

Big Eight championships

Gymnasts hope to rock in quest for fourth title

By Todd Cooper
Staff Reporter

Senior co-captains Ted Dimas and Brad Bryan will be going for a sweep at this weekend's Big Eight men's gymnastics championships at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

"I want to finish out in a bang," Dimas said. "I want to go through winning all four championships."

The Cornhuskers will be competing with Oklahoma and Iowa State. Compulsories will begin at 7 p.m. today, with optionals starting at the same time Saturday.

Nebraska has won the Big Eight championship the past three years. But they've never

faced the quality of this year's Oklahoma Sooners, the No. 1 team in the country, according to Dimas.

"This is by far their best team," Dimas said. "They have three experienced seniors who are really talented gymnasts."

Jarrod Hanks, Bryan Halstead and Jeff Lutz will lead the Sooners against the youthful Huskers. Besides Bryan and Dimas, Nebraska competes five freshmen.

"We, by far, have one of the most talented groups in the nation," Dimas said. "It's inexperienced, but if we can hit our routines, we have the capability of beating them."

Dimas said he will use his past experience in the Big Eight championships to convince the

freshmen of that.

"They want to win a Big Eight championship, but they still lack a little confidence," Dimas said. "I don't think they realize what kind of team we have."

Dimas said the younger Huskers compare favorably with the group that won the national championship last year.

"If you look at Patrick (Kirksey), Mark (Warburton) and Bob (Stelter) in their freshman year, I would take this team over them," he said. "They're going to be the powerhouse of this country."

To be a powerhouse Sunday, Nebraska will have to be consistent, Dimas said.

"We have to start off the meet as gangbust-

ters," Dimas said. "If we can get everyone rocking on the floor, that will just get us going."

Head Coach Francis Allen said Dimas will do some rocking of his own today and Saturday.

"I think this meet you're really going to see him come in true form," Allen said. "He's been really solid the past month. He has started us off extremely well in each of his events this month."

And Allen said he'll need that to beat the No. 1 team in the nation.

"If we put pressure on them early, they could get rattled," Allen said. "They've come in here before and got their ass kicked, so they know we're capable."

Hosers explode in game to close perfect season

By Brian Busenbark
Staff Reporter

The Hosers capped a perfect intramural basketball season with a perfect second half in defeating Beta Theta Pi 58-36 Thursday night at the Lee & Helene Sapp Recreation Facility.

Both teams had trouble shooting in the first half, struggling to combine for 26 points with two minutes left before halftime.

Jamar Johnson, who led the Hosers with eight points in the first half, said the Hosers just couldn't get into their game plan early on.

"We just weren't getting the ball to the right places," Johnson said. "We weren't able to work it into the middle, and so that didn't open up the outside either."

Despite giving up a lot of size to the Hosers, the Betas controlled the paint in the first half, largely because of Doug Henningsen. Henningsen grabbed eight of his 11 rebounds in the first half.

With 2:25 left in the first half, the Hosers began to get into synch. Down 17-9, they ran off eight unanswered

points to tie the score at halftime and set the stage for their second-half explosion.

That's when Johnson took control. Johnson scored 15 more points in the second period and sparked the Hoser transition game to a quick eight-point lead five minutes into the second half.

"Give a lot of the credit to Dave Lutz," Johnson said. "He told me at halftime that they were susceptible to pressure on the ball. He's the one that forced a lot of the turnovers that started the break."

Johnson said that the Hosers decided at halftime to distribute the ball evenly, taking advantage of the Beta zone.

"Kenny (Walker), Brent (Pick) and Jake (Young) did a great job inside," Johnson said. "And that opened it up for Doak (Ostergard) and the guys to pop from the outside."

The exclamation point of the Hoser's victory came with 2:15 left in the game, on Kenny Walker's breakaway monster dunk.

Rick Harris led the Fraternity A champions with 11 points.



Nebraska's Ken Waller runs a curve during the indoor season.

Michelle Paulman/Daily Nebraskan

Coach expects runners to score high outdoors

By John Gardner
Staff Reporter

All season, Nebraska track and field coaches have raved about their teams being more competitive outdoors.

Now, with Nebraska's men's and women's teams going to Louisiana State for a meet next weekend, they will be proven right or wrong, and men's sprints coach Dave Harris is sticking to that prediction.

With the addition of events like the javelin, discus and decathlon, the Cornhuskers are expected to score a lot of points, Harris said.

For instance, in the discus, the Nebraska men have returning All-American Jeff Hooper, who won the Big Eight outdoor championship last season. Andy Snyder returns after placing fifth at Big Eight last year. And redshirt freshman Andy Meyer will compete. Meyer came out of high school ranked in the top three in the country, Harris said.

In the javelin, Eric Leick returns after taking third at Big Eight last season. Harris said Roddy James will be coming back from surgery

and should be a big help at the end of the season. Paul Larkin also is a good thrower, he said.

The decathlon is another added dimension to the Cornhusker squad. Harris said All-American Rick Schweiger and Mike Bailey should score a lot of points.

"Rick (Schweiger) has a good shot at winning the whole thing this year," he said.

Freshman triple jumper Phouphet Singbandith also should fare well outdoors, Harris said.

Then, of course, there are the men and women sprinters.

"We expect them to carry a lot of the load," Harris said. "They have the potential to score a lot of points."

Especially with the return of Bob Jelks, who did not compete indoors. Jelks will help fill the void left by Tamas Molnar, Harris said. Molnar, who pulled and repelled his hamstring during the indoor season, still is not completely healthy.

"It's really killing me right now," Harris said. "Whenever it looks like Tamas is ready to go, he injures his hamstring."

Gymnasts to pursue Big 8 title

By Erik Unger
Staff Reporter

Nebraska women's gymnastics coach Rick Walton said he is glad Saturday's Big Eight championship is not being held in Lincoln.

The Cornhuskers had their best scores of the season in their final two road meets. They scored 189.75 points at Arizona State and finished with a season-high 189.95 at Alabama.

But, having the Big Eight meet at Columbia, Mo., still doesn't make Nebraska the favorite, Walton said.

"Oklahoma is the favorite," Walton said. "They drew the best rotation, the best depth in the conference and maybe the most skill."

Walton said Nebraska and Missouri aren't far behind. All three teams will be advancing to the regionals following the conference championships.

The only Big Eight team not going to regionals is Iowa State. However, Walton said not to count them out.

"Iowa State has a chance to prove something," he said.

He said competing so well in Alabama bodes well for the team this weekend.

"I can't imagine any more pressure than down at Alabama," Walton said. "No one will fall apart (this weekend)."

SPORTS BRIEFS

NU swimmers take 16th place

The Nebraska 200-yard freestyle relay team finished 16th to receive honorable mention All-American status Thursday during the first day of the NCAA women's swimming and diving championships in Indianapolis, Ind.

Mindy Matheny, Chris Gmeiner, Lynne Braddock and Chris Frederick swam a time of 1:35.12.

Melanie Wirtner swam a school-record 2:04.36 in the 200 individual medley but did not make the finals. All-American Amy Aarsen finished 17th in 1-meter diving.

Husker rejoins basketball team

Point guard Jose Ramos has returned to the Nebraska men's basketball team and is participating in off-season conditioning.

Ramos left the team shortly before the Big Eight tournament, and did not rejoin the team for the NCAA tournament.

Tennis team Florida-bound

By Jeff Singer
Staff Reporter
and Paul Domeier
Senior Editor

The Nebraska men's tennis team is taking a complex trip to Florida for spring break.

The what: The Cornhuskers will play six dual matches, starting Sunday against Southwest Missouri State.

The where: Outside, for the first time this spring, in Miami.

"It'll be good for us to play outdoors," Nebraska coach Kerry McDermott said. "We're going to use the trip to prepare for the elements of the sun and wind."

The who: In addition to Southwest Missouri State, Florida International and Barry and Boca Raton, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach community colleges.

The when: A week before the Big Eight season begins. The Huskers will face defending conference champion Oklahoma State April 6.

The why #1: Recruiting. The players from the three community colleges could transfer to Nebraska someday.

The why #2: To set the starting lineup for Big Eight play.

The fourth, fifth and sixth singles positions are up in the air, to be fought over by Joey Salerno, Anthony Kotarac and Karl Falkland. McDermott said that the lineup for the conference season will be set when Nebraska returns.

The why #3: To build the team's confidence.

"We should go down and win all six matches, but if we're not ready, we can get beat," McDermott said. "I just want to see us improve after each match we play."

Big Eight baseball to begin

The Nebraska baseball team will end its spring break trip by starting its Big Eight season.

The 11-4 Cornhuskers will play the final four at Kansas next weekend.

Nebraska will play Hardin-Simmons in a single game today and a double-header Saturday in Abilene, Texas. Hardin-Simmons was 5-24 entering a three-game series earlier this week.

The Huskers will face 23rd-ranked Texas Tech in single games Monday and Tuesday in Lubbock, Texas. The Red Raiders are 27-5 going into a weekend series with Houston.

Nebraska will play 12-8 Kansas in

one game March 29, two games March 30 and a fourth game March 31 in Lawrence, Kan.

Last season, Kansas finished in sixth place in the Big Eight with a 27-31 record, 10-14 in conference play. The two teams split four games last year in Lincoln.

Kansas has had some success against top teams this season with wins over Texas and Creighton, both ranked in the top 10. The Jayhawks were swept by Arkansas, a team Nebraska split a double-header with earlier this season. Kansas will open its Big Eight season this weekend against Kansas State.

— Nick Hytrek