

Huppert excitedly eyes next year's season

By Jeff Apel
Senior Editor

Nebraska women's swimming coach Ray Huppert has turned his attention toward next season after seeing the Cornhuskers earn a 29th-place finish at the NCAA swimming and diving championships.

Huppert said he is excited about next season because Nebraska loses only one diver and one swimmer from this year's team which finished 5-7. He said his excitement has pushed his enthusiasm to its highest level during his 14-year Husker coaching career.

"I've already got the wheels burning about next season," Huppert said. "With our freshman class a year ago, the people we have coming back and who we're recruiting, we're going to have a lot of talent."

Huppert said that talent was still too young to be a team factor at the NCAA championships this weekend in Indianapolis. Nebraska



May

earned its 29th-place finish by tallying 16 points, 12 of which were recorded when senior Julie May finished 5th in the 1-meter diving competition.

Stanford overcame an early deficit to win the meet with 610 1/2 points followed by Texas with 547, Florida with 536, Tennessee with 258 1/2 and California with 234. Kansas, which edged Nebraska for this year's Big Eight title, finished in 26th place with 27 points, while Iowa State tied West Virginia for 41st place with one point.

Conference rival Missouri failed to score. Huppert said he was not disappointed with Nebraska's performance even though the Huskers wanted to earn a top-20 finish. He said the only aspect he was disappointed about was Nebraska not having a second chance to swim in four of its events.

The top 16 finishers in each of the three-day competition's events were included in the finals. Individuals or relays who failed to finish among the top 16 were listed as alternates, meaning they would swim only if a qualifying team or individual scratched.

"It's disappointing, but our kids gave a real strong effort," Huppert said. "They swam

their hearts out."

In addition to May, who earned All-America status with her 5th-place finish in the 1-meter diving competition, Nebraska's 400-yard medley relay team of Carole Johnson, Kristen Neuenfeldt, Jenell Garcia and Mindy Matheny earned honorable-mention All-America honors by finishing 16th.

Individuals or relays who finish among the top eight finishers earn All-America honors, while those who finish 9th through 16th are named honorable-mention All-Americans.

Nebraska's 200 medley relay team of Johnson, Neuenfeldt, Garcia and Lynne Braddock narrowly missed All-American status, as it finished 17th. The Huskers' 200 freestyle relay team of Braddock, Neuenfeldt, Johnson and Matheny finished 18th.

Braddock also finished 21st in the 50 freestyle and 42nd in the 100 freestyle. May finished 23rd in the tower diving competition, while Amy Aarsen finished 21st in both the tower and 3-meter diving events.

Huppert said all of the Nebraska athletes performed well.

"I won't allow them to hang their heads," he said.

Huppert said he was surprised Stanford won this year's title. He said the Cardinals trailed Texas after the first day of competition on Thursday, but used a late rally to overtake the Longhorns.

"It caught a lot of people by surprise," Huppert said. "The way everybody picked the teams, they picked Florida as the heavy favorite. But Stanford was way too strong."

Nebraska's next competition is on Tuesday, when the Huskers compete in the U.S. Senior National Championships in Chapel Hill, N.C.

Huppert said Allison Barker, Terri Long and Kelly Fox will join Braddock, Neuenfeldt, Garcia and Matheny at the five-day competition. Barker will compete in the 100 and 200 butterfly, while Long will compete in the 200 breaststroke. Fox will compete in the 400 individual medley.

Huppert said the senior nationals will give him an opportunity to see how Braddock, Neuenfeldt, Garcia and Matheny perform with little rest. He said he expects Barker, Long and Fox to turn in impressive performances because they will be rested.

NU sophomores gain All-America status

By Steve Sipple
Staff Reporter

Nebraska, led by All-America performances by a pair of sophomores, finished 17th Saturday at the NCAA wrestling championships in Oklahoma City.

The Cornhuskers finished 39th at last season's meet, winning just four matches. This season, they won 23 matches and 126-pound Jason Kelber and 167-pound Scott Chenoweth became the youngest Nebraska wrestlers ever to gain All-America status.

"We definitely took a step forward," Nebraska coach Tim Neumann said Sunday. "I feel good when I compare last year to this year and think about next year. (Next year) we'll have one or two wrestlers in the finals and we'll place four or five. I'm not afraid to say that."

Player says NU is ready for second-chance game

By Nick Hodge
Senior Reporter

It doesn't matter whether the term pride or revenge is used -- the Nebraska men's basketball team knows it must play better than the first time it faced Ohio State.

Nebraska forward Pete Manning said the Cornhuskers realize they must improve their execution when they face Ohio State Monday for the second time this season. Nebraska committed a season-high 30 turnovers in dropping a 103-76 decision to Ohio State earlier this season in Columbus, Ohio.

"We weren't ready to play before," said Manning, who led the Huskers with 17 points in Nebraska's first meeting against Ohio State. "If anything, it should make us play better. We have it on our minds that we have to go back and try to get a win."

Nebraska will have a chance to redeem itself when it makes its second appearance of the season at St. John Arena in the second round of the National Invitational Tournament. Tip-off is set for 7 p.m.

The Huskers earned the right to face Ohio State by defeating Arkansas State 81-79 Thursday night in the first round of the NIT. Ohio State, 18-14, beat Akron 81-70 Wednesday night in St. John Arena.

Manning said Nebraska was surprised when it learned that its second-round game would not be staged at the Bob Devaney Sports Center. "We were down a little bit after we heard because the Nebraska fans help us with giving us momentum going into the games," Manning

Nebraska scored 28 points. Big Eight-rival Oklahoma State won the title with 91 1/2 points.

Neumann said his optimism for next year was buoyed by the performances of Kelber, of Albion, Iowa, and Chenoweth, of Perry, Okla.

Kelber assured himself of All-America status Friday with a 5-0 win against Ahmed El-Sokkary of California-Bakersfield. He then lost two matches Saturday -- 1-0 in overtime to defending national champion Jim Martin of Penn State and 5-3 to Peter Gonzalez of Montclair State in a fifth-place match.

Against Martin, Kelber was called for stalling with 15 seconds remaining, giving Martin the only point he needed.

"Kelber wrestled his best tournament of the whole year," Neumann

said.

Chenoweth clinched All-America honors Friday with a 6-4 win against two-time All-America John Hefferman of Iowa before losing to Syracuse's Jason Morris 7-2 in the consolation quarterfinals. He was decided 6-3 by Dan Niebuhr of Fresno State Saturday in a match for seventh-place.

A top eight finish denotes All-America status.

Kelber, who finished the season 33-13, became the first Husker 126-pound wrestler to earn All-America honors.

Chenoweth finished 27-12-2, with eight of his losses coming to All-Americans.

Nebraska's last sophomore to gain All-America status was heavyweight Gary Albright, who finished second

in 1984.

Neumann said it was a rugged NCAA meet, but that his team hung tough.

"Everybody I talked to at the meet said Nebraska has really improved -- from parents of the kids, other wrestlers, officials and coaches," he said. "During the meet, I'd look up and every guy is limping, they're all beat up with black eyes. Honest to God, guys were coming off the mat limping and bleeding."

"But when it came time to wrestle they blocked it all out. It was a special experience for each coach and each wrestler. It was real neat."

Oklahoma State's first-place finish was good for the conference but possibly bad for Nebraska, Neumann said. Nebraska is currently in a head-to-head recruiting battle with the

Cowboys for two high school standouts. But Neumann said he was impressed with the Big Eight's finish at the meet.

Iowa State, led by championships from 150-pound Tim Krieger and 190-pound Eric Voelker, finished third with 63 points. Oklahoma was fourth with 61 points.

Nebraska was 11 3/4 points from a top-10 finish.

"It was a great, great performance," Neumann said. "Everybody wrestled as well as they had their entire life."

Neumann said he will now turn his attention toward the April 12 national letter-of-intent signing date. Neumann said he will leave Tuesday for trips to Oklahoma, Iowa and Minnesota to pursue prospects.

Huskers' enemy will lack leader

Nebraska's greatest enemy will not be present when the Cornhuskers face Ohio State tonight in the second round of the National Invitation Tournament.

Ohio State guard Jay Burson, who burned the Cornhuskers for 48 points during the teams' last two meetings, will miss the game with a neck injury. Burson's season ended Feb. 13 when he fractured a vertebra in his neck after crashing to the floor against Iowa.

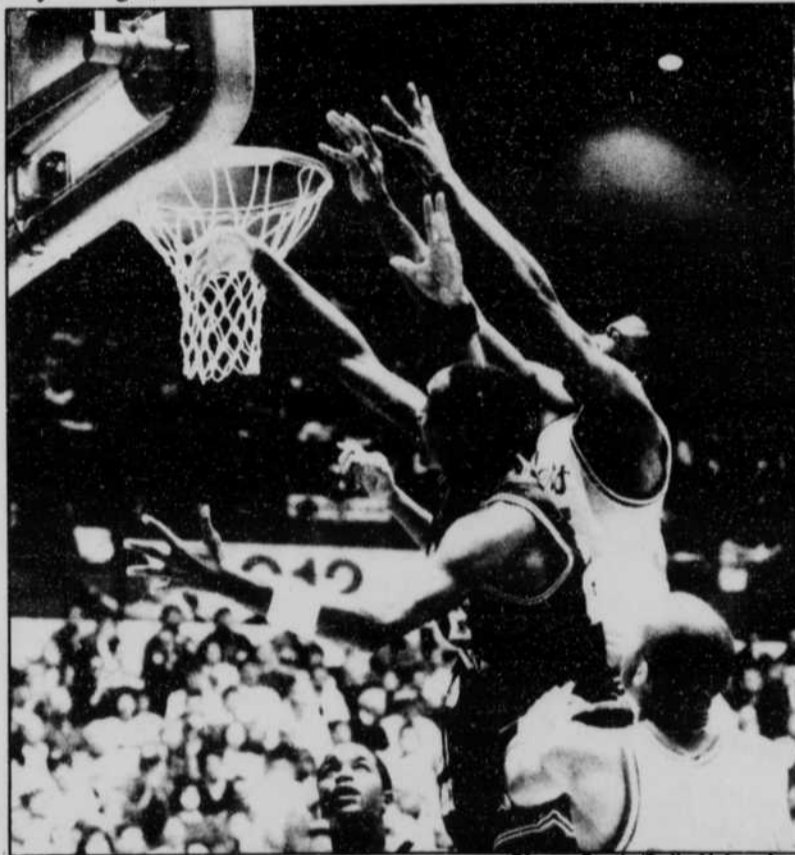


Burson was lucky. The injury could have left him paralyzed, but instead it will require him to wear a head brace that will immobilize his neck so the bones can heal. He then will be required to perform a number of exercises to build his neck muscles back up to the point where they once were.

Without Burson, the Buckeyes are not the same team. They lack poise, leadership and the all-important 22.1 points per game the senior guard supplied. They also lack the driving, slashing antics of a 6-foot guard who gave new hope to every mediocre basketball player in the country.

That's not to say Ohio State isn't a good team. The Buckeyes still have an arsenal that includes 6-8 Perry Carter, 6-5 Jerry Francis and 6-11 Grady Mateen. If Mateen would not

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Shaun Sartin/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska forward Pete Manning battles for a rebound during the Cornhuskers' 81-79 victory against Arkansas State.

a 22.1 points per game average. He was also a candidate for Big Ten Player of the Year before the injury ended his season.

Manning said Burson's absence has more effect on the Buckeyes than on Nebraska.

"For them, it does because they depended on him as a leader and team player," Manning said. "They're down because of it."

Manning said Ohio State has other players besides Burson that concern the Huskers.

"They always play tough inside,"

said.

Manning said the Huskers need to put their road troubles behind them and learn from their past mistakes. Nebraska has compiled a 3-11 road record this season, including a 1-2 mark at neutral sites.

Nebraska's two road wins this season were by a total of three points. The first came at Texas Tech, when the Huskers defeated the Red Raiders 71-69. The other came at the Chaminade New Year's Classic in Honolulu, Hawaii, when Nebraska defeated Chaminade 86-85.

Manning said the Huskers must adjust to the unfriendly atmosphere of St. John Arena if they want to advance to the NIT's third round.

"We seem to be way too tense on the road," Manning said. "We have to try and be looser than before when they beat us. We just have to play with stronger nerves on the road."

Manning said the Huskers will have an advantage entering the game because they have already played in Columbus.

"We've been there before which should help us," Manning said. "We're going in with the attitude that we have to win and are expecting to win."

One personnel change in the Buckeye lineup will provide the Huskers with a different look than the first meeting.

Ohio State point guard Jay Burson suffered a fractured neck vertebra after he crashed to the floor while attempting a layup against Iowa.

Burson, who scored 20 points against Nebraska earlier this season, was Ohio State's leading scorer with