



Robin Trimarchi/Daily Nebraskan

Katie Fletcher, Nebraska women's cross country team captain, stretches before running.

Small-town Kansas runner captains cross country team

By Benji Greenberg
Staff Reporter

Distance runner Katie Fletcher has come a long way since arriving at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln from a small Kansas town. Fletcher is a native of Lakin, a town of about 2,000 residents in southeastern Kansas. "Coming from a small school in Kansas to Nebraska was a big adjustment to make," Fletcher said. "I had to make big adjustments

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Fletcher
captain
NU women's cross country team

both mentally and physically, and I had to adjust to more extensive training."

She has risen from obscurity to be named captain of this year's Nebraska women's cross-country team. The team begins its season Saturday by hosting the Woody Greeno-Nebraska Invitational at Pioneers Park.

She said being elected captain by her teammates is no big deal.

"I don't think about being captain. I feel it doesn't matter because I'm part of a whole team," the redshirt sophomore said. "We have a young team this season with a lot of dedicated runners."

Coach, Jay Dirksen, said she is a hard worker, a leader by example. She enters the season as

the top runner on the defending Big Eight champion women's team.

"Katie's respected by her teammates and not only that, but she's also very enthusiastic and an all-around good person," said Dirksen, the 1989 women's cross country Big Eight Coach of the year. "We have a fun team this year with no real star, but we have a lot of depth."

Fletcher said she believes she can accomplish anything, and that belief boosts her confidence.

She is looking forward to this season after placing sixth at the Big Eight meet, fifth at the NCAA District V meet and 37th at nationals last season, she said. She was the 26th American runner to place nationally, which put her one away from being named an All-American.

"We are all excited to start the 1990 season, and we all have a positive attitude," Fletcher said.

The recent heat wave has hindered the team's preparation for Saturday's invitational against most of Nebraska's small colleges and Big Eight Colorado, Fletcher said.

"It's been difficult . . . because the heat is not advantageous to running distances," she said. "And with the heat, we haven't been able to have quality training."

Along with being a cross country runner, Fletcher also runs distance events for the Nebraska women's indoor and outdoor track teams.

Fletcher said she prefers cross country running over track and field running because of the unique courses and terrain versus just running around a track.

Nebraska is predicted to repeat as conference champion, but Fletcher said for that to happen, the Cornhuskers must outperform Kansas State.

"And we hope to do the best we can do at nationals," she said.

Softball

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was three years ago. At Kearney State, she was an NAIA All-American, but that was Kearney State.

Then Cuddeford transferred, for various reasons.

"I kind of always wanted to play here, and I wanted to graduate from Nebraska," she said.

She had trouble adjusting to the intensity of Division I.

"At first, I about dropped dead at practice," she said.

She didn't have games to look forward to, either, having to sit out a season as a transfer.

She went to Kearney State partly because she wanted to play basketball as well as softball, she said.

"Everybody said I wasn't big enough to play Division I basketball, but I could play softball," she said.

Although Cuddeford is 5-foot-5, she is a power hitter.

"Size is deceiving sometimes. I like to say it's the quickness of the bat," she said. "It's more technique than size and how strong you are."

Cuddeford said she's more prepared for this season than she was last fall. There were questions when she transferred, she said, but people began to understand why she left when she became a starter for the Huskers.

"I don't think you need to be All-Big Eight to be understood," Cuddeford said. "The people nearest to me didn't have trouble with my transferring."

Barsness

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national championship, instead of six, seven or eight individual goals.

So instead of being bitter, she wants to be better. Right now, she's trying to get back to where she was.

"I'm not playing as well as I want," Barsness said. "That should have been expected."

Should have been. "It's harder to come back than I thought it was going to be," she said.

She has to think about all the little individual movements again, she said, after she thought she had them perfected.

"I didn't think I'd have to break down my fundamentals," she said.

It's early, though. Once Barsness can break down her fundamentals and build them back up, her status might change. Nebraska has about 30 games left, including one game Friday and two Saturday in the Baden-Mizuno Invitational.

Can she be content as a reserve? She partially answered that. One, she wants to be better. Two, she is putting team goals first.

"Just being on this team is more than a lot of players could dream of," she said.

Barsness could turn out to be Nebraska's most important player. If Hall misses time with her chronically ailing back or, heaven forbid, someone goes down with a knee

injury, Barsness will have to step in.

Then having a fifth-year senior who once had 1,121 attacks and 465 kills in a season will be vital.

Or she could spend most of the season on the sideline. If she doesn't get much playing time, then she won't be part of too many great stories, other than the courageous comeback.

But as long as she's a part of one story that begins, "The Nebraska Cornhuskers won the 1990 NCAA volleyball championship by defeating . . ." Linda Barsness doesn't mind.

Domeier is a senior news editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan sports reporter and columnist.

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110 Announcements

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Orchesis
Student Dance Organization
1st meeting Thursday 7:30 MLH 304. New and old members welcome.

Organizational meeting
Society of Professional Journalists 6:30 p.m., Monday, September 10th and Thursday, September 13th, 108 Avery Hall. Bring your bodies.

Paper Money
FREE Paper Money coupon books
Student Info. Center
116 Nebr. Union

Publications Board Meeting Thursday, 4:00 p.m.
Nebraska Union. Readers of the Daily Nebraskan are invited to attend.

Religion & Racism Workshop
Thursday, September 13, "An Anglo-American Perspective." 4:00-5:00pm at the Culture Center 333 N. 14th St. All Welcome!

STUDENT ORGANIZATION ORIENTATION SUMMIT SCHEDULE

Culture Center-4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
August 29, September 5, 10, 11, 12, 17, 24, 25, 26
Sunday, Sept. 9-6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
East Union-4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
August 30, September 6, 13, 20, 27

STUDENTS FOR CHOICE
Meeting
Thursday, 7:30pm City Union. Room posted.

TODAY

UICP Talks and Topics first organizational meeting. Bring a friend and see how much fun it can be. 7:00pm City Union.