

Softball team will battle OU, OSU this weekend

By Mike Kluck
Staff Reporter

A battle between a thoroughbred and a bulldog will take place when Nebraska's softball team faces Oklahoma and Oklahoma State in a double round-robin tournament Saturday and Sunday in Norman, Okla.



Kremer

Nebraska coach Ron Wolforth said the No. 13-ranked Cornhuskers will encounter a "bulldog" when they face No. 4-ranked Oklahoma State at 10 a.m. Saturday. The 26-5 Cowgirls have been successful even though they are not quick and graceful, he said.

"They are really scrappy, and if they get you down, they can take a bite out of you," Wolforth said. "They have a tad bit of animosity on their team because they don't like whoever they play that day. They're like a pit bull because they will bite you and keep biting you until you bleed."

Wolforth said the 19-7 Huskers fit the description of a "thoroughbred" because they are graceful in all areas of play. He said Nebraska has the talent to win most games.

But Wolforth said he wishes the Huskers would act more like bulldogs when they need to play hard and scrappy to win.

He said Nebraska will be challenged by the Cowgirls because the Huskers and Oklahoma State are co-favorites to win the Big Eight championship.

Oklahoma State coach Sandy Fischer said that although her team expects a tough match against Nebraska, it will not stray from its usual aggressive game plan.

"I don't expect a different game from them," Fischer said. "It should be an equal match. We had a good recruiting year and have some equal talent. We're not doing anything different because we treat every game the same."

Wolforth said Nebraska and Oklahoma State are equally matched offensively, but the Huskers have a pitching advantage. Seniors Lori Sippel and Donna Dearthoff will pitch against the Cowgirls, he said.

"Oklahoma State has the basic people who get up and get after you," Wolforth said. "This is the most important series of the year until the Big Eight Tournament. These are our biggest four games all year long."

Fischer said Oklahoma State will

have an emotional advantage in the games, which will be the conference-opening contest for both teams.

"We have just missed the national tournament the last three years," Fischer said. "That has built up in the players' minds and keeps them going in the right direction."

"Right now we are just looking to play the best we can."

Oklahoma coach Michelle Thomas said she is also looking for her 13-16 Sooners to play the best they can. She said that although Oklahoma is considered the "sleepy" team in the tournament, the Sooners are hoping to surprise Nebraska.

"It could be a positive turning point in our season," Thomas said. "We feel we can come out of the round robin at .500. If we play good ball, we can play with anybody."

Wolforth said he knows the Sooners are the underdog in the tournament, but that they'll have a good chance of winning if they are in the game in the fifth, sixth and seventh innings.

Oklahoma hits the ball well but lacks defense and pitching, Wolforth said, and Nebraska needs to attack the ball early in hopes of winning the game.

"We need more of a killer instinct," Wolforth said. "The top five teams are separated from the top 15 teams by being the teams that are able to put their opponent away. We have to play every inning of every game."

Wolforth said Nebraska will have to play better than it did during its 2-1 and 4-2 victories against Eastern Illinois last Saturday at the Nebraska Softball Complex.

"If we play like we did against Eastern Illinois, we are going to get beat," Wolforth said. "We have to play as well as we can mentally. We need to be as intense as possible and play both teams well."

Wolforth said the Huskers will be aided by the return of shortstop Jane Kremer. Kremer, a junior from Lamotte, Iowa, missed most of the last two weeks of practice because she was home with her father, who has cancer.

Kremer said she is trying to separate her personal problems from her playing. She said it is critical that she focus on the games because Nebraska will receive a tough test from Oklahoma and Oklahoma State.

"We need to believe in our abilities, have some confidence and play together as a team," Kremer said. "Our main thing is to play together as a team."

Wolforth said Kremer will bring stability to the Nebraska lineup because she is an experienced shortstop.

Rodeo listed for weekend

Ten colleges from the upper Midwest will compete as teams and individuals in the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's 30th annual rodeo this weekend at the State Fair Park Coliseum.

Competition begins tonight at 7:30, with Saturday's action slated for 1:30 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday's afternoon session is a special kids' rodeo, with admission reduced to \$1 for children and \$2 for students.

Letter

Pennant forecast 'in left field'

I'm writing in response to Jeff Apel's prediction for the American League West pennant (Daily Nebraskan, April 5).

I'm not sure what type of sports fan Apel is, but he certainly cannot claim to be a student of baseball. His predictions are not remotely close to home. Not one of the major sports publications has predicted a finish similar to Apel's. About the only similarity between Apel's predictions and the other predictions is Oakland in first and Chicago in the cellar. I predict that Apel's accuracy average will be a lower average than Bo Jackson's batting average.

Take a second to look at your predictions, Apel. They are simply absurd. Kansas City is next to last place and 40 games out. Be serious. The Royals may lack some punch in their bats and may have a weak bullpen, but they ought to be good for at least a third-place finish (although I think they will challenge Oakland for

first). More generally, you have predicted that no one will finish closer than 11 games to Oakland. That's absolutely crazy. The A.L. West has never been dominated by a team to the degree that you predict Oakland will dominate in 1988. I'm not sure how to figure the finishes, but I seriously doubt that it is mathematically possible to have the A.L. West with teams that are all as far out as you have suggested. What happens in the A.L. East? Do they all finish within a half game of first? That's probably what would have happened to make your predictions come true. A scenario I doubt will develop (remember, the A.L. East has Cleveland).

Apel, I suggest that you do some homework — read what the experts are saying about the upcoming season. Your predictions are simply out in left field.

Michael K. Moore
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