by Ivy. They never trailed after that.

Beck said the Huskers' slow start was caused by Iowa State's full-court press. The press caused five Nebraska turnovers in the first four minutes. "We don't see that many

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