

Drake Relays to test Husker track teams

By Kyle Schurman
Staff Reporter

A severe test will await the Nebraska track team when it sends 19 men and 17 women to the Drake Relays this weekend in Des Moines, Iowa.

Nebraska coach Gary Pepin said the relays will be a strong test for the Cornhuskers because many of the top athletes in the country compete in them. No team scoring will be kept at the competition.

"The (Drake Relays) is one of the premiere relay events in the country," Pepin said. "The competition will be very good. Our athletes are really looking forward to competing this weekend."

Nebraska assistant coach Jay Dirksen said the competition at the Drake Relays will be the best that the Huskers have faced all year.

"(The competition is) pretty stiff in most

cases," Dirksen said. "The athletes are of a much better quality than at the Kansas Relays and equal to if not better than at the Texas Relays. In every area the athlete will be severely tested."

Dirksen said more than 100 teams will compete at Drake. He said most schools only send their top athletes because the qualifying standards are difficult to attain and because of the stiff competition. Dirksen said Nebraska will have more athletes than most schools at the relays.

"This is the kind of meet that the teams only send their best people," Dirksen said. "The entries that we have there will be competitive."

Dirksen said that Drake limits the number of competitors for each running event, and one Husker, Juliet Prowse, who has already attained a NCAA qualifying mark in the 1,500-meter run, did not have a fast enough time to compete at Drake in the 1,500.

Nebraska's Dale Burrage will try to win the "triple crown" of the Midwest relays, Kansas, Texas and Drake, in the 400 hurdles. Burrage has already won the 400 hurdles at Kansas and Texas, and he could become the first Husker male to win the triple crown since 1947. One Husker woman and four Nebraska men have won the triple crown.

Dirksen said the Husker women will be led by Sharon Powell in the 800, Michelle Milling in the 400 and Linetta Wilson in the 400 hurdles.

"Up and down the line we'll have quality performers," Dirksen said.

Dirksen said Nebraska will be competitive in the relay events as well. He said the Nebraska men's 400 and 800 relay teams, who won at the Kansas Relays last weekend, will see some of their toughest competition of the year.

"They're going to see some teams from the South who are at least of equal ability," he said.

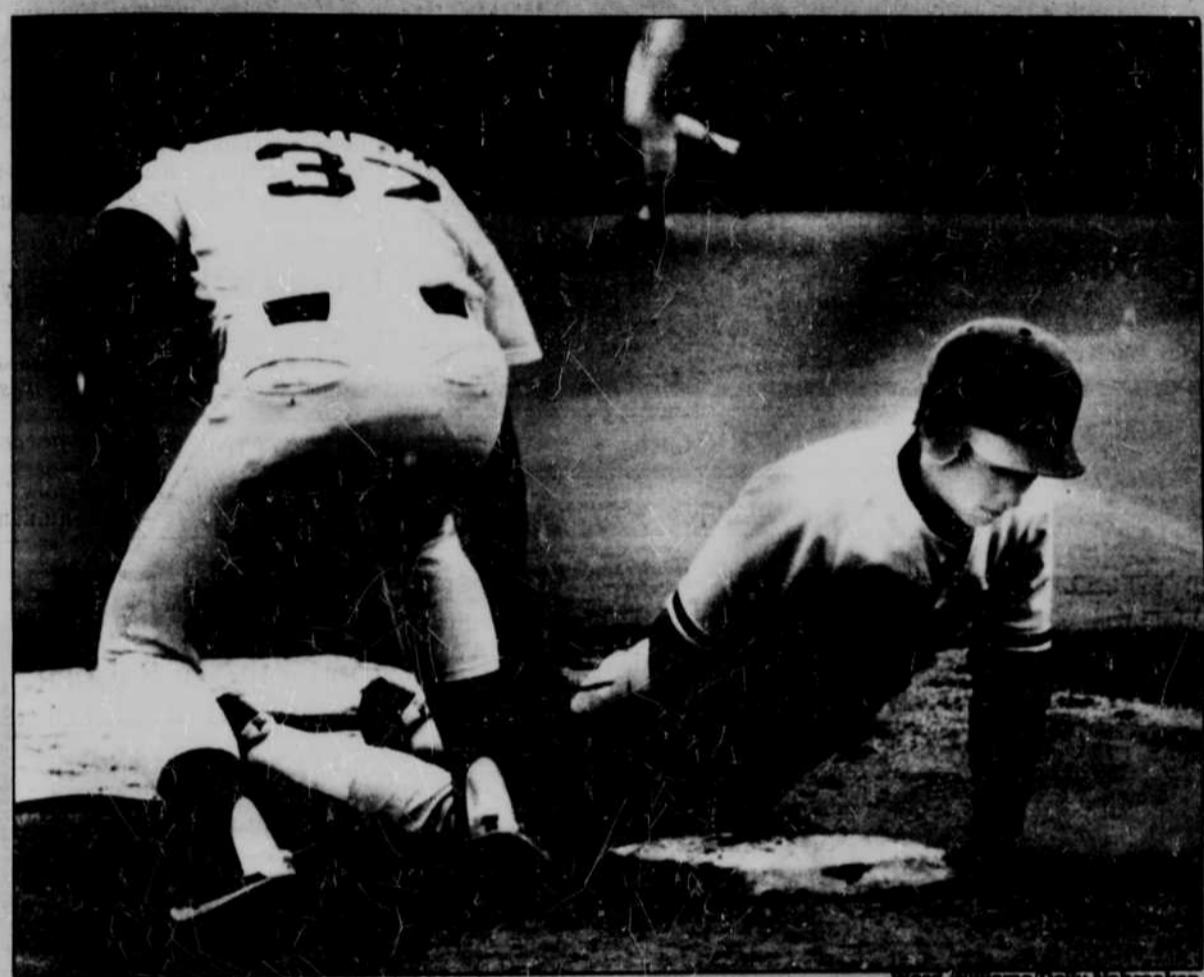
Although teams from across the United States will be at Drake, Dirksen said, Nebraska won't be able to get a preview of the type of competition it will see at the NCAA Championships.

"The focus is on the relay (events) at Drake, so it won't give too much of an indication to the NCAA meet overall," he said.

The Huskers will also participate in the Nebraska Intercollegiate meet Sunday at the Ed Weir Track. The Intercollegiate was rescheduled from April 9, when it was postponed because of cold weather.

Dirksen said the Huskers who go to Drake will not participate in the Intercollegiate, which is for all collegiate track athletes in the state. He said Nebraska will run a "number of athletes."

Teams from Doane, Concordia, Kearney State, Midland Lutheran, and Nebraska Wesleyan will join the Huskers on Sunday at the Intercollegiate.



Ward Williams/Daily Nebraskan

Northwest Missouri State's Steve Char dives to avoid a tag by Nebraska's Jeff Taylor.

Huskers to play No. 1-ranked OSU, hopes to gain ground on Cowboys

By Steve Sipple
Senior Reporter

Forget Oklahoma State's No. 1 ranking and its seven straight conference championships. Nebraska's baseball team has other things in mind entering its weekend series.

"It's a series where we can gain ground in the Big Eight," Nebraska coach John Sanders said. "It's not really a peak in the season — the whole Big Eight season is a peak and this game falls in the Big Eight. They're 12-0 and we're 7-5. We want to gain ground on them."

The Cornhuskers will get that chance when they play Oklahoma State in a four-game series starting Saturday at Buck Beltzer Field. The teams will play doubleheaders beginning at noon Saturday and 12:30 Sunday.

Oklahoma State, which has a 44-2 record, has been ranked No. 1 all season in the Collegiate Baseball/ESPN national Top 30. Nebraska, 40-13 overall, is fourth in the Big Eight entering the weekend series. Oklahoma is second at 9-3 and Missouri is third at 10-6.

"We'll take the series game by game," Sanders said. "We're just interested in going out and playing as well as we can play and hope some good things happen."

Sanders said good things have

been happening lately to Nebraska at Buck Beltzer Field. The Huskers' doubleheader sweep of Northern Iowa Wednesday increased their home win-streak to 23 games.

Oklahoma State coach Gary Ward said the Huskers' home field will help to make it difficult for his team to remain unbeaten in the conference.

"I think staying undefeated is highly unlikely," Ward said. "The nature of baseball makes that unlikely because you can't control variables. There's bad calls, there's line drives — just too many things you can't control."

Ward said he always looks forward to bringing his team to Lincoln.

"It's always an enjoyable place to play," Ward said. "They always have outstanding crowds. They've filled it (Buck Beltzer Field) the last two times we've been there."

Ward said that for the most part, the pressure is off the Big Eight's top four teams. He said the field for the Big Eight Tournament May 18-22 in Oklahoma City is virtually set. The top four regular season teams qualify for the conference tournament.

"I don't know how significant the order is," Ward said. "I think you'll have a lot of relaxed coaches and players right now."

But Ward said the weekend se-

ries will be indicative of what it will take to be successful in the Big Eight.

"Regardless of the outcome, it will leave an understanding of what it takes to win the Big Eight regular season title and the tournament," he said.

Sanders said Nebraska will use two left-handed and two right-handed pitchers against the Cowboys. Left-hander Pat Leinen and right-hander Rocky Johnson will start Saturday's games, he said.

Leinen has a 6-2 record with a 4.11 earned run average. Johnson is 1-3 with a 4.45 ERA this season.

On Sunday, John Lepley, a left-hander, will start the first game and right-hander Phil Goguen the second. Lepley is 7-2 this year with a 4.41 ERA and Goguen is 2-0 with a 4.88 ERA.

Goguen, who struggled early in the season, has earned his way back into the rotation with two straight strong outings, Sanders said.

Ward said he is undecided what his exact pitching rotation will be. He said right-handers Pat Hope, Tim Pugh and Tom Keffury and left-hander Mike Gardella will be the likely starters, but he didn't know in what order.

All University of Nebraska-Lincoln students with identification cards will be admitted free to each of the weekend games.

NU softball team attempts second-place Big 8 finish

By Mike Kluck
Staff Reporter

A final review of the Big Eight will occur this weekend for the Nebraska softball team.

The No. 11-ranked Cornhuskers will face Missouri at 10 a.m. Saturday and Kansas at 4 p.m. Sunday at the Nebraska Softball Complex.

Nebraska coach Ron Wolforth said the 29-15 Huskers must win three of the four games to secure a second-place conference finish. Oklahoma State, the conference leader, finished its Big Eight schedule with a 10-0 record while Nebraska is 4-2.

"We are No. 2 in the Big Eight race and it is important that we get the second seed in the tournament so we can get to Oklahoma State," Wolforth said. "Getting the second seed is a better place for us to be."

Wolforth said this weekend's games are also important because Nebraska needs to win them in order to have a chance at a return trip to the College World Series.

Wolforth said Kansas, which split a pair of games with Nebraska earlier this season, is capable of giving the Huskers trouble.

"Kansas is not a top-30 team, but they are a good solid team and very young," Wolforth said. "They are not quite there but are very capable of winning a game and giving us trouble."

"If they're in a game until the sixth or seventh inning they are going to hang on and we're going to have a tough time beating them."

Kansas' coach Kalum Haack said the Jayhawks' 2-0 defeat of Nebraska in April gave his team a boost and let them know they can play with the Huskers.

Haack said although the 32-26 Jayhawks aren't looking past Nebraska — they are more concerned about Iowa State. Kansas faces the

Cyclones at 2 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

"Statistically speaking, we must win against Iowa State because we want to finish third in the conference," said Haack, a former Nebraska assistant coach.

Haack said the Jayhawks must have good pitching and play strong defense to beat Nebraska. The Jayhawks' pitching staff is led by Roanna Brazier and Reenie Powell. Brazier, a sophomore, has compiled a 20-14 record and a .94 earned run average while Powell has a 10-9 record and a 2.36 ERA.

Haack said Kansas must also keep Nebraska runners off the bases. He said if the Huskers have a runner in scoring position, Kansas will intentionally walk shortstop Jane Kremer, who is hitting .375 and has 35 runners batted in.

"We want to make somebody who isn't the clutch player make the play," Haack said. "We want to make one of their other players come through. We don't want to let their game player have a chance at winning the game."

Wolforth said Missouri's 37-14 record overall and 2-4 mark in conference play is deceiving because the Tigers haven't faced any top-20 teams. He said the record has given Missouri confidence which it lacked last season while winning only 13 games.

"They haven't played anybody tough, but that has helped to get their confidence level up," Wolforth said. "Their kids believe in themselves, and in softball it is incredibly important to have a mental attitude in making a team."

Wolforth said he isn't as worried about the Huskers' opponents as he is about the Huskers.

"I am more concerned about us in getting good swings at the plate," Wolforth said. "We play every game against ourselves."

Chatwin boosts Huskers to win second game

By Mike Kluck
Staff Reporter

OMAHA — A chewing out session by Nebraska coach Ron Wolforth after a 2-1 loss to Creighton, 30-15, propelled the Cornhuskers to a 3-1 victory in the second game.

Wolforth said he is not accustomed to chewing out or yelling but thought it was needed after the 29-15 Husker's first game performance at Dill Field.

"I was irritable with the efforts in the first game," Wolforth said.

Wolforth said he was pleased with the effort of catcher Ruth Chatwin in the second game.

Chatwin, a junior from Melbourne, Australia, was 0-4 hitting in

the first game but was 3-4 in the second game while scoring twice and batting in the winning run.

"In the first game we didn't take care of business," Chatwin said. "In the second game we knew we had to have G and D (guts and determination) if we're going to make it."

Chatwin said she saw a turning point in the second game when the Huskers scored more than one extra run to win the game. She said she was also motivated by having her parents here from Melbourne to see the game.

"My dad saw me play two years ago, but this is the first time they have both been here together," Chatwin said. "Having them both here has put me on a high."

See NEBRASKA on 12