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Five NU individuals, five relays to compete

# Swimmers prepare for intense meet

By Jeff Apel  
Senior Editor

The intensity of the NCAA championships awes Nebraska men's swimming coach Cal Bentz.

Bentz said Nebraska must be mentally focused for the NCAA championships because they are the most intense meet in the world. He said they are even more intense than the Olympics, which pit two swimmers from each country against one another.

"This is the most intense meet of its kind," Bentz said. "At the NCAA's, you have all those Olympians plus several athletes who are just a fraction slower."

Bentz said the meet's quality field makes him reluctant to make any predictions about Nebraska's chances in this year's meet. He said he will not know anything definite about the Cornhuskers team-wise until the meet is concluded Saturday night.

"We'll let the smoke clear and add up the points on Saturday night," Bentz said. "Then we'll see how we did."

"This is an excellent team and one of the best ones I have ever coached.

They are hard working, and they want to go down to the NCAA (meet) and do as well as we can. That's all I can ask."

Bentz said Nebraska will try to at least equal the 10th-place finishes it has compiled at the last two NCAA championships when it opens this year's version of the three-day meet today at Indianapolis. The Huskers will have five individuals and five relays competing, a fact which caused Bentz to be optimistic.

"We are pleased with the guys we are sending," he said. "We are capable of scoring enough points to break into the top-10. I just hope it happens."

Nebraska's Tom Stus said it will. In fact, Stus said, the Huskers want to do better than 10th.

"We'd like to move that up a little bit," Stus said.

If Nebraska is going to improve on its 10th-place finishes, it is going to need a big performance from Jan Bidman. Bidman is the Huskers top individual qualifier, as he will compete in the 200- and 400-yard individual medleys and either the 200 butterfly or 200 breaststroke.

In addition to Bidman, Nebraska's other individual qualifiers include six-

time All-America selection Peter Williams and Broken Bow native Bob Fitzpatrick in the 50-yard freestyle, senior Sean Frampton in the 100 breaststroke and freshman Matt Eastin in the 1-meter diving competition.

The Huskers 200-, 400- and 800-yard freestyle relays also will com-

people." Four teams that Nebraska may have trouble beating, Bentz said, are Michigan, Stanford, USC and Texas. The Longhorns are the defending national champions, while Bentz said USC has a plethora of great sprinters.

Bentz said Stanford has an abundance of athletes qualified for the competition, while Michigan left the majority of its squad untapered while capturing this year's Big 10 championship.

Tapering is a process in which swimmers attempt to improve their times by resting and shaving.

"Michigan kept so many people unshaved for their conference meet," Bentz said, "that they may be the team to beat."

Bentz said Michigan's presence doesn't mean he is counting Nebraska out.

"I think our team is peaking at the right time," he said. "Everytime we swim, the times are getting faster and faster."

"You really can't predict too many things when it comes to the NCAA meet, but I think our team will do well if (swimmers perform) to their capabilities. This could be a good weekend for Nebraska swimming."

**We are capable of scoring enough points to break into the top-10. I just hope it happens.**

Bentz  
Men's swimming coach

pete, as will Nebraska's 200 and 400 medley relays. Individuals and relays qualify for the NCAA championships by completing their event in a specified time, while divers qualify by tallying a certain amount of points.

"We feel we have as fine of team as we have ever had here," Bentz said. "We feel we can beat a lot of

## Player voices concern about team conflicts

By Paul Domeier  
Senior Reporter

Ken Feuer expressed concern Thursday that dissension is tearing apart the Nebraska men's tennis team.

Feuer, the lone senior on the Cornhusker squad, did not name names. In fact, he said, most of the team has fallen into the rift. Wherever the fault line lies, though, he said the personality conflicts are bothering him.

"It's been like this the whole year," he said. "You can either be a baby and cry, or be a man and ignore it."

Nebraska coach Kerry McDermott said the conflicts have gotten worse in the last week, as he nears final

decisions for the Big Eight lineup.

"Tennis is an individual sport, with a lot of egos involved," he said. "Once they let go of the egos, things will be OK. They all want to coach; that's the problem."

Feuer admitted he was "pulling a Henderson." Senior guard Phil Henderson blasted his Duke basketball teammates for immaturity two weeks ago after the ACC tournament, and the Blue Devils have responded with two wins in the NCAA tournament. But Feuer said he expects the Huskers' attitude to drift further and further from the unity which characterized Nebraska his first three years.

"I don't think it will be the same," he said.

Feuer helped Steve and Stuart Jung, Brad Scheidegger, Pat Carson and Robert Sjolholm turn the Huskers into a Big Eight power. Those players,

Feuer said, had their own conflicts, citing a quickly resolved near-fight between Carson and Steve Jung last season, but the Huskers always pulled together to play as a team. Now only Feuer, last year's Big Eight champion at No. 4 singles, remains.

"It bothers me this year," he said. "I don't like to see the Nebraska tennis team a different way."

McDermott said the Huskers went through this before Feuer joined the team, too, but Nebraska has been lucky in recent years.

"In the past I've been really blessed with guys who got along," he said. "Now I feel like I'm really having to coach more. I'm trying to let them sort themselves out. It's a matter of growing up."

The team problems this year are coming to head as the Huskers approach the conference season, when

Feuer said he bears down. The Huskers will play their last non-conference matches -- duals against Kearney State on Monday and Nebraska Wesleyan Tuesday plus the Blue-Gray Tennis Tournament in Montgomery, Ala., March 29-31 -- during Spring Break.

The Blue-Gray tournament will include about half of the top-20 teams in the nation, McDermott said.

"The Drake coach told me it's better than the NCAA tournament," McDermott said.

But for the Huskers to challenge in April for their conference title, they must bury the distractions, and Feuer as a team leader, offered maxims that mirrored his coach's.

"Separate problems on the court, off the court," Feuer said. "Everybody's here to get an education. Just come in and play tennis and help the tennis team."

## Tough mental attitude helps NU pitcher throw 37 scoreless innings this season

By Darran Fowler  
Staff Reporter

There is more to Nebraska junior softball pitcher Stephanie Skegas this season.

Skegas is 7-0 this spring season and has given up just two runs, one earned in 49 innings. She opened the season with 37 scoreless innings, including the second no-hitter of her career against Furman last weekend at the Florida State Invitational.

She has totaled 23 strikeouts to lead the No. 6-ranked Cornhuskers to a 9-4 record this season. She has given up nine walks while compiling an earned run average of 0.14.

Last year, Skegas, who transferred from Creighton, finished the season 18-16 during her first year at Nebraska.

Skegas, of Torrance, Calif., said the difference this year is she's mentally tougher. She said that means she is more confident, more focused, more mature, more consistent... more everything, including having more pitches.

"My goal was to start the season right and then keep improving and get mentally tougher as the season goes along," Skegas said. "This year I'm more mentally tough than I was last year."

"I'm a better pitcher because I have more confidence and my mental approach is far off better than it was last year."

This year, for the first time, Nebraska softball coach Ron Wolfarth started holding an hour-long classroom everyday to prepare the players psychologically.

"That has helped tremendously," Skegas said. "The imagery that we do helps a lot."

"It's a big part of the reason why

my mental attitude is a lot better. I wasn't really confident at all last year, and I wasn't consistent. I would have a good game, and then I would have a bad game. This year I find myself concentrating more on the mound."

Being coached by former Nebraska star and All-America selection Lori Sippel also has helped, Skegas said.

Sippel, whose 93 victories, 1,052 strikeouts, 10 no-hitters and career 0.50 earned run average all logged in the Nebraska record books, joined the Husker coaching staff last fall. She completed her eligibility in 1988.

Skegas said she has learned new pitches and better techniques on some of her old pitches from Sippel.

"I have a lot more variety of pitches," she said. "We've worked on perfecting my pitches and now I'm getting better spin on my ball."

Sippel taught Skegas to throw a slow drop ball and an off-speed pitch, both of which Skegas said she couldn't throw effectively last year.

The spin and control of her riser is also better, she said.

Sippel also helps during games by setting up the batters with pitching signals from the bench, Skegas said.

"It's good to have someone who is a great pitcher backing you up when you are out on the mound," she said.

Skegas said her approach for the rest of the season will remain the same as it was in Nebraska's first two tournaments this season.

"I'm going to just try and pitch my best," she said. "If we lose, we lose. But I'm not going to give up."

"I'm going to go out with the attitude that we're going to win every ball game."



Skegas

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