

Athletes strive for NCAA meet Time to qualify runs short

By Chuck Green
Senior Reporter

In keeping with the first part of the season, rain will be an almost certain factor when the Cornhusker men's and women's track and field teams travel to Seattle Saturday for a triangular meet with Washington and Washington State.



Pepin

Nebraska coach Gary Pepin said he is hoping that a few more Huskers trickle through with the raindrops as qualifiers for the NCAA championships.

This will be the last road meet of the year for the Huskers. Nebraska will host the Twi-Light Invitational May 11 and the Big Eight championships May 19-20, both at Ed Weir Track.

But Pepin said he hopes that if anyone else is going to qualify for the NCAA outdoor championships, they won't wait for the last two meets.

"Time is running out," he said. "We just need some good weather and good performances, and we'll be fine."

Which brings up the main problem for this weekend's meet in Seattle. This, like most of the rest of the year, is the rainy season in the Pacific Northwest.

Three of the last four meets the Huskers have competed in have been in rain and cold temperatures, which has kept down the number of Nebraska's NCAA qualifiers.

So far, 13 Husker women and 10 men have qualified for the meet, which will be in Eugene, Ore., May 29-June 1.

Pepin said he and his athletes are anxious to get to Seattle.

"We're really looking forward to this meet," he said. "Washington State's men's team is one of the favorites to win the NCAA title and they have a great team. There's no event that we're a shoo-in to beat them in."

"They're going to be as good as or better than any men's team we've faced so far this year."

Washington State was tabbed by Track & Field News as the pre-meet favorite to win the NCAA men's championship. The Cougars were picked over Tennessee and Auburn and were projected to have two champions — August Olobia in the 100-

meter dash and Tony Li in the 110 hurdles.

Washington also has a strong men's team, Pepin said.

But the Husker women appear to be the strongest of the three teams, he said.

"It should be a great meet for our teams," Pepin said. "At this point in the season, in order to gear up for the conference meet, we need a meet like this. The competition in every event should be at a high level."

"There will be people out there who run faster than anyone we've seen all year."

Pepin said he hopes that some of those people will be in Nebraska uniforms.

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