

NU gymnasts to brush with No. 2 Stanford

By Chuck Green
Senior Reporter

This men's gymnastics regional in Albuquerque, N.M., this weekend will have a national championship flavor.

Top-ranked Nebraska and No. 2 Stanford will be among the 10 teams in the West Regional that will decide four qualifiers for the NCAA Championships, which will be April 23-25 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

The meet is set to begin at 8 p.m. in Johnson Arena, with the University of New Mexico as host.

The head-to-head confrontation between Nebraska and Stanford will highlight the nation's top-scoring teams. The Cornhuskers average 285.68 per meet, while the Cardinal averages 285.30.

Nebraska has been No. 1 for all but one week this season. It was Stanford

that knocked the Huskers from the top spot by scoring a 288.40 against California-Berkeley.

The score had broken the previous NCAA team scoring record of 288.15, set by Nebraska during the 1988 NCAA championships.

Nebraska coach Francis Allen said he and his gymnasts were looking forward to this weekend's regional.

"It will be nice to meet up with them," he said. "We will have a lot better idea about what we'll be up against at NCAAs after seeing Stanford in person. I've heard they're good, and they must be to score that high, but to really know what a team is like, you need to see them in person."

Nebraska is riding a string of eight consecutive team scores above 280 points, which ties UCLA for an unofficial consecutive-meet scoring record.

Allen said he also was hoping to

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Allen,
NU men's gymnastics
coach

avoid the same problems the Huskers faced at this time last year.

Last season at regionals, Nebraska was in first place after two events, but was tied with UCLA in second place with one rotation remaining, trailing

Stanford. The Huskers then turned in a season-low score of 44.75 on the parallel bars, which knocked them from second to fourth place.

Allen said he thought being back in the No. 1 spot would help the Huskers focus this time around.

"We're used to (being ranked No. 1)," he said. "I think with my personality and with my team's personality, No. 1 is a great place to be. We get everybody's best effort every time we compete, but that's all right. I think we would anyway. We're Nebraska, and we have seven national titles."

"That means we don't have a lot of friends in this business."

Allen said he was impressed with the success of this year's team. The Huskers, made up primarily of freshmen and sophomores, have turned into one of the best gymnastics teams ever assembled, he said.

Nebraska's highest regular-season team score this season was a 286.20 against New Mexico, but the Huskers recorded a 286.50 at the Big Eight championships last month.

At the Big Eight meet, Nebraska captured its fourth conference title in the last five years and its 11th overall. Sophomore Dennis Harrison, who was named the Big Eight Gymnast of the Month in February and March, became the 11th Husker to win the all-around competition, scoring a 113.05.

Nebraska won or shared individual titles in five of the six events.

Notes:

Nebraska is 16-1 against teams competing in the West Regional. The Huskers' only blemish came Dec. 7 against Oklahoma, which edged Nebraska by one-tenth of a point.

Since that loss, Nebraska is 12-0 against teams competing in the West.

NU softball team sets sights on winning streak

By Susie Arth
Staff Reporter

Nebraska softball coach Ron Wolforth is hoping his team will use its six games this weekend to gain momentum.

The Cornhuskers, who are coming off a two-game sweep against Wichita State Wednesday, will face Colorado State in a doubleheader Friday at the NU Softball Complex and travel to Omaha to play in the Creighton Tournament Saturday and Sunday.

Wolforth said he hoped the Huskers could win six in a row this weekend and extend their winning streak to eight.

"If we string eight games together, the University of Nebraska is a force to be reckoned with," he said.

Although Colorado State defeated the Huskers earlier this season, Wolforth said he was expecting his team to sweep the Rams.

"They beat us in our worst game of the entire year," Wolforth said. "Our defense broke down and they put a lot of pressure on us."

Wolforth said he planned to start freshman pitcher Lisa Shandy against Colorado State and give her as much playing time as possible this weekend to help build momentum.

Shandy's confidence, Wolforth said, has finally grown and has enabled her to pitch up to her capability.

Now it is important, Wolforth said, for the rest of the players to start believing they can win.

"I hope our team buys into the fact that we can sweep these people," Wolforth said. "But we will see what they believe on Friday."

"It's really not important what I expect or

See SOFTBALL on 8



Michelle Paulman/DN

Wichita State's Nikki Ewertz falls over after tagging out Nebraska's Kristin Davidson at second base in Wednesday's Cornhusker sweep of the Shockers. The Huskers will try to extend their winning streak to eight as they play six games this weekend.

Huskers to wrangle with OSU

NU aims to break cowboy tradition

By Peter Theoharis
Staff Reporter

Oklahoma State baseball coach Gary Ward and his Cowboys will ride into town tonight for a big series against Nebraska.

Oklahoma State, 27-8 and ranked ninth by Collegiate Baseball/ESPN and 11th in Baseball America, is scheduled to square off against Nebraska tonight at 7 p.m. in the opener of a four-game series. The teams will play a doubleheader Saturday at 4 p.m. and a single game Sunday at 1 p.m.

The two schools are tied with Oklahoma for first place in the Big Eight Conference.

Nebraska is 3-1 entering the weekend, while the Cowboys and Oklahoma are both 6-2.

At the helm of the Cowboys, Ward has compiled a 699-211 record in 15 seasons. Along the way, Ward has made Oklahoma State a fixture at the College World Series. The Cowboys' last trip to Omaha was in 1990 when

Nebraska-Oklahoma St. Series Notes

All-Time: Oklahoma State leads 80-41. Nebraska has never won more than two games in a series against the Cowboys.

Last season: The two teams split the four-game series in Stillwater, Okla. Nebraska won 5-0 and 10-3. Oklahoma State won 9-7 and 10-9.

This season: The Cowboys are 27-8 and ranked 11th in the most recent Baseball America Poll. Nebraska and Oklahoma State are tied with Oklahoma at the top of the Big Eight standings. Nebraska is 3-1, Oklahoma state 6-2.



they finished second to Georgia.

Cornhusker reliever Steve Boyd, with seven saves this season, could be a prominent figure in this weekend's games.

Boyd said Nebraska must go into the games confident against the tradition of the Cowboys.

"We can't let it get in our heads that they're unbeatable," Boyd said. "They're like any other team."

"I personally take it as just any

other game and I hope the other guys do."

Nebraska's Tim Seaton, who is replacing injured Marc Sagmoen in the leadoff spot, said the Huskers must remain positive this weekend and focus on each game.

"We're confident right now," Seaton said. "If we do what we can, we have a chance of doing well."

See BASEBALL on 8

Women to attempt climb from bottom regional rung

By Robert Birkeland
Staff Reporter

In the words of Nebraska women's gymnastics coach Rick Walton, his team is in for an eye-opening experience this weekend.

The Cornhuskers will compete in the NCAA Midwest Regional Saturday in Salt Lake City. The Huskers will be the seventh and lowest seed at the meet.

"We are happy to be there considering where we were the first half of the year," Walton said.

Walton said junior CeCe Ocel is the only Nebraska gymnast that has competed at this level. The young team is made up of five freshmen, three sophomores and one junior.

An average of about 12,000 people attend the meet, Walton said, the largest crowd the Huskers will compete in front of this year. For this reason, it could be tough to stay calm at the beginning of the meet, Walton said, but he said that feeling shouldn't last long.

"Once the meet gets under way,

things will fall into place and it will be like any other meet," Walton said.

Walton said the Huskers could do as well as anyone if they got off to a good start.

"This is not the kind of meet that you can fall down early and then make a push at the end," Walton said. "If we fall down early, then we are done."

Robin Richter returned from an early season back and neck injury to compete in the past two meets, and she will compete in the regional meet.

Walton said Richter had been a big help for the team on the uneven parallel bars. If she hits her vault routine like she is capable of doing, he said, she should get a high score.

Walton said his team was fairly healthy except for Big Eight all-around champion Martha Jenkins, who had been hampered by nagging injuries. Walton said Jenkins was training day by day and her condition would not improve until

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