

UNL Campus Rec offers scuba lessons

By Mike Kluck
Staff Reporter

Although the best open water scuba diving area in Nebraska is over 300 miles from Lincoln, students at the University of Nebraska are still able to learn how to scuba dive.

A scuba class taught by "Big Mac" Scuba and Sail of Lincoln is being offered through UNL to students and Lincoln residents. The class is being sponsored by the Office of Campus Recreation.

Brent Johnson, an Advanced Open Water Instructor, said the class was set up in 1986 with "Big Mac" and

Campus Recreation and is controlled by the Campus Recreation Department.

Johnson said Lake McConaughy in Nebraska is the best area for open water diving but added that there are many other areas in Nebraska available for diving.

"Virtually anywhere there is water a person can dive," Johnson said.

Scuba diving has increased in popularity in Lincoln, Johnson said, because it isn't difficult to learn and a person can dive almost anywhere.

He said there are between 400 and 500 scuba divers in Lincoln and "Big Mac" has trained over 200 new divers

across Nebraska so far this year.

Johnson said the class is divided into a classroom and pool session two nights a week for three weeks. After that time students spend a weekend at Lake McConaughy where they take four to six open water dives under the supervision of an instructor.

He said "Big Mac" teaches students with many instructors at the beginning of the course but gradually cuts back on instructors as students become more accustomed to diving. Johnson said by the last dive the students dive on their own with one instructor on the shore.

"The program we have is a very

educational system," Johnson said. "It is an actual learning system where we will cover an aspect of diving five to seven times before actually diving."

Johnson said the program "Big Mac" teaches is sanctioned through Scuba Schools International. The program uses many different forms of multi-media equipment in the classroom, including video, lectures, textbooks and workbooks.

The program can be completed in sections, Johnson said.

"Because we have locations all over the world a person can complete the classroom part of the course here

but do their open water dive at one of our other stores," Johnson said.

Johnson said once students complete the course they are certified as an open water diver.

Although students are certified in open water diving, Johnson said it is still best to take an Environmental Orientation Dive if they want to dive in a different environment. He said an average scuba class at the University has around eight to 12 students.

The cost of the class is \$150 per person. Classes meet every Monday and Tuesday from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. at Mabel Lee pool. The sessions are July 4-19 and July 25-Aug. 9.

Coleman signs NU letter of intent

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of his, but you never want an individual with the potential to do something to be held back," Kostek said. "You don't want him to ask 'What if?' later in his life."

Playing football should not interfere with his progress in track, Coleman said. He plans to make steady progress at Nebraska, he said, but likes to keep his goals to himself.

One of the keys to making progress is good coaching, Coleman said. He said he learned the importance of coaching from his high school track coach, Scott Witt.

"You don't find people like him (Witt) anywhere," Coleman said. "A lot of people have the title of coach, but they don't really do anything. He deserves the name coach. A lot of times I'd call him at night and say 'Let's go out and throw.' He has a wife and family, but he'd always come out."

Coleman said that he started throwing the shot put in 7th grade, but his coach didn't teach him the proper form. He said he didn't begin throwing properly until Witt began coaching him his sophomore year of high

school.

As a freshman Coleman threw the shot put 48 feet. That increased to 54 feet his sophomore year, 59 feet as a junior, and to 66 feet this year.

Kostek said that Coleman "exploded on to the scene" when he switched from the rotational technique to the glide technique. Kostek said he is unsure which technique Coleman will use at Nebraska, but he hopes a decision will be made this fall and that Coleman will use the same technique his whole career.

Coleman also throws the discus, and finished third in the state this season with a throw of 173-11. He will throw the shot put, discus, and possibly the hammer and the javelin at Nebraska, he said.

The college shot put and discus are bigger than those used in high school, but Coleman doesn't think that will be a problem for him. In fact, he said it

will help his discus throw.

The high school discus "is a toy for me," Coleman said. "I feel much more at ease with the college discus, and I'm already throwing it 175."

Switching to the college discus, which is about one pound heavier than the high school discus, usually causes an athlete to lose 15 to 20 feet a throw, Kostek said. However, he said that because of Coleman's size the switch would not be as difficult for him.

Coleman said he is keeping busy this summer by competing in track tournaments. He won the shot put throw at the Golden West Tournament in Sacramento, Calif., despite having to throw almost immediately after getting off the plane. He finished second in the shot put at the Keebler Invitational in Chicago with a throw of 63 feet, which disappointed him.

"That was a very bad throw," he said.

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