

Nebraska wrestling team places third

By Chuck Green
Senior Reporter

The biggest wrestling tournament so far this season produced "the best weekend of wrestling Nebraska has ever had," according to Cornhusker coach Tim Neumann.

Nebraska, ranked No. 5 by Amateur Wrestling News, finished third in the 42-team tournament in Las Vegas, and five Huskers placed in the top six in their weight classes.

"Going into the meet, our goal was to finish in the top five," Neumann said. "But we honestly thought that if our kids wrestled well, we could get in the top three."

Jason Kelber wrestled well

enough to win the 126-pound weight class, beating Oklahoma State's Kendall Cross 4-2 for the championship. Kelber never had beaten Cross.

Joe Malecek won the heavyweight division, defeating Indiana's Scott Holman 5-1.

At 167, Scott Chenoweth lost to Arizona State's Dan St. John -- the defending national champion -- 3-1 to take second.

Chris Nelson defeated two ranked wrestlers before finishing fourth at 190, and Corey Olson was sixth at 177.

Eight of 10 Nebraska starters advanced to the quarterfinals in the tournament.

Neumann said three other Huskers

-- Dave Droegemeuller (134), Layne Billings (142) and Paul Herrera (150) -- "were a move or a couple of moves away from placing" this weekend. All three were beaten in the quarterfinals.

"You never know this early in the season how well your team will perform at a meet like this," he said. "If those four kids would have wrestled back, we would have been right on Oklahoma State's heels for second."

Arizona State won the meet with a 140.5 score, and Oklahoma State was second with 129.25. Indiana and Iowa State rounded out the top five, behind Nebraska.

Oklahoma finished 11th.

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"From the films I've seen, they look good," he said. "They're well-coached. Molinari's doing a nice job."

Northern Illinois is 2-0 at home this season, while the Huskers' losses have been road setbacks against Miami of Ohio and Michigan State.

Nee said the Huskers are in for a difficult but win-able contest against Northern Illinois.

"They're a good team," he said. "They have experience and they have the home-court advantage."

The experience begins with the players who run the show for Northern Illinois.

The Huskies return all five starters from last year's team. Northern Illinois is led by Stacy Arrington and Donald Whiteside, a pair of junior

guards who average a combined 22 points per game.

Nee said the Huskies' guard tandem makes their inside game potent even though it will be giving up nine inches to Nebraska. Northern Illinois' post game includes forward Donnell Thomas, a 6-foot-4 junior who averages 19.5 points and six rebounds per game.

In addition to Thomas, Northern Illinois' inside attack includes Randy Fens, a 6-8 freshman center who averages 8.3 points, and Antwon Harmon, a 6-7 junior forward who averages 9.8 points per contest.

The Huskies' remaining returning starter is 6-7 Andrew Wells, who became the team's sixth man after suffering a concussion in Northern Illinois' first game. In three games, Wells is averaging 27 minutes, six points and nine rebounds while coming off the bench.

The Huskies are ready for their third game away from the Bob Devaney Sports Center this season, Nee said.

"I think this trip should help us,"

he said. "Now that we have five games under our belts, our new players are going to have a better feel for what it's like to be on the road."

Nee said his squad did not hurt itself by defeating Harvard and Pepperdine en route to winning the Ameritas Classic.

"Winning helps build confidence," Nee said.

Nee said two Nebraska players are especially excited about the trip. Those players are junior guard Clifford Scales and sophomore forward Carl Hayes, who hail from Westchester (Ill.) St. Joseph High School.

Westchester is located 58 miles from DeKalb.

Northern Illinois will have a weapon to counteract Hayes' and Scales' homecoming advantage. That weapon is James Schraut, a 6-4, 190-pound freshman.

Schraut began the season as the Huskies' student manager, but was issued No. 24 after injuries at the beginning of the season reduced Northern Illinois' roster to nine players.

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how the Buffs stack up against other teams this season.

But in the world of college football, a guess is worth just about everything.

It's a simple, textbook example of a program hitting the big time too fast for its own good. The fans and media don't know what they're doing. The team is good, but the tradition isn't there.

It's wonderful that Colorado's fans now have a football team to be proud of. It's good for the Big Eight and college football in general. But as every Husker fan knows all too well, getting your hopes up too high makes for a long and crummy winter.

Will Colorado's success last? What happens next season, when the Buffs lose 10 of their 22 starters?

Next year, Colorado opens its schedule with Stanford, then has road games against Illinois and Texas, before returning to Boulder, Colo., for a date with Washington. The Buffs also face Nebraska in Lincoln. Yikes!

Colorado's team won't fall off the face of the earth next year, but a 7-4 record is possible... even probable.

The emotion from Sal's death will have subsided by then (hopefully) and teams Colorado beat this year will be waiting anxiously for September to come.

Here's hoping Ralphie III, the team's mascot, isn't diagnosed of cancer this spring. We'll never hear the end of it.

Green is a news-editorial major, a Daily Nebraskan sports senior reporter and a sports columnist.

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A shortened season also would be less fun and rewarding, he said. The games are a reward for the players after all the time they spend preparing for the games, Nee said.

Fewer games also could cut revenue, Nee said.

"We have 23 sports here at Nebraska and they're all financed by basketball and football," he said.

Nee estimated that almost every school in the country faces the same situation. He said by "messing with basketball," everyone will be hurt.

Nee said there are compromises

that could be made on the proposal.

"The preseason is too long. Games shouldn't be allowed until the end of November," he said. "There would be enough time to prepare if practice didn't start until Nov. 1."

Nee said the 28-game schedule is all right, but one or two fewer games in the same time period would be acceptable.

However, Nee said he would prefer that the NCAA left basketball alone.

"We have a great, great game and I wish they wouldn't mess around with it," he said.

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Ohio State will have to continue to serve well to be effective, Stone said.

"We're not a very tall team so we feel to overcome that we have to be scoring points on our serve," he said.

"For us to be successful we're going to have to serve well and get a couple points a game off our serve. At the very least, we have to get it so they can't run the middle every time. But that's easier said than done."

The Buckeyes are led offensively by Holly O'Leary, who has recorded

a team-high 612 kills in posting a .276 hitting percentage. She averages 5.01 kills a game.

"Holly's a great player," Stone said. "She gets a lot of swings offensively, but that's not much different than a player on a basketball (team) who's hot and gets a lot of shots."

About 1,000 tickets remain for this weekend's matches. A two-day tournament pass is being sold for \$10 at the South Stadium ticket office. University of Nebraska-Lincoln students will not be admitted free.

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In the next game, though, the Huskers were thrashed by No. 10 Iowa, 74-59, and then came the inconsistency of last weekend.

Beck said one of the problems may be that she is assimilating her few veterans with her most talented recruiting class. The young players

came in sharper than the returnees, she said.

Beck said she needs the contributions of her old players to show the freshmen how to win at the Division I level. The win over Northeastern could be an indication that that is happening, she said.

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