

Problems plague Sooner gymnastics team

By Mike O'Malley
Staff Reporter

Hard times that have fallen on the Oklahoma football team have also plagued the Sooner men's gymnastics squad.

Oklahoma, which was once a powerful foe with talented gymnasts like Olympic gold medalist Bart Conner, will not bring a full team to Sunday's triangular meet against Nebraska and Iowa State.

The Nebraska men's meet will be preceded by a women's competition that pits the Huskers against UCLA and Michigan State in the Masters Classic. That meet begins at 2 p.m. at the Sports Center.

Oklahoma men's gymnastics coach Greg Buwick said the Sooners' problems center around five gymnasts who will not be competing because of various reasons. Those gymnasts include Kevin Crumley, who will miss the meet with a back injury, Carlos Sabino, who is sitting out after being granted a hardship year, Matt Harvey and Scott South, who were both declared academically ineligible. In addition, Jeff Lutz -- the team's top all-around competitor -- quit the team after suffering a career-ending wrist injury.

The Oklahoma football program has also lost several players recently, as quarterback Charles Thompson was suspended from the team after

allegedly selling 17 grams of cocaine to an undercover FBI agent. Three players -- Glen Bell, Nigel Clay and Bernard Hall -- were suspended after being arrested for an alleged rape, while another -- defensive back Jerry Parks -- was suspended for allegedly shooting teammate Zarak Peters following an argument.

"We'll be bringing individuals because we don't have enough people to have a full team," Buwick said. "We approach the competition more for our individuals to do well, instead of working as a team."

Nebraska men's gymnastics coach Francis Allen said he had high hopes for the Sooners before the loss of the gymnasts. He described the loss as "devastating."

Oklahoma's top individuals are Tom Vaughn, a two-time All-American, and veterans Brian Harstad and Jarret Hanks.

Allen said Nebraska will concentrate on improving its score against Oklahoma and Iowa State. The No. 2-ranked Huskers have been averaging 277.38 points per meet, while top-ranked Ohio State has a 277.72 average.

"We'll be going out trying to break 280, which no team has done this year," Allen said.

Nebraska's Mark Warburton said a 280 score will be tough to reach this season.

"The scores always drop the year

after the Olympics because there are new scoring rules," Warburton said. "It usually takes three years to get used to the new rules and maximize your scores."

Nebraska's Bob Stelter said that score will also be tough to reach because the depth of this year's team doesn't match up to last year's squad that captured the national championship. He said the graduation loss of All-Americans Tom Schlesinger and Kevin Davis has hurt Nebraska's team.

"Going into UCLA, we didn't know what to expect because we are lacking the guys this year," he said. "This year, we have six all-arounders. Last year, when we had eight, we could decide who was the best on each event. We can't do that this year."

Allen said a back spasm that has hampered Ted Dimas won't make the depth situation any easier.

"Dimas is still hurting," Allen said. "I don't think he'll improve this week. Right now it doesn't look like he'll compete, but he's a tough kid. He'll probably find some way to compete Sunday."

The Nebraska men's meet will be preceded by a women's competition that pits the Huskers against UCLA and Michigan State in the Masters Classic. That meet begins at 2 p.m. at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.



Allen Scheben/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska's Ted Dimas competes on the parallel bars.

Husker 'radiates leadership,' Sanders says

By Jerry Guenther
Staff Reporter

Nebraska outfielder Bobby Benjamin drew cheers and praise while playing for the United States Baseball Federation Winter Olympic Team, but was a target of distrust off the field.

Benjamin said he has mixed emotions about his experience at the Kaohsiung (Taiwan) International Harbor Baseball Tournament because of the different ways he was treated. He said the Taiwanese fans cheered Team USA for outstanding



Benjamin

plays on the field, but did not treat the players as nice off of it.

"It was fun, but it was different," Benjamin said. "The people were pretty mean to you. They didn't trust you."

Benjamin led Team USA to a 7-1 record and a subsequent 2nd-place finish by recording a team-high .720 batting percentage and hitting two home runs.

Benjamin said he spent a lot of his free time shopping while he was in Taiwan. But, he said, he didn't try many foreign foods.

"They tried to set it up for us where we would eat food that we'd like," Benjamin said. "But that didn't work out too well."

Instead, Benjamin said, the team

members usually ate at McDonalds, Pizza Hut and Wendy's.

"We had plenty of free time," Benjamin said. "They let us do about anything we wanted."

Benjamin said he enjoyed getting to know different players on Team USA. He said he became close friends with Seton Hall's Maurice Vaughn.

Team USA coach Charlie Greene said Vaughn and Benjamin were "the best two long ball hitters on the team." Greene, the baseball coach at Miami Dade Community College South in Miami, Fla., said Benjamin has "plus power" on a major-league scale.

Greene said Benjamin's home runs helped rally Team USA to a pair

of victories. Team USA competed against squads from Taiwan, Mexico, Japan, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic.

'The key for Bobby or anyone out to improve is to re-commit to excellence.' --Sanders

As a freshman last season at Nebraska, Benjamin led the nation with 91 walks while hitting .288. He also drove in a team-high 78 runs while hitting a school-record 21 home runs.

This season, Benjamin said he hopes to improve his batting average while cutting down on his strikeouts.

Nebraska baseball coach John Sanders said he plans to use Benjamin as the 4th-place hitter in the starting lineup.


"He'll be hitting in a very important spot in the lineup," Sanders said, "and so he will be asked to show leadership on the field."

"His very presence radiates leadership."

Sanders said Benjamin has been successful because he has good work ethics.

"The key for Bobby or anyone out to improve is to recommit to excellence," Sanders said. "Bobby has shown he is very willing to do that."

Husker women are pre-meet favorite



1989 Big Eight Conference

FRIDAY TIME SCHEDULE

WOMEN'S EVENTS 9:30 A.M. - 4:55 P.M.		MEN'S EVENTS 6:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.	
PENTATHLON	9:30	60-Meter Hurdles	PRELIMS
	10:05	High Jump	
	11:50	Shot Put	
	1:00	Long Jump	
	*Conclusion 800-Meter Run		
	2:25	Mile Run	
	3:10	55-Meter Dash	
	3:15	Long Jump (prelims & finals)	
	3:25	600-Yard Run	
	3:40	400-Meter Dash	
3:55	55-Meter Hurdles		
4:10	1,000-Meter Run		
4:25	800-Meter Run		
4:40	200-Meter Dash		
4:55	5,000 Meter Run (finals)		

SATURDAY TIME SCHEDULE

WOMEN'S EVENTS		MEN'S EVENTS	
1:30	Shot Put (prelims & finals)	1:30	Pole Vault (prelims & finals)
1:30	Triple Jump (prelims & finals)	1:30	High Jump (prelims & finals)
2:10	Distance Medley Relay (finals)	2:25	Distance Medley Relay (finals)
2:40	Mile Run (finals)	2:50	Mile Run (finals)
3:00	55-Meter Dash (finals)	3:05	55-Meter Dash (finals)
3:15	600-Yard Run (finals)	3:20	600-Yard Run (finals)
3:30	High Jump (prelims & finals)	3:30	Shot Put (prelims & finals)
3:30	400-Meter Dash (finals)	3:30	Triple Jump (prelims & finals)
3:45	55-Meter Hurdles (finals)	3:35	400-Meter Dash (finals)
4:00	1,000 Meter Run (finals)	3:55	55-Meter Hurdles (finals)
4:10	800-Meter Run (finals)	4:05	1,000-Meter Run (finals)
4:20	200-Meter Dash (finals)	4:15	800-Meter Run (finals)
4:30	3,000-Meter Run (finals)	4:25	200-Meter Dash (finals)
5:00	4x400-Meter Relay (finals)	4:45	3,000-Meter Run (finals)
		5:10	4x400-Meter Relay (finals)

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"I think we have a good chance to win. That doesn't mean we will. It's going to take a really good team effort," he said. "It's going to be difficult and I expect a very tough meet."

Pepin said Nebraska will be healthy for the meet.

"The most pleasing fact heading into this weekend is that for the first time this year we'll have our full team ready to go," Pepin said. "We've been struck with injuries, a lot of flu and sickness. Hopefully, we're over that now. That should make a big difference."

The defending men's Big Eight champions who will compete in this year's meet include Nebraska's Frank Graham in the mile, Kansas State's Jeff Reynolds in the 600, and Colorado's Kyle Hargett and Mike Macinko. Hargett is the defending Big Eight champion in the 400, while Macinko will defend his title in the 800.

Nebraska's Regis Humphrey, who won the 880 title at the 1987 indoor meet, will also compete.

The defending women's Big Eight champions who will compete include Nebraska's Toyia Barnes in the shot put, Renita Robinson in the triple jump, and Lincetta Wilson in the 400. The additional defending conference champions include Colorado's Chris McNamara in the mile, Missouri's Natasha Kaiser and Teri LeBlanc in the 300 and pentathlon, Kansas State's Kim Kilpatrick in the 55-meter hurdles, Iowa State's Edith Nakiyngi and Maria Akraka in the 1,000 and 800-meter runs and Oklahoma State's Jackie Goodman in the 3,000 and 5,000.

John Bruce/Daily Nebraskan



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