



Kiley Timperley/DN

Nebraska freshman Jason Christie competes in a meet earlier this year. The Cornhusker men scored a season-high 288 last weekend against New Mexico and will compete in the Big Eight Championships this weekend.

Gymnasts post highest regular-season score

By Jeff Griesch
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska men's gymnastics team is peaking at the right time.

The Cornhuskers scored a season high in defeating New Mexico 288.20-279.35 at Albuquerque, N.M. on Sunday.

In their final tuneup before the Big Eight Championships, the third-ranked Huskers recorded their highest regular-season score ever.

Nebraska coach Francis Allen said the judges were scoring the events high com-

pared to Big Eight judges.

"The kids performed exquisitely, but the judging was easy," Allen said. "I think the judging was the way it should be judged; they kind of kill us at home."

Allen said routines that would normally receive a 9.3 or 9.4 at home got a 9.7 at New Mexico.

Allen said the higher scores will give the Huskers confidence going into the conference meet, but he also said Nebraska should not count on another record setting perfor-

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Women prepared to turn on heat in tourney game

By Derek Samson
Staff Reporter

After days of anticipation, the Nebraska women's basketball team is ready for its first-round game against San Diego Wednesday night at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

"Our emotions are going to be flying high," senior Rissa Taylor said. "It means a lot for us to get it at home. We're more comfortable playing in front of our fans."

The Cornhuskers finished the season 22-7 and finished second in both the Big Eight regular season and in the Big Eight Tournament.

"I feel like we got a great draw with San Diego coming in here," Sara Offringa said. "They won 16 games and are in the tournament, so we know they are a quality team."

Nebraska point guard Meggan Yedsena said playing an unfamiliar team was what made the NCAA Tournament a great competition.

"We're going to be able to do what we have done all year," she said. "We don't know a lot about them and they don't know a lot about us. I think that is what makes the postseason so exciting."

A Nebraska win will send Nebraska to Los Angeles to play Southern Cal. A game with the Women of Troy would be another winnable game, according to some Huskers.

"We're taking it one game at a time, but if we do win, we know we can beat USC," Yedsena said. "If we show up and play our best, we can

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play with anyone in the nation."

After practice Monday, Nebraska watched the film of its Big Eight Championship game with Kansas. The Jayhawks beat Nebraska 64-60 to capture the Big Eight tournament title.

"I think we will learn from our mistakes in that game. We won't be looking past anyone," Offringa said. "We've just got to use the intensity that Kansas had against us and we'll be right with everyone in the tournament."

Taylor said the Kansas game also showed areas that will need improvement.

"We'll have to play better defense and settle down some on offense," Taylor said. "We have to worry about it a game at a time."

The Huskers' preparation for San Diego only consisted of two practice days because the pairings were announced Sunday.

"It might be better to have a few more days to get ready, but I would rather just get out there and play," Taylor said.

Several players said Big Eight teams were treated poorly in the past by the selection committee. Kansas, Oklahoma State and Colorado, along with Nebraska, all earned spots in the 48-team tournament.

"When I heard OSU was in and we weren't picked yet, I was getting a little nervous," Yedsena said. "We got put in a great spot, though. From the way the brackets look, the West seems like it is the best bet."

Two athletes win top spots at indoor track meet finals

By Derek Samson
Staff Reporter

Shannelle Porter and Kevin Coleman proved to be the best as each took first place at the NCAA indoor championships in Indianapolis last weekend.

Porter won the 400-meter dash with a time of 52.82, while Coleman won his second consecutive indoor shot put title.

"Any time you win a national championship, you have to be pleased," Coleman said. "I didn't throw as well as I wanted to, but I'm happy to win it."

Coleman went into the meet as a strong favorite in the shot put and did not show any signs of a letdown.

"I like being an underdog, but I like the pressure (as the favorite). It just adds fuel to the fire," Coleman said. "Unfortunately, there wasn't much of a fire. Maybe just a real small, little flame."

Coleman, a senior from Elgin, Ill., said the thought of being upset never crossed his mind.

"There is always a possibility that something like that can happen, but that's not at all what I thought about," Coleman said. "My

mind is always on winning. (Losing) is the last thing you want to think about, especially when you go into a national meet."

Nebraska sent four athletes to the national meet to compete in the shot put. Paulette Mitchell, Krista Mader and Andy Meyer joined Coleman in the shot put.

"That says we've got a very strong program. It says a lot for the coach as well as the athletes," Coleman said. "The athletes are out there busting their butts, and our coach has done a hell of a job turning mediocre throwers into something that good."

Porter, a junior from Cheyenne, Wyo., went into the finals with the slowest qualifying time.

Three other competitors earned All-American honors for finishing in the top eight of their events. The Huskers' All-Americans were Mitchell, high jumper Cris Hall and triple jumper Robert Thomas.

In the team standings, the women finished tied for 12th, while the men came out in the 15th spot.

"It was like any meet," Coleman said. "We had people do better than expected and people do somewhat less than what was expected of them."

Some Big Eight teams don't merit NCAA play

March madness came in like a lion. And nowhere was it more evident than right here in the good old Big Eight.

First the seventh-seeded Missouri Tigers won the Big Eight Tournament. They defeated the conference's No. 5 team, Kansas State, in the finals.

Then the NCAA Tournament Committee selected six Big Eight teams to play in the big dance.

They left out Oklahoma. That constitutes lionlike madness. How did it all happen?

The same answer can be given to all questions: The Big Eight Conference had an off year.

Missouri was able to put itself in a position to win the conference because the entire conference was down this year. Besides Kansas, there was no real powerhouse taking command of league play. This left the door open for the lower-seeded teams.

Likewise, Kansas State was able to make it to the finals because there was no clear-cut front-runner. The Wildcats' upset over Kansas was a big win, but even Kansas had been stumbling lately. With the exception of Colorado, the rest of the teams were clumped together in a mass of mediocrity.

And finally, six teams don't deserve to go the NCAA because the Big Eight had an off year. Three teams do.

Kansas deserves to go, Oklahoma State fought its way to the top of the conference throughout the season and Missouri goes based on its Big Eight Tournament win.

But that's where the line probably should have been drawn.

Oklahoma probably didn't deserve an NCAA berth. Their 19-11 record was impressive, but the teams they played were not. Three of their victories were over non-Division I schools. So Oklahoma is out, but did Kansas



Susie Arth

State, Iowa State, and maybe even Nebraska deserve to follow in their footsteps?

Twenty wins is usually considered an automatic berth, but in Nebraska's case, only a couple could actually be counted as quality wins. The win over Kansas definitely counts. The win over Oklahoma counted until they didn't make it into the NCAA. Should two wins over Missouri really count as quality wins? Or how about the win over Kansas State, which was 17-9 before its Big Eight Tournament magic? The list of quality wins probably ends there.

Iowa State's identical 20-10 record was also enough to get them into the tournament. The Huskers and the Cyclones split their two regular season matchups. Like the Huskers, the Cyclones racked up a quality win against Kansas on their own home court, but other than that win, Iowa State's Big Eight season was rather bleak. The Cyclones' only Big Eight win on the road was over last-place Colorado.

And then comes Kansas State, which was in a must-win situation in their first-round matchup against the Huskers. And they did it. They had only 17 wins before they pulled off some wins at the Big Eight Tournament, and now they are a No. 6 seed in the NCAA.

Give the Wildcats credit. They won when they had to. Unfortunately, Kansas State has no offense, and they are in the tourney based only on their defense.

The Big Eight is sending quantity to the NCAA, but unfortunately it is not sending quality.

Don't expect the Big Eight teams to make too much of a splash in the big dance.

They will make their appearances and go out quietly.

It could be as bad as last season, when the NCAA took six Big Eight teams, and only one made it past the second round.

The teams who played consistently well all season long like Indiana, Kentucky, North Carolina and Michigan will be the ones playing in New Orleans in April.

Don't expect the Big Eight teams to make any Cinderella runs.

After all, March came in like a lion in the Big Eight. And it will go out like a lamb.

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