

## Coach says improving gymnast is key factor

### Idahoan swings into major role

By Beau Finley  
Staff Reporter

When entering the 1993 women's gymnastics season, Nebraska's Jennifer Hawkinson was just hoping to compete in the all-around.

That was then. Hawkinson, a sophomore from Boise, Idaho, has placed second in the all-around once and third another time this season and, along with teammate Nicole Duval, has been the top performer for the sixth-ranked Cornhuskers.

Last week in a meet against Southeast Missouri State, Hawkinson came in third in the all-around with a score of 38.20 and was the highest Nebraska finisher.

She also tied a personal best with a score of 9.85 on the uneven bars.

Hawkinson said competing in all four events allows her a chance to be a major ingredient in the Huskers' success.

"I want to be a major contributor, not just some factor," Hawkinson said.

Nebraska coach Rick Walton said that Hawkinson's improvement has made her more than a factor.

"She's had a big turnaround since last year," Walton said. "She's had a good season to this point and now it's just a matter of her being consistent."

Hawkinson's first season as a Husker was plagued with disappointment. She only competed in three events, and her team, beset by injury, finished 13th nationally, one position away from qualifying for the national championships.

Hawkinson admits that her freshman year was a "difficult" period, but said the adversity has helped her become a better role model for her teammates.

"Last year we (the freshmen class) were the leaders because of all the injuries, so this year there's no added pressure," Hawkinson said.

Hawkinson's improvement is nowhere more evident than in her attitude toward the rest of the season.

"After every meet I'm more confident; after every meet life is a little easier," she said.

The Huskers have shown simi-



Staci McKee/DN

Nebraska's Jennifer Hawkinson performs her routine on the balance beam in a meet against Air Force earlier this year at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

lar progress, recording victories against No. 19 Oklahoma and No. 6 Auburn. The team has risen from their preseason No. 18 ranking to No. 6 in the nation.

Hawkinson said the ranking is no fluke.

"We have so much talent and capability," Hawkinson said. "We can compete under any pressure

and do well."

That pressure could be intense if the Huskers earn a berth in the NCAA Championships at Corvallis, Ore., on April 15-17.

"We'll definitely be there (at nationals)," Hawkinson said. "When we get to regionals, we'll show everyone how good we are."

## NCAA berth hopes alive, Husker says

By Susie Arth  
Senior Reporter

Nebraska's men's basketball loss to Oklahoma State Monday inflicted plenty of short-term pain. But Cornhusker center Derrick Chandler said he expected his team to make a full recovery.

And Chandler said he was still optimistic about Nebraska's chances to get into the 64-team NCAA Tournament.

"(The loss) won't hurt our chances," he said. "If we can steal one on the road and win the remainder at home, we should make it to the NCAA."

Oklahoma State's 73-63 win dropped Nebraska's Big Eight record to 4-5 and overall record to 16-8.

The Huskers' remaining road games are against two of the Big Eight's best: Missouri and Kansas.

Colorado, Iowa State and Oklahoma will be the final three teams to face the Huskers at the Bob Devaney Sports Center this season.

By winning one of the road games in addition to all their remaining home games, the Huskers would improve their overall record to 20-9. Another chance for a win would come at the Big Eight Tournament March 12-14.

Twenty wins is usually considered the magic number for an NCAA berth.

But Chandler said the team still had many adjustments to make before it would be ready to play in the NCAA.

Sacrificing individual glory for the good of the team is one of those

	Conf.		Games	
	W	L	W	L
Kansas	7	1	20	3
Kansas State	5	3	15	5
Oklahoma State	6	4	15	5
Oklahoma	4	4	16	7
Missouri	4	4	15	8
Nebraska	4	5	16	8
Iowa State	4	5	14	8
Colorado	0	8	8	12

Monday's result—Oklahoma St. 73, Nebraska 63  
Tuesday's game—Kansas St. at Colorado (late)  
Wednesday's games—Missouri at Iowa St.  
Oklahoma at Kansas



Scott Maurer/DN

adjustments, he said.

"The only way we'll make it the NCAA is if we play as a team," he said.

Chandler said the erosion of team unity caused the Huskers' loss to the Cowboys and halted the momentum they had built during the past two victories over No. 3 Kansas and No. 23 Kansas State.

The Cornhuskers' winning chemistry, he said, had not yet become consistent enough.

"It takes time," Chandler said. "We've gotten better—it's just taken longer than we expected."

## Athlete may set record with undefeated season

By Tim Pearson  
Staff Reporter

Winning a national championship is a dream to most people. To others, it is a mere possibility.

But to Nebraska wrestler Matt Lindland, winning a national championship is a definite probability.

Lindland's record is 33-0 this season, and in his second year as a Cornhusker wrestler, he is attempting to do something no other Nebraska wrestler has done before—go undefeated.

The best winning percentage in Cornhusker history belongs to Bill

Scherr, who posted a 36-1 (.973) record in 1984.

Winning the national championship and going the entire season unbeaten are two of the main goals Lindland set for himself before the year began.

"My main goal is, and always has been since I've come here, to become a national champion," Lindland said.

Nebraska wrestling coach Tim Neumann said a national championship for Lindland, ranked No. 1 at 158 pounds, was well within his reach.

"He's kind of on a mission to win a national championship this season," Neumann said. "Billy Scherr is probably remembered as the best wrestler we've had here, and Matt has a chance to break his record."

See LINDLAND on B

## Cowboys ignore script, wreck sequel for Cornhuskers

On a cruel, bitter-cold Big Monday, Nebraska was the victim of the big monster it created a month ago: Big Country and his posse of 'Pokes.

No, the Cornhuskers weren't supposed to lose 73-63 to Bryant Reeves and Oklahoma State Monday night. Not after losing to the Cowboys 30 days earlier in a game Nebraska should have won.

Not after two of Nebraska's biggest wins—67-63 over then-No. 3 Kansas and 80-59 over then-No. 23 Kansas State—in at least two years.

And not, definitely not, after Husker center Derrick Chandler was humiliated (4 points, 5 rebounds) by Big Country (22 points, 15 rebounds) in the first matchup.

That's not how the script was written. Downtown Chandler was supposed to take Big Country to town Monday night.

Just like Nebraska's payback of

Kansas State Saturday, this revenge was supposed to be a beauty. A million-dollar sequel—something like Return of the Jedi or Batman Returns.

It wasn't supposed to be entitled "Big Country Returns."

Nowhere in the story line, nor the box score, was Big Country supposed to star in Monday night's sequel.

D.C. vs. B.C.?

Forget it. No contest. Big Country: Get back to the farm in a big hurry.

Big Country and the 'Pokes didn't read that script.

While Chandler dunked and dinked in shots, Big Country sat and watched with three fouls for the last eight minutes of the first half.

D.C. slammed home an alley-oop from Eric Piatkowski. He did a little dance. Big Country sat.

D.C. blocked Fred Burley. Big Country sat on the big, hard bench and rubbed his big, fuzzy head.

Although in foul trouble in the first



Todd Cooper

half, Big Country was in no trouble during the second half. In fact, he used the same confidence he gained against Nebraska one month earlier.

Before Nebraska rode into town on Jan. 16, the cellar-dwelling Cowboys were saddled with two losses to Iowa State and Kansas State. But the Cornhuskers lost, and let the 'Pokes out of the chute.

And that came back to haunt 'em. Both with that confidence and his homeliness, Big Country was good at tormenting Huskers Monday night.

Reeves capped a 9-2 Cowboy run to tie the game at 36 with 16:20 to play. Big Country made a shot and got fouled. He pumped his fists, talked

some smack and did an ugly little tap dance.

Think back. Wasn't Big Country doing the same thing 30 days ago?

A rebound was tapped through D.C.'s hands. Big Country's big paws grabbed hold and slammed it home.

D.C. watched in disbelief while Oklahoma State outrebounded, outthrustled and outscored Nebraska at the end.

D.C. sat dejected on the bench. Big Country celebrated with a big-country bear hug for his teammates on the bench.

D.C. finished with 17 points and six rebounds. Big Country finished with 16 points and four rebounds.

And a win.

That's not how a classic is supposed to end. Since when does a sequel end the same way as the first showing?

But now, the big question—the same question—everybody was ask-

ing after the Huskers lost to Oklahoma State a month ago:

Can the Huskers make the big dance?

Iowa State coach Johnny Orr said seven Big Eight teams should go. Sorry, Johnny. Like Nebraska coach Danny Nee predicts, the NCAA Tournament will have, at most, five teams.

Big Country and the Cowboys appear to be in. Kansas is in. That leaves Kansas State, Oklahoma, Missouri, Iowa State and Nebraska fighting for three spots.

Assuming they beat Colorado, the Huskers must win their two home games against Iowa State and Oklahoma, two teams they were slaughtered by earlier this year.

Neither victory is a lock.

And two more sequels like Monday night's could make Nee's "NCAA Tourney Appearance III" impossible.

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