

Team shoots for title

NU gymnasts hope to keep undefeated record

By Chuck Green
Senior Reporter

The Nebraska men's gymnastics team will be trying to preserve its undefeated record while aiming for its third consecutive Big Eight title this weekend.

The Big Eight championships will be Friday and Saturday at the Lloyd Noble Center in Norman, Okla.

After completing the regular season with a 19-0-1 overall record and a 7-0-1 dual mark, the nation's top-ranked Cornhuskers will be looking to win the first of what Nebraska coach Francis Allen hopes will be three season championships.

The other two include the Midwest Regionals, which will be in Norman, Okla., April 7, and the NCAA championships, scheduled for April 19-21 in Minneapolis.

The Huskers were 6-0 this season against Oklahoma and Iowa State and are favorites to win the conference title.

But, Allen said, the Huskers need to concentrate on performing their routines well and not about what the

results were earlier this year. "Our guys respect both Oklahoma and Iowa State," Allen said. "I think we're out of both of their reaches as far as the team races goes, but we don't want to lose an individual or team event either."

Nebraska closed its regular season last Saturday by beating Houston Baptist 279.85-274.30. The Huskers were without the services of freshman all-around performer Trent Dimas, who suffered from a serious throat infection.

The Huskers' other freshman, Josh Saegert, replaced Dimas and scored a 54.75 in the all-around.

It was Saegert's first collegiate all-around competition.

Dimas probably will compete this weekend, Allen said.

"Josh did a heck of a job in a substitute role, but Trent's 56-plus all-around is tough to replace," he said. "Trent seems healthy, but sometimes it's hard to predict how a strength-zapping illness like he had might affect him."

Last year, four Huskers finished among the top six in the all-around

competition in the Big Eight championships in Ames, Iowa. Nebraska won the meet with 282.15, easily outdistancing runner-up Iowa State, which scored 264.90.

Husker senior All-Americans Patrick Kirksey and Mark Warburton both are returning conference champions. Kirksey won five individual titles in his career, including the all-around, floor exercise, pommel horse and parallel bars last year.

Warburton has won the still rings competition the last two years.

Another senior All-American, Bob Stelter, placed in all six events at last year's conference championships, including a second-place finish in the all-around.

Allen said the Huskers must focus on winning the conference championships before looking ahead to the regional and national meets.

"We're pretty sure we can win the Big Eight," he said. "We also want (to finish with the top four) in the all-around."

"This team is ready for a good meet and a good score."

Finishing among nation's top five teams goal of Cornhusker women's golf team

By Jeff Apel
Senior Editor

The Nebraska women's golf team will shoot for a top-five finish when it competes in the South Carolina invitational this weekend in Columbia, S.C.

Nebraska coach Robin Scherer said she would be satisfied with a top-five finish because nine teams enter the three-day competition ranked ahead of the No. 36-ranked Cornhuskers. Those teams include an abundance of East Coast schools, all of which will have an advantage entering the invitational on the par-72 Woodlands Country Club.

Scherer said Nebraska will have to overcome the tournament's tough field and the challenge of having to adjust to a South Carolina-based course if it is going to finish in the top five. She said courses in South Carolina present special challenges because they are tighter and have thick grass that does not let the ball roll as much.

Those rolls could hurt Nebraska,

which will be matched against a talented field that will be preparing for the NCAA championships later this year in Hilton Head, S.C. The teams in the competition that are ranked ahead of the Huskers include No. 7 Georgia, No. 13 Duke, No. 14 Furman, No. 16 Indiana and No. 23 South Carolina.

Twenty-ninth-ranked Oklahoma, 30th-ranked North Carolina-Wilmington, 33rd-ranked Florida State and 35th-ranked James Madison also will compete. The remainder of the invitational's field includes Memphis State, Michigan State, Minnesota and Ohio State.

Scherer said the tournament's field is causing her to take a realistic approach towards the competition. That approach will be tested Friday, when the invitational begins.

"Normally you wouldn't be satisfied with a top-five finish because you always like to win," she said. "But in this case, a top-five finish would be an accomplishment because (the invitation) is going to be a

challenge."

Scherer said the invitational will provide Nebraska with a unique opportunity.

"It provides us an opportunity to show how good we are," Scherer said. "We could make a good impression."

Scherer said the Huskers need to get better production out of the bottom part of their lineup if they're going to make a good impression. She said the lower portion of the Huskers' lineup has been inconsistent throughout the spring season.

"It's not that they don't have the talent," Scherer said, "it's just they need a little more experience."

One golfer who has plenty of experience is Joanne Brooks, a sophomore from Tauranga, New Zealand, who recorded a second-place finish at the Peggy Kirk-Bell invitational two weeks ago in Winter Park, Fla.

Brooks has been Nebraska's top golfer throughout the fall, and is ranked 56th in the individual collegiate rankings.

ists hinge on wrestlers who have led the Huskers all season, including Kelber, Scott Chenoweth at 167 and heavyweight Joe Malecek. Kelber and Chenoweth earned All-America status last season, and are coming off of Big Eight tournament finishes they called "disappointing."

Chenoweth finished third at the conference meet.

But Neumann said the NCAA tournament is a "good place for redemption."

"Until the Big Eight finals, I was

Oklahoma State is probably the most balanced team in the tournament.

Neumann
wrestling coach

sure Jason would be the top seed (at the NCAA tournament)," Neumann said. "But I'm sure that after losing to Cross, people may have some doubt."

Kelber, though, will be tough to beat this weekend, Neumann said.

"Jason is a powerful wrestler who's focused now," he said. "The only way that (loss to Cross) hurt was in the seeding. I think it helped him refocusing on what he needs to do to win the tournament."

Chenoweth suffered the biggest upset of the Big Eight meet when he lost his semifinal match to Iowa State's Matt Johnson, 4-3. The loss dropped him into the consolation bracket and halted the Huskers' early meet mo-

mentum.

But Chenoweth, a junior, responded with two straight technical falls in the consolation round of the meet.

"Scott has had a great season," Neumann said. "He just didn't wrestle well in the semifinals at the Big Eight meet."

Neumann said he thinks Chenoweth, like Kelber, will be re-focused if he's disappointed if he wasn't in the finals," Neumann said.

Malecek, the Big Eight's heavyweight champion, has a good chance at the national title, too, Neumann said.

"The key for Joe is that he's wrestling better now than he has in his entire career," Neumann said. "That's not a guarantee in this meet, but you have to feel good about his chances."

For four of the remaining six Husker qualifiers, it will be their first NCAA meet.

John Buxton, the conference champion at 118, and 177-pound runner-up Corey Olson are freshmen ranked 12th and seventh, respectively. Sophomore Chris Nelson is No. 4 at 190, and transfer Todd Enger, a junior at 150, was a Division III 142-pound All-American.

Dave Drogemue (134) and Paul Herrera (142) are making their second NCAA appearances. Herrera is ranked No. 6.

Neumann said he is happy with the way his team has performed throughout the season.

"We had talked about next season being the year because we will have a lot of people coming back," he said. "But now that we're here, we don't want to let the opportunity go to waste."

in brief

SPORTS

Osborne expects televised opener

Nebraska football coach Tom Osborne said that the Nebraska-Baylor game "almost certainly" will be televised.

Nebraska's game against the Bears, which will be in Memorial Stadium, tentatively is planned to be moved to Sept. 1 to accommodate the national broadcast by ESPN (cable channel 23). The game originally was scheduled for Sept. 15.

"I can't really make an official announcement on the game until we hear a definite approval from ESPN," Osborne said. "But we have agreed, and we understand that we have an agreement from Baylor."

Nebraska's share of the \$300,000 promised to each team would be two-ninths -- \$66,666. The other shares would be divided among the seven Big Eight teams.

Osborne said he doesn't foresee problems with moving the game to an earlier date, "other than it makes the offense a little shorter."

Baylor returns 18 starters -- nine each on offense and defense -- from last year's 5-6 team.

UNL rugby team earns important win

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln men's rugby team accomplished an "unheard of" task when it defeated the Omaha GOATS 19-13.

Nebraska's Jim Wiggs said the win was a big one because the GOATS -- which stands for the Greater Omaha Area Touring Side -- are a formidable opponent.

"Beating the GOATS is unheard of by a collegiate side," Wiggs said. A side is the name for a team in rugby.

Nebraska recorded its win against the GOATS by using a penalty kick by Mark Palmer to take a 15-13 lead, then used a try by Brian Chaffin to score its final points. Wiggs said the try was a big one because it showed that Nebraska was a superior team.

The try was set up when, after Palmer converted Nebraska's penalty kick, the Cornhuskers kicked to the GOATS. In rugby, the team that just has scored normally is kicked to, but Wiggs said Nebraska elected to kick to give the GOATS one last chance to prove that they were a better team.

That effort was in vain, as the GOATS quickly committed a turnover and Chaffin recorded his try.

Wiggs said Nebraska cherished the score by Chaffin. "We basically took it and rubbed it in their face," he said.

Wiggs said the win, which raised Nebraska's record to 2-0, was a big one.



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