

# Meet could give glimpse of national champ

By Erik Unger  
Staff Reporter

This week's Big Eight Invitational could provide a peek at the national champion, Nebraska coach Francis Allen said, although the men's gymnastics national championships won't be held until April.

The Invitational will match Nebraska, the defending national champion, against Oklahoma, which Allen called one of the best teams in the nation.

Oklahoma should be favored, Allen said, because they have the advantage in experience.

The winner of the Invitational has gone on to win the national championship nine of the last 14 years, but Allen said that doesn't bother him.

The meet is significant, he said. "But that doesn't mean we're in a must-win situation," Allen said.

Allen said he expects a slow start from the Huskers in the first part of the season, but said Oklahoma won't be able to beat them later in the season when it really counts.

"They'll (Oklahoma) score pretty much the same all year," Allen said.

Nebraska's slow start can be attributed to the young team they are competing with this year.

The Huskers graduated four senior All-American's, off of last year's national championship team and will be competing with seven freshmen this year.

Four of those freshmen Burkett Powell, Che Bowers, Sumner Darling and Dennis Harrison will be competing in the all-around event.

Allen said he was so confident in this freshman class that he spent five out of the seven scholarships he can offer on them.

"This is the best recruiting class in the country," Allen said.

He said they are all better than

former Nebraska All-American Patrick Kirksey was as a freshman and four will make the U.S. Olympic team in 1992 and '96, Allen said.

Allen said, however, that the team will call on sophomore Josh Saegert to do the all-around and lead the team.

"Josh Saegert is our most consistent performer," Allen said. "He's the one who is going to establish the momentum for the team," he said.

The Huskers will host Iowa State, Air Force and Oklahoma in the Big Eight Invitational Friday and Saturday night at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

## NU's Mueller goes to Florida

From Staff Reports

Nebraska tennis player Matthias Mueller will play in the 1990 Du Pont National Clay Court Tennis Championships in Panama City Beach, Fla. The tournament starts today and runs through Sunday.

The junior from Hamm, Germany was one of 32 players selected for singles competition by the Intercollegiate Tennis Coaches Association.



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## Shortage of winning teams may result in empty bowls

The Associated Press  
Parity in college football is making a parody of the bowl games.

If you think it has been a crazy season thus far, consider the following:

- There might not be enough teams for the 19 bowl games. Under NCAA rules, a team must have a winning record to qualify for a bowl and only 37 Division I-A teams are assured of finishing with winning records.
- That includes either Baylor or Rice, who meet this weekend; the runner-up in the Big West Conference, whose champion goes to the California Raisin Bowl, plus Mid-American Conference teams Toledo, Ball State and Western Michigan. The MAC champion goes to the Raisin Bowl and the others are not likely to be considered by other bowls.
- As many as seven teams that have agreed to accept bids could play themselves out of the picture, including No. 14 Tennessee, which is 5-2-2 with three games remaining. The others are Air Force (5-5-0), Alabama (5-4-0), Baylor (5-3-1), Indiana (5-3-1), Michigan State (5-3-1) and Syracuse (5-3-2).

A rash of upsets would have to occur for all those teams to blow their bowl bids but...

"Anything is possible this year," said David Cawood, assistant executive director of the NCAA. "It doesn't surprise me. And because of so many bowls handing out their invitations early, there's more talk of a playoff than there's ever been."

Two bowls have even swiped teams that were headed elsewhere. The Fiesta Bowl, desperate after Arizona's negative Martin Luther King Jr. holiday vote, took Louisville away from the All American Bowl, which countered by grabbing Southern Mississippi from the Independence Bowl.

"A lot of people think there are too many bowls," said John Swofford, athletic director at the University of North Carolina and chairman of the NCAA's Post-Season Football Subcommittee. "But our committee does not have the authority to determine how many bowls there are."

"As long as the criteria are met, we're required to sanction a bowl." The major criteria for new bowls are a \$2 million letter of credit from a banking institution, written support from 20 Division I-A athletic directors and a 50,000-seat stadium already in place.

The bowls always have played politics, but never as a result of general elections.

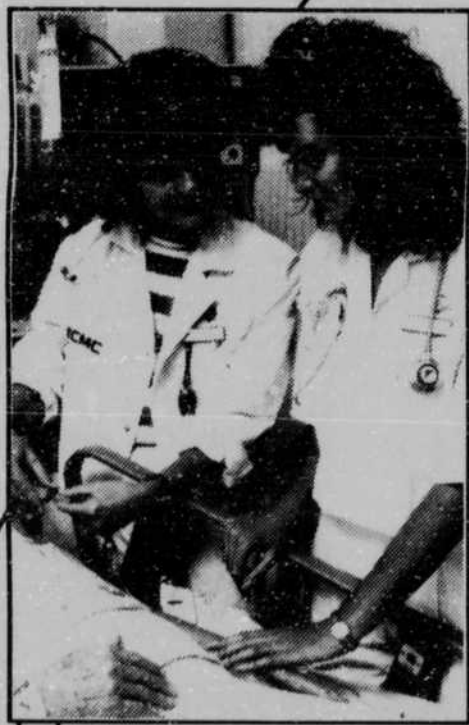
"Who would have thought the Fiesta Bowl would have affected the Independence Bowl? It is a strange world we live in," Independence Bowl chairman Brant Goyne said.

In addition, the University of California was criticized by the NAACP for accepting a bid to the Copper Bowl in Tucson in the aftermath of the King vote.

"Nineteen bowl games is too many, and eight games on Jan. 1 is too many," said Steve Hatchell, executive director of the Orange Bowl and chairman of the Football Bowl Association. "We knew a year ago it could get dangerously close to not having enough teams to play."

It will get even worse next year when a team must have six wins over Division I-A opponents to warrant a bowl bid. If that rule were in effect this year, Air Force, Baylor and North Carolina State would not be eligible, Illinois would not have qualified as yet and Louisiana Tech and Temple would not be trying to impress the Independence Bowl. All claim at least one Division I-AA team among their victims.

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## Thompson

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He writes of the overwhelming media buildup before the 1987 Nebraska-Oklahoma game — dubbed as the "Game of the Century II." He recalls how former Cornhusker quarterback Steve Taylor smirked at him during a pregame interview with CBS, and the feeling he and his teammates had for three weeks prior to the game, while Husker players predicted a Nebraska rout of the Sooners.

Overall, Thompson does an excellent job of painting a vivid picture for his readers. From his first play as a Sooner, when he scored a touchdown against North Texas State, to his last — which resulted in a broken leg against Nebraska — he tells it, evidently, like it was.

The guns, the fights, the improprieties within the program... it's all here.

## Huskers

Continued from Page 7

which began Wednesday. Witherspoon is a four-time honor roll student and vice-president of the Honor Society. Beck said called her a Stanford-type player academically.

Yet Beck said she and her coaching staff contemplated passing on Witherspoon because of something she'll have to learn. Even though Witherspoon is only 5-9, Beck said,

The atmosphere described by Thompson of the Norman, Okla., campus was one in which the Sooner athletes, particularly the football players, were kings, and they got what they wanted.

Whether it was money, cars, sex or drugs, they got it, according to Thompson.

The book has received endless criticism since it was released two months ago, and more than a little of it has come from Switzer. Perhaps some of it is deserved, but probably not all of it.

Switzer has called Thompson a liar for his allegations. But after finishing the book, one has to examine the source — actually, both sources.

After all, if it's a choice between believing the 22-year-old who went to prison for his mistakes or the 53-year-old who lied and used every means available to cover up that and other incidents, who is to be believed?

she is a back-to-the-basket post player who will have to adjust to playing facing the hoop in college. Sophomore LeeAnna Hiestand, 5-10, is trying to make the same switch right now for Nebraska.

But Nebraska went after Witherspoon, Beck said, partly because Kansas State and Missouri were other possibilities. With Witherspoon's skills and aggressive nature, Beck said, the Huskers couldn't afford that, even if she does have to learn a new position.