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in brief
SPORTS

Men gymnasts win title, lose athletes

The Nebraska men's gymnastics team's team title at the Big Eight Invitational proved to be a costly one, as two Huskers suffered injuries.

Nebraska coach Francis Allen said Trent Dimas and Josh Saegert both suffered injuries during last weekend's title meet at the Sports Center that could keep them out until January. Dimas suffered a pulled muscle in his neck, while Saegert underwent surgery after breaking a knuckle in his hand.

Despite the injuries, Nebraska still easily captured the team title in its season-opening competition. The Huskers scored 272 points, while Oklahoma finished second with 264.90.

Iowa State was third with an average of 257.10, and Air Force was fourth with 250.

"I was pretty happy that we scored as well as we did without a full team," he said. "Those two injuries could have cost us a lot of points, but we won anyway."

PLEASED from Page 5

Nee said he thought stress began to take its toll on the Athletes in Action in the second half. The Athletes in Action were playing their 11th game in 13 days.

"Athletes in Action was a little off their game," he said. "Once fatigue set in, it was just a matter of time. You can see they've played a lot of games.

"When we got any leads or any spurts, I simply saw fatigue on their part."

Husker coaches added to the Athletes in Action's problems by using reserve players more frequently than they did against the Brisbane Bullets, whom Nebraska played last week.

Nebraska's reserves combined for 38 points and 21 rebounds. Guard Chris Cresswell and forward Ray Richardson scored 17 and 10 points, respectively.

"We played more people because more people practiced harder during the week," Nee said.

Nee said he was pleased with the improvements and progress he saw in practice during the week.

"I felt we got better," he said. "A lot of guys got over the jitters. Other guys might still have them, but I think we're going in the right direction."

Nee said Nebraska looked ready for its Saturday season opener against Missouri-Kansas City.

"The two exhibitions really helped," he said. "With Thanksgiving, we've got four days to get ready, so I think we'll be OK."

WAKE UP from Page 5

those victories, if one can get a true sense of anything from those matches.

To borrow a term several players have said this season, the team needs to become more "mentally focused" and put the team's goal back into perspective.

Nebraska has played 26 matches this season -- several against high-caliber teams -- all geared toward one goal, to reach the Final Four.

That's still within the realm of possibility but it's going to take a more conscious effort than what's been displayed lately.

Again the Huskers have to be hungry, only this time no second chances.

At the beginning of the season a player made a reference that this year is now or never.

There is no more tomorrow. Now is here.

Fowler is a junior news-editorial major and is a Daily Nebraskan sports reporter and columnist.

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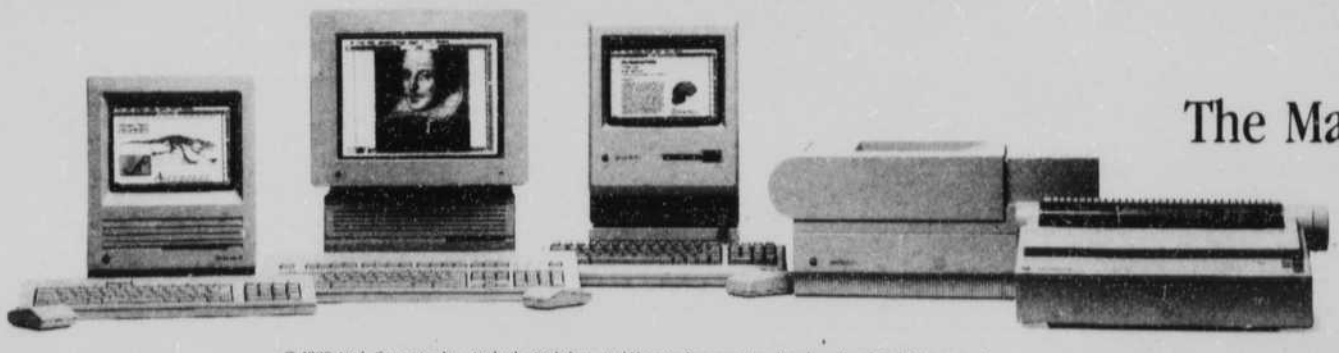

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