

Softball team goes 4-7 during road trip

By Darran Fowler
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska softball team's annual Spring Break trip to California had results similar to last year's.

Nebraska went 4-7 over break, putting the Cornhuskers' record at 13-11 this season. Last year, the Huskers lost six straight games during break, finishing 3-6 and returned home 13-17 overall.

"We're in better shape than the team last year at the start of the season but that's hedging the question, be-

cause we expected to be better," Nebraska coach Ron Wolforth said. "It was a very disappointing trip."

In pool play of the Pony Invitational at Fullerton, Calif., Nebraska started with a 4-2 defeat of Rutgers and then lost to Fullerton 3-1 and Big Eight rival Oklahoma State 6-2.

In bracket play, the Huskers edged Minnesota 1-0, before being eliminated by Fresno State 9-3.

Nebraska spent the remainder of the week playing doubleheader games against Toledo in Fullerton, and then traveled to San Diego to play U.S.

International and San Diego State. Nebraska was swept by Toledo 5-3, 5-1 and split with U.S. International, 3-2, 2-0 and San Diego State 3-0, 2-0.

The major disappointment struck when the Huskers played Toledo, Wolforth said.

"That was when we hit bottom," he said. "That was the worst game we played all year."

He said Nebraska lacked the intensity needed to be competitive in a tournament that featured five of the seven top teams in the country and

then play three doubleheaders afterwards.

"Our youth definitely showed," he said. "We played a couple of games well in the Pony, but we just couldn't put it all together."

"Ten games in 10 days, that's pretty stressful. That takes a lot of mental toughness and we have not been able to have that."

However, Wolforth said he has not given up.

If Nebraska develops a tougher mental attitude over the course of the season it can win the Big Eight tour-

namment and receive a subsequent NCAA automatic bid, he said.

"This doesn't discourage me in the Big Eight, but it does make me a little leery," he said. "We just have to learn to maintain our mental toughness in tournaments like this and like the Big Eight."

Against conference favorite Oklahoma State earlier this season, Nebraska stole a 1-0 victory over the Cowboys.

"We still match up with Oklahoma State very, very well," Wolforth said. "We have a very good chance to win the Big Eight."

Fourth inning grand slam boosts Nebraska over KU

By John Adkisson
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska baseball team got a power boost this weekend from a most unexpected source.

Eddie Anderson, a 5'9" center fielder and the Huskers' leadoff hitter, hit a grand slam homer on Sunday to lift the Cornhuskers to a 6-2 victory and a doubleheader sweep of Kansas. Nebraska won the nightcap 9-0.

The two victories Sunday gave Nebraska a split of the four-game series with the Jayhawks. Kansas beat Nebraska 4-3 and 3-1 Saturday.

Anderson, who is a switch-hitter, hit the homer in the fourth inning with Nebraska trailing 2-1. The shot was Anderson's first ever batting left-handed.

"I was just thinking about getting a sacrifice fly," Anderson said. "I didn't expect it to go out."

Nebraska head coach John Sanders said Anderson's slam came at a critical point in the game.

"That homer really helped us. He just tomahawked the pitch and rode it out of here," Sanders said.

The grand slam was Anderson's second home run of the season. His

first came in another big game, Nebraska's win over then top-ranked Wichita State.

Anderson, who had only four RBIs coming into the series with Kansas, picked up five over the weekend. But Anderson said his main concern is just getting on base.

"When I'm up at the plate, I look for any way I can to get on. That's where I can be most effective," he said.

Anderson leads the team with 24 stolen bases.

In the second game, Nebraska got a strong pitching performance from John Ofstun and cruised to the victory.

"It's always tough to shut a team out at the college level," Sanders said. "John pitched an excellent game for us."

Anderson said he knew the Huskers would rebound from Saturday's losses and play well Sunday.

"I feel that our team is very strong mentally. I knew we could bounce back today," he said.

Nebraska, 20-10 on the season, will host Northern Iowa and travel to

See NU on 8



NU designated hitter Joe Shapley tripped, fell to the turf and crawled safely to first base on a KU error Sunday afternoon at Buck Beltzer Field. NU won the doubleheader 6-2, 9-0.

Duke's strategy won't work against Rebels

Larry Johnson vs. Christian Laettner? Johnson, no problem. Anderson Hunt vs. Phil Henderson? Hunt by a hair. Stacey Augmon vs. Robert Brickey? Augmon, hands down.

UNLV would crush Duke 9-0 or 8-1 if the two teams' regulars played a

best collection of mediocre talent in college basketball.

That talent advantage doesn't guarantee a victory for the Rebs and Coach Jerry Tarkanian, but it has made the NCAA championship UNLV's to win or lose.

UNLV became the consensus pre-season No. 1 when Johnson, the 1989 junior college player-of-the-year, committed to the already stacked Rebs. David Butler and Moses Scurry couldn't play during the first semester because of academic problems, but since the two post players returned, UNLV has been awesome.

All five starters are great scorers and great defenders. The bench has three or four good role players. Tarkanian lives basketball and is one of the best coaches in the country.

Offensively, defensively and strategically the Rebels are loaded.

Duke is different. This is the third-

straight trip to the Final Four for the Devils, and Coach Mike Krzyzewski should promise never to return until he recruits more NBA-caliber talent. Duke doesn't have one great prospect, and at least four future first-round selections (Georgia Tech's Dennis Scott, Kenny Anderson and Brian Oliver and Arkansas' Todd Day) were eliminated Saturday.

Krzyzewski's squad is solid, though. The Devils may not have any superstars, but they also don't have any holes.

A team like Duke should win two or three tournament games, then lose. But Duke is the type of team that could win the NCAAs if all the best teams (Missouri, Oklahoma, Syracuse, Michigan State) collapse. Guess what? UNLV is the only great team left.

As for style of play, the final matchup is great for basketball pur-

ists who had to watch the up-tempo onslaught of the tournament's first 60 games.

The Rebels and Devils eliminated the last two freak teams, teams that get by without the traditional two guard, two forward, true center scheme. Georgia Tech and Arkansas were M&M teams -- solid on the outside, melting on the inside. Loyola Marymount, Georgetown and Texas were three teams that had some large weakness, and all have lost.

Both finalists have traditional lineups, both play great man-to-man defense, both can score numerous ways with numerous players, and both are well-coached. UNLV is better in each category, though.

Duke has used its versatility to get this far, working inside against vulnerable teams like Arkansas and Connecticut, but that strategy won't

work against UNLV. The Rebels must collapse for Duke to take its first title.

Augmon and Hunt will indicate the outcome. Augmon played the best half of his life to shut down Scott in the last half of the semifinal, but he can't afford a letdown tonight, offensively or defensively. Augmon is prone to disappearing when the team doing well.

And Hunt, who has had two-straight great games, must remember he is not Scott. His shot selection at the end of the semifinal was crazy. If he comes out firing from anywhere, and missing, the entire UNLV offense could break down.

UNLV vs. Duke? Should be UNLV, but you never know.

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series of one-on-one games instead of the NCAA tournament final, which will be staged tonight at 8:14 p.m. Runnin' Rebels' Johnson, Hunt and Augmon are part of the best collection of great talent in college basketball, while Blue Devils' Laettner, Henderson and Brickey are part of the

Walton: NU gymnasts edge Minnesota but look sloppy

By Chuck Green
Senior Reporter

Nebraska women's gymnastics coach Rick Walton isn't one to look for excuses -- but after Saturday night's meet against Minnesota, he was looking for answers.

Nebraska beat the Golden Gophers 190.90-188.15 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center, but Walton said that, at times, the No. 4-ranked Cornhuskers looked sloppy.

Lisa McCrady led the Huskers, winning the all-around competition with a 38.75 score. She edged out Minnesota's Marie Roethlisberger by

.05. McCrady won the floor exercise with a 9.80 and finished third in the uneven bars and vault.

Nebraska's Michele Bryant was third in the all-around competition with a 38.35.

But, Walton said, the Huskers made several mistakes throughout the meet -- including three falls on the balance beam and two more on the uneven bars.

"I'm not sure what was wrong," he said. "Maybe we just weren't mentally prepared for them. We made far too many mistakes for this time of year.

"It's hard to come up with reasons for it, but the bottom line is that it happened, and it shouldn't have."

Nebraska's Angie Burdette won the vault with a score of 9.80, and Bryant tied McCrady for second in the competition.

Jane Clemons was third on the balance beam with a 9.65, and Tami Bair finished second on the uneven bars with a 9.70.

Walton said the problems must be resolved by next weekend, when the Huskers travel to Salt Lake City for the NCAA regional competition.

Six of the seven teams that will be

at the regional are ranked among the nation's top 12, including top-ranked Utah. Walton said a key for Nebraska is the returning experience from last year's NCAA competition.

Seven of the 11 Huskers competed last season in NCAA competition.

"It's probably going to be a heck of a factor for us to have any one of five girls that can score in the 38.50-range, or better," Walton said. "Our goal is to get all of them to score in that range for the NCAAs."

Most of this week's practice time will be devoted to eliminating execution mistakes, rather than physical

conditioning, Walton said. "Mentally, we're to the point that we can't take anything for granted," he said. "Any error, large or small, can hurt you. We want to remove any visible signs of error a judge can see."

At any rate, Walton said, the Huskers must perform better next weekend than they did Saturday night.

"It certainly will be a challenge with seven of the best teams in the country," he said. "It will be more of a challenge if we make the same kinds of mistakes we made (Saturday night)."