

Gymnastics coach excited for next year

By Lori Griffin
Staff Reporter

Records were broken in all categories for the Nebraska women's gymnastics team this season, and Cornhusker coach Rick Walton said he couldn't have asked for more — except a higher finish at the NCAA Championships.

Walton said Nebraska broke every individual and team record this season. He said gymnasts Crystal Savage, Jeaneane Smith and Michele Bryant broke the 38-point barrier in the all-around competition, while the

Huskers were also one of six teams to break the 190-point barrier in team competition.

Nebraska broke the team scoring record twice this season. The old mark of 187.40, which was set last season, was broken when the Huskers tallied 189.05 points in a triangular meet against California State-Fullerton and Arizona in Tucson, Ariz. Nebraska then broke the record a week later by scoring 190.10 points in a home dual meet against Missouri.

Nebraska also set team records in the vault with a 47.75 score, the uneven bars with 47.85, the balance

beam with 47.10 and the floor exercise with 47.95 points.

Bryant broke the individual vault record held by Savage and Smith with a 9.75 score against Missouri, and Savage broke Smith's record in the uneven bar competition with a 9.85 score. Smith broke the Nebraska all-around record set last year by Savage by tallying a 38.3 score.

Two Husker records were tied this season. Bryant, Smith and Savage all tied the record in the balance beam with a 9.55 score. Freshman Lisa McCrady tied Smith's record of 9.7 in the floor exercise.

Walton said Nebraska accomplished all of its goals this season and even exceeded some.

Walton said Nebraska's best performance came against Missouri. The Huskers hit 23 of 24 of their routines en route to breaking the 190-point barrier.

"When you have no mistakes and score over 190 points, you set yourself up for the best performance of the year," Walton said. "It would have been nice if it would have happened at a regional and a national championship, but you set yourself up for a goal to try and have more than one compe-

tion like that."

Walton said he was pleased with Nebraska's season this year. The Huskers captured their second-consecutive Big Eight title March 26 in Ames, Iowa.

Walton said Nebraska's success will benefit the team next season. He said he is excited about next year's schedule because it includes an invitational at the Bob Devaney Sports Center and meets against Utah and UCLA, who finished second and third at this year's NCAA Championships.

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Sipple reaches 1000th career strikeout

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those records were close at hand, so I wanted to get them if I could," Sipple said. "They were just icing on the cake."

Sipple, 19-7, struck out nine batters against Kansas and gave up three hits. She also hit a three run home run in the third inning, the third home run of her career.

Sipple pitched the final three innings of Nebraska's win over Missouri, striking out seven of the 10 batters she faced. She also hit a solo home run in the top of the seventh inning.

"It was just really an appropriate way for Lori Sipple to close out her regular season at home," Wolforth said.

Sipple and the other Nebraska players may get a chance to play at home again this season if the Huskers get to host a College World Series regional game, Wolforth said.

Sipple said that in order for Nebraska to accomplish that, the Huskers will need to play like they did this weekend.

"I'm real pleased with the last three games," she said. "We've gotten runs early so we couldn't coast, but we were in control."

Kansas coach Kalum Haack, a

former assistant coach at Nebraska who recruited Sipple, said he was impressed with Sipple's performance against the Jayhawks.

"I'm happy for her," he said. "She's one of the best kids I've ever coached."

Nebraska pitcher Donna Dear-dorff picked up wins against Kansas on Saturday and Missouri on Sunday to raise her record to 13-9.

Wolforth said that despite the loss to Missouri, the weekend overall was a success because Nebraska improved its record in the Big Eight Conference to 7-3, which gives the Huskers the No. 2 seed in the Big Eight tournament. The tournament is in Oklahoma City, Okla. May 6-8.

Nebraska will play Saturday against the winner of Friday's Iowa State-Oklahoma game.

Oklahoma State will be the top seed with a conference record of 10-0, including 6-0 and 1-0 victories over Nebraska. Sipple said the key to beating Oklahoma State in the tournament would be to score the first run of the game.

"I don't think anybody has gotten out there and scored early on them," she said.

Wolforth agreed that scoring early would be a key against Oklahoma State.

"There's nothing else we can do defensively and pitching wise against Oklahoma State," he said. "We have to hit the ball hard."

Wolforth said that run production shouldn't be a problem against any other Big Eight opponent except Oklahoma State.

"This team against Big Eight pitching, except Oklahoma State, should never be held to less than three runs," he said.

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