

NCAAs are reward for NU tracksters

By Sara Bauder
Staff Reporter

For the 15 Nebraska athletes who qualified for the NCAA Indoor Track and Field Championships, today and Saturday are the rewards of a season's work.

All-America honors and national championships will be on the line when the first Cornhusker to compete, Ethel Edwards, runs in a qualifying heat of the 55-meter dash at 11 a.m. in Indianapolis.

Nebraska coach Gary Pepin said he really does not know what to expect at the meet.

"For the field events and the straight-away races, you can look at

the rankings and get a pretty good idea of where you stand," Pepin said. "But for races around the oval, rankings don't mean much because of all the different-sized tracks the times have been taken on."

Pepin said some tracks are more suited to fast times in races with turns in them. He said the track at Indianapolis is the fastest one he has seen in the United States.

The Huskers have been hurt by injuries to three athletes who qualified for the national meet.

All-America sprinter Ximena Restrepo, who had qualified in the 200 and 400 dashes, did not go to Indianapolis because of a hamstring injury.

Dieudonne Kwizera, an All-America selection to the 800 run, will miss the meet because of a hamstring injury suffered at the Big Eight meet two weeks ago.

Pepin said Tamas Molnar made the trip but has been bothered by a sore quadriceps. Molnar qualified for the championship meet in the 200 and 400 dashes and as a member of the 1,600 relay. He will compete in the 200 and the relay.

Kevin Coleman, a sophomore from Elgin, Ill., will compete in the shot put Saturday. Coleman won the Big Eight indoor shot put championship with a throw of 59-feet-3 1/2.

The men's 1,600 relay team of Mark Jackson, Bobby Jelks, Ken

Waller, Molnar and alternate Jerry Marsee will run a qualifying heat at 9:10 a.m. today. The relay won the Husker Invitational championship in 3:08.77 minutes, a school record.

Jacques van Rensburg will compete in the mile run. The senior from Bloemfontein, South Africa, set a provisional qualifying time of 4:03.56 at a triangular meet with Arkansas and Drake. Because not enough athletes reached the NCAA's automatic qualifying time in the mile, van Rensburg qualified for the national meet.

Stephen Golding, a sophomore from St. Catherine, Jamaica, qualified to compete in the 55-meter hurdles with

a time of 7.26 seconds last week.

On the women's side, Sammie Gdowski qualified to run the mile and the 3,000- and 5,000-meter runs. She will run the 5,000.

Meredy Porter, a junior from Bellevue, will compete in the high jump Saturday. She has won five of her last six high jump competitions.

Yvonne van der Kolk qualified in the mile and the 800-meter run. She will run the mile.

A junior from Dallas, Kim Walker set a provisional mark in the 200-meter dash and will run a qualifying heat today.

Fran tenBensel and Lisa Darley will run the 800 this afternoon.

Postive attitude, tricky pitch crucial to Nebraska win

By Jeff Apel
Senior Editor

Nebraska pitcher Mike Zajeski played the role of a deceiver during the Cornhuskers' 4-2 win against Wichita State on Thursday night.

Zajeski said he kept the top-ranked Shockers in check at Buck Beltzer Field by relying on his slider. He said his slider is a tricky pitch because it is not much slower than his fastball.

"I throw my fastball in the mid-80s," Zajeski said, "and my slider is in the low 80s. Most people throw it a lot slower than that."

Zajeski said his up-tempo slider is effective because it does not give batters enough time to distinguish between it and a fastball. He said the end result is usually strikeouts, nine of which he picked up against Wichita State.

"I think all nine of my strikeouts were on sliders," Zajeski said. "They touched my slider once. That's it."

Zajeski said he wasn't overly surprised by Nebraska's victory even though the Huskers were coming off a dismal 1-6 road trip to Hawaii. He said Nebraska recovered from its Hawaiian catastrophe by thinking positively.

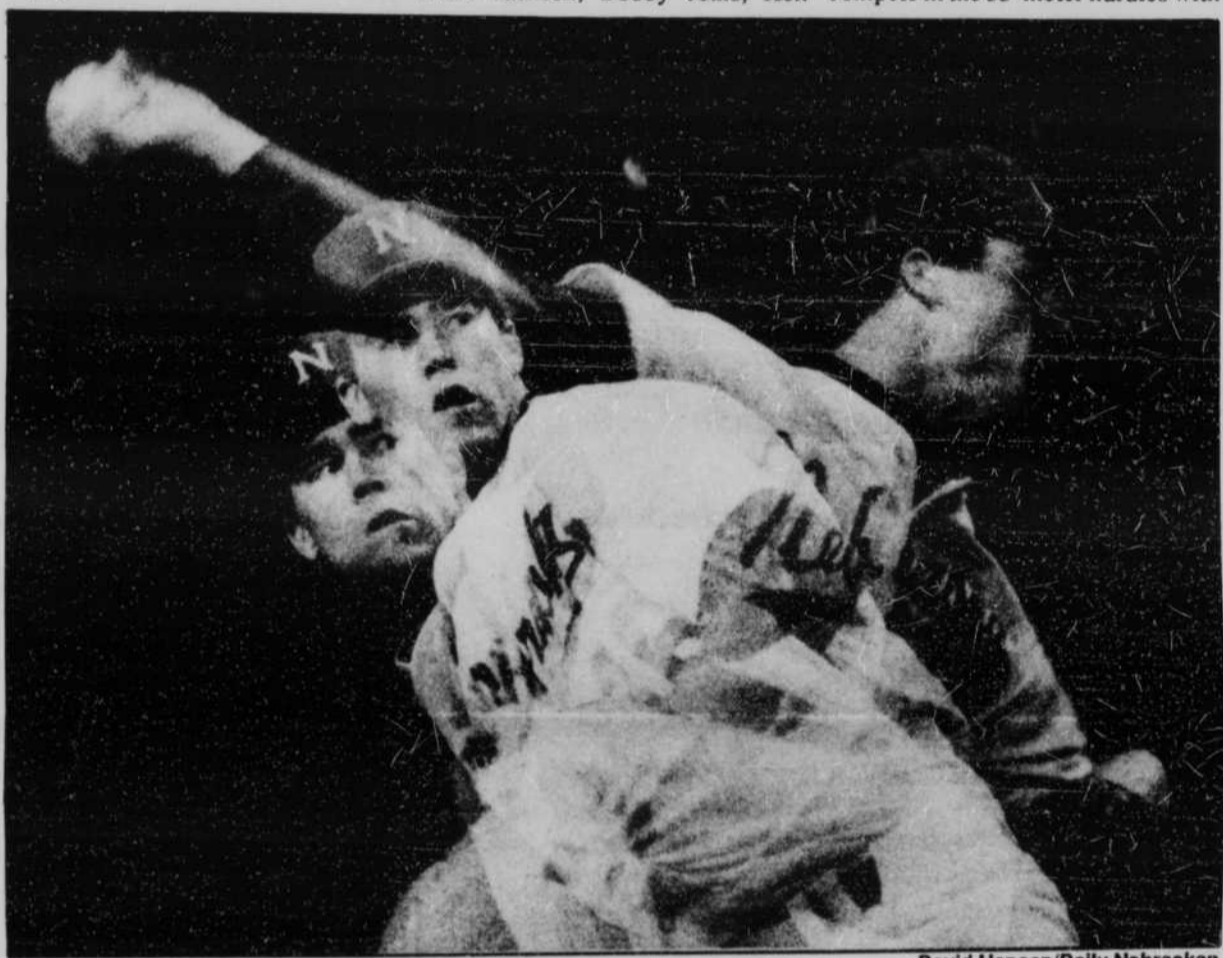
Zajeski said Nebraska, 9-6, did not have any trouble preparing itself for 8-1 Wichita State.

"We were very much up for this game," he said. "Realistically we couldn't be down. You have to be up when you're playing the No. 1 team."

Zajeski and Nebraska baseball coach John Sanders said the win was a big one because it elevated the Huskers to another level. They said Nebraska can use the win as a turning point in the season.

"This is a step that says, 'Hey, let's take it up another level,'" Sanders said.

Sanders said the win also improved



David Hansen/Daily Nebraskan

NU's Mike Zajeski pitched nine strikeouts in seven innings of play against No. 1 Wichita State on Thursday evening at Buck Beltzer Field.

his post-game taste buds.

"The pizza will taste a lot better," he said. "It's the same pizza but a different game. And that pizza will taste a lot better."

Nebraska jumped out to a 2-0 lead against Wichita State in the bottom of the second inning when shortstop Bill Vosik hit a single that scored Bobby Benjamin and Kevin French.

Wichita State tied the score 2-2 in the top of the third inning when designated hitter Scot McCloughan drew a walk and scored on a home run by Jim Audley.

Nebraska then took the lead for

good in the bottom of the inning when Eddie Anderson hit his first home run of the season, and added an insurance run in the fifth when Anderson reached on an error, stole second and scored on a pair of sacrifices.

There were some tight moments in the contest, as Wichita State coach Gene Stephenson was ejected for arguing a pair of calls. Both benches also emptied when Wichita State second baseman P.J. Forbes turned toward the mound after striking out to end the fifth inning.

Zajeski said Forbes approached the mound because the Shocker player

was frustrated. He said that was obvious because Forbes kept calling Nebraska players names.

Zajeski said he is glad his teammates stepped in when Forbes began to approach him.

"I would have gotten thrown out in the sixth inning if they wouldn't have," he said, "and that's not what I wanted to do."

Nebraska's next game is Sunday, when the Huskers face St. Cloud State, a Division II school from St. Cloud, Minn., in a doubleheader at Buck Beltzer Field. The action begins at 1 p.m.

Gopher coach reluctant to measure matchup

By Jeff Apel
Senior Editor

The standard will not be used as a measuring stick when the Nebraska men's gymnastics team faces Minnesota.

Minnesota men's gymnastics coach Fred Roethlisberger said he won't measure his team's progress by how well it does against Nebraska because the Gophers are coming off an emotional victory in the Big 10 meet. He said it wouldn't be fair to judge his team Saturday because he isn't expecting any earth-shattering performances.

Roethlisberger will find out how Minnesota responds from capturing its 18th Big 10 title when the second-ranked Gophers face top-ranked Nebraska at Williams Arena in Minneapolis. The meet begins at 7 p.m.

Roethlisberger said he has great respect for Nebraska.

"They're the standard in men's gymnastics. They have been for the last 10 years or so," Roethlisberger said. "But I'm very reluctant to measure anything by what my team does this weekend because you just can't get psyched up two weeks in a row."

Roethlisberger said Minnesota's victory in the Big 10 championships was an emotional one. The Gophers won the title by overcoming a slow start en route to tallying a 282.60 mark.

Roethlisberger said Nebraska has an advantage entering the meet because the Cornhuskers were idle last weekend, and competed in the Big Eight triangular week before. He said the Big Eight invite doesn't come close to the Big 10 championships.

Nebraska won the Big Eight triangular Feb. 25 by tallying 281.60 points. Oklahoma was second with 276.90, while Iowa State was third with 265.45.

"The Big 10 is not like the Big Eight," Roethlisberger said. "We've got seven teams, and four of them consistently qualify for the NCAA's. 'It's pretty tough.'"

Roethlisberger said it also is going to be tough for his team to match up with Nebraska. He said the Gophers particularly will have trouble matching up with Patrick Kirksey, who is the defending NCAA champion in the all-around.

"Patrick Kirksey is a great gymnast," Roethlisberger said. "That's what makes them so hard to match up with."

"I think we'll have to match up in average with their lower guys."

Nebraska men's gymnastics coach Francis Allen said that matchup may not be as difficult as Roethlisberger thinks. He said Minnesota is a great team.

"Minnesota is as good a team as we will face," Allen said.

Allen is basing his assessment on the season-long statistics compiled by both teams. An examination of the stats reveals that Nebraska averages 282.52 points per meet, while Minnesota averages 281.67.

In the individual events, Nebraska has totaled higher scoring averages in the floor exercise, rings, vault and horizontal bar, with Minnesota holding an advantage in the pommel horse and parallel bars.

Allen said Nebraska will not have any problems preparing for the Gophers. He said the Huskers proved they were capable of getting fired up when they won the UCLA invitational Feb. 10.

Nebraska won that invite by posting a season-high team score of 283.075.

"We'll be fired up for Minnesota," Allen said. "This team has the ability to rise to the occasion, which happened at UCLA."

Nee can see no weaknesses in No. 1 Oklahoma

By Jeff Apel
Senior Editor

Nebraska men's basketball coach Danny Nee has an answer for anyone arguing that the Big Eight isn't strong.

They're wrong. Nee said the Big Eight has proven it is for the real by dominating the upper ranks of the national polls this season. Three teams -- Oklahoma, Missouri and Kansas -- have taken turns being ranked No. 1, and Missouri and Kansas held the top two spots for four weeks.

Nee said his team will be put up against that competitiveness when it faces Oklahoma -- the nation's current No. 1-ranked team -- tonight in the opening round of the Big Eight tournament. The game begins at 6:10 p.m. at Kemper Arena in Kansas City, Mo.

In other first-round matchups, fourth-seeded Kansas State will face fifth-seeded Oklahoma State at 12:10 p.m., top-seeded Missouri will square off against eighth-seeded Colorado at 2:20 p.m. and third-seeded Kansas will meet sixth-seeded Iowa State at 8:20 p.m.

The tournament's semifinal round will be held on Saturday at 1:10 and 3:20 p.m., with the championship set for 3:10 p.m. Sunday. The winner of the championship game will receive an automatic berth in the 64-team NCAA tournament.

The entire tournament will be televised by Raycom (channels 10-11). The Nebraska-Oklahoma game will be shown beginning at 7 p.m. The first 50 minutes of the game will not be shown, as the 10-11 newscast and Wheel of Fortune will be telecast at that time.

Nee said Nebraska is looking forward to its game against Oklahoma because it represents an opportunity. He said the opportunity comes in the form of facing the No. 1-ranked team in the country for the third time this season.

Nebraska faced then No. 1-ranked Kansas on Jan. 8, and dropped a 98-93 decision. The Huskers also squared off against then top-ranked Missouri on Feb. 10, and suffered a 107-85 loss.

Nee said he can't believe Nebraska, now 10-17 overall and 3-11 in the Big Eight, will face its third No. 1-ranked team of the season tonight.

"It's unbelievable," he said. "It just gives credit to the quality of the Big Eight."

Nee said that quality extends to Oklahoma, which enters the contest with 23-4 and 11-3 marks.

"In my own head I don't see any weaknesses in Oklahoma,"

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