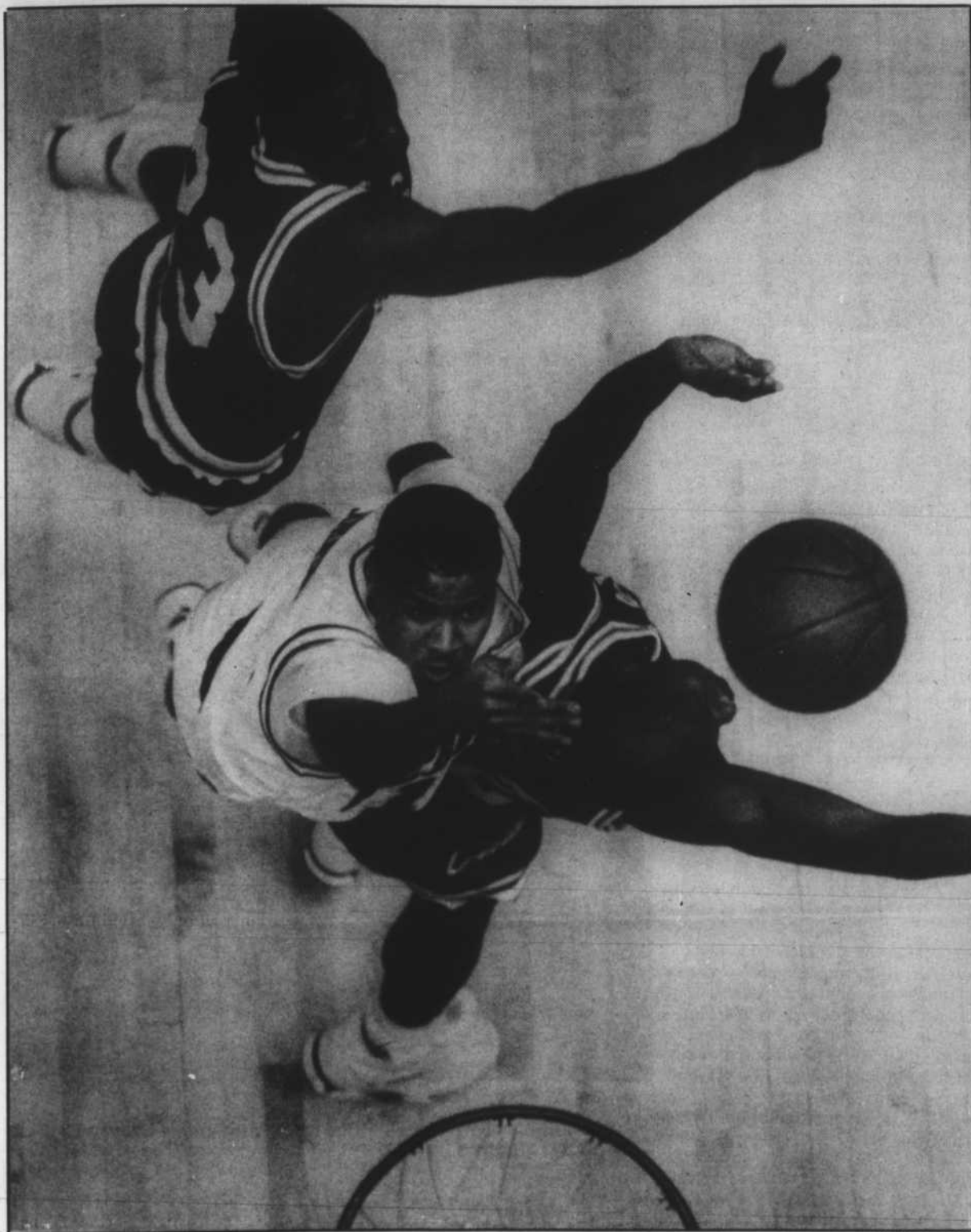


Huskies face Sooners in opening game



Nebraska's Jamar Johnson fights two Kansas State players for a rebound during the Cornhuskers' 91-62 win against the Wildcats on March 4 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center. Johnson and his teammates will begin Big Eight tournament play today against Oklahoma.

By Thomas Clouse
Senior Editor

Repeat in reverse. The Oklahoma men's basketball team will attempt to do today what the Cornhuskers did to it last year — win all three of the season's games.

Nebraska Coach Danny Nee said that the Huskers should have the advantage going into the opening round of the Big Eight Tournament against the fourth-seeded, 24th-ranked Sooners.

"I think the team that has the two losses has the emotional and psychological edge," he said. "But that goes out the window after the first 10 minutes because you still have to execute and play."

Nebraska lost Saturday's game 106-97 to the Sooners at Norman. The Huskers also lost the first game, in Lincoln, 79-76.

The loss dropped Nebraska to 19-8 overall and 7-7 in the Big Eight. Oklahoma is 20-7 overall and 8-6 in the conference.

Nee said the key was Oklahoma's ability to run the floor, which cost Nebraska 38 points in the last matchup.

"Their quickness really bothers us," he said. "We have to play better transition defense."

Nee said the game between Nebraska and Oklahoma demonstrated how far Big Eight basketball had come

in recent years.

Before last Saturday's game in Norman, Okla., both teams knew they would meet again in the Big Eight tournament, but both teams played with high intensity throughout the game, Nee said.

"Big Eight basketball has reached the level that no team is just going to come out and play," he said. "Oklahoma and Nebraska have a lot of pride. This is a great rivalry, and it was a really good game both ways. We wanted to win, but they wanted to win more."

Nebraska guard Jamar Johnson, who scored 21 points in the game, said Nebraska's effort against Oklahoma today would be just as intense.

"We're going to play hard, and we're going to keep knocking on that door," he said. "We just put it all out there (last Saturday night). I think we enjoyed that style. This was Nebraska basketball at its best."

On Tuesday, Iowa State Coach Johnny Orr and Oklahoma Coach Billy Tubbs both agreed that the Big Eight tournament was a poor way to try to get more conference teams into the NCAAs.

Their argument was that for a team like 19-11 Iowa State, which is an uncertain selection for the NCAA's

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NU men's probable starters

NU vs. Oklahoma Fri. Mar. 13, 12:08 p.m. Kemper Arena, Kansas City, Mo.

Nebraska (19-8 7-7)		PPG	RPG
F	21 Carl Hayes	6-9 Sr.	11.8 5.6
F	44 Bruce Chubick	6-7 So.	7.1 5.5
C	34 Derrick Chandler	6-10 Jr.	12.5 8.2
G	12 Jamar Johnson	5-11 So.	11.5 3.5
G	52 Eric Piatkowski	6-6 So.	14.6 6.4
Oklahoma (20-7 8-6)		PPG	RPG
F	31 Damon Patterson	6-8 Sr.	20.9 8.9
F	32 Jeff Webster	6-8 So.	13.9 6.1
C	40 Bryan Sallier	6-8 Jr.	14.3 9.2
G	03 Terry Evans	6-0 Jr.	10.2 3.2
G	20 Brent Price	6-1 Sr.	19.4 3.8

Brian Shellito/DN

NU track coach says teams to exceed expectations of experts at magazine

By John Gardner
Staff Reporter

A panel of track and field experts at Track Wire Magazine isn't giving Nebraska much respect going into this weekend's NCAA Championships, but Cornhusker coach Gary Pepin said he thought his teams would throw it a surprise or two.

According to the magazine, the Huskers have a slim chance of winning the meet, but Pepin said he wasn't worried about its predictions.

"In the Midwest, teams traditionally get very little recognition," Pepin said. "We aren't picked to do much this year, but I think we can do considerably better than what people think."

"In fact, we always do better than they expect us to. The problem is, there is very poor publicity in this area about track and field."

The two-day event will be today and Saturday at the Hoosier Dome in Indianapolis, Ind.

In all, Nebraska will send 19 athletes to the meet — eight women and 11 men. Both the men's and women's teams are coming off Big Eight victories last weekend. It was

the 13th-straight indoor title for the women, and the fourth in the last seven years for the men.

Leading the way for the men is Kevin Coleman, whose shot-put effort leads the country this season. Coleman's toss of 65 feet, 3 1/2 inches at the conference meet puts him in position to win the NCAA title. But, according to Track Wire Magazine, a second-place finish for Coleman is all that can be expected.

Pepin disagrees.

"I think Kevin can do better than that," he said. "I really feel he can win this meet. I'm sure the guy they have picked to win it thinks he can, too."

Stephen Golding returns to the "show" in the 55-meter hurdles as the Big Eight Champion once more. Golding's top mark of the season is 7.26 seconds, and is picked to finish fourth.

"Stephen has been there before, and I believe he'll do a good job," Pepin said.

Petar Malesev, a freshman from Yugoslavia, posted a personal-best mark of 7-2 1/2 in the high jump at the conference meet to qualify for nationals. Malesev is nursing a sore

ankle. Earlier this season, he said that he could jump much higher than he had so far.

The 1,600 and 3,200 relay teams also qualified. In the 1,600 relay, All-American sprinter Tamas Molnar had to be replaced by Travis Grant, but it seems to have been for the better. At the conference meet, Nebraska ran a 3:09.86 with Molnar in the lineup.

Last weekend at the Last Chance meet at Iowa State, the relay team ran a school-record 3:07.64 with Grant. Mark Jackson, a three-time member of Nebraska's outdoor All-American 1,600 relay team, will join Grant, Patrick Trainor and Ken Waller this time out.

In the 3,200 relay, a team consisting of Renier Henning, Kevin Miller, Kirk Petit and Jeremy Skinner ran a school-record time of 7:21.66 at the Last Chance meet to get in.

On the women's side, Pepin said, Nebraska definitely wasn't getting very much respect. The Husker women are only expected to finish in a tie for 14th place.

"That could very well happen," Pepin said. "But with the quality

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Coach says NU psyched for meet against UCLA

By Chuck Green
Senior Reporter

Traditionally, preparing his gymnasts for meets against UCLA has never been a problem for Nebraska men's gymnastics coach Francis Allen.

When the top-ranked Cornhuskers travel to Los Angeles to meet the Bruins on Saturday, Allen expects intensity — from his team, not from UCLA.

UCLA won NCAA team titles in 1984 and 1987, and has finished in the country's top 10 the last 12 seasons. The Bruins placed third at last year's NCAA championships. UCLA currently is ranked 10th.

The Bruins have been slowed all season by injuries to top performers. Before the season began, UCLA's roster looked to be one of the best Coach Art Shurlock had ever fielded.

But injuries to five-time All-American Scott Keswick and USA Championships runner-up Chaney Humphrey have lowered both UCLA's ranking and the Bruins' chance of qualifying for the NCAA team championships in April.

Allen said this injury-riddled UCLA team wasn't what it used to be.

"Without Chaney, they're in trouble," he said. "At the beginning

of the season, we thought this would be one of those classic UCLA-Nebraska clashes that have been so good over the last several years. But you never count on injuries."

In addition to UCLA, Nebraska will face Cal-Santa Barbara and Army at the meet, which will be at 9 p.m. CST at the John Wooden Center on the UCLA campus.

Cal-Santa Barbara returns 11 lettermen from last year's team, which finished the season ranked in the top 20 for only the second time in the program's history.

Army, which earned a 6-10 record last year, lost its top three gymnasts from last season. The Cadets finished 28th last season.

Without Keswick in UCLA's lineup, Nebraska's Dennis Harrison should have a relatively easy time winning the all-around competition.

Harrison turned in the best day of his two-year career at Nebraska last week in a triangular meet with New Mexico and Washington's club team, posting a 58.50 all-around score. The score was just .05 short of the school record set by Jim Hartung in 1981.

The Huskers won last weekend's triangular with a season-best team score of 286.20, blowing past New

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