

Healthy NU gymnasts ready for NCAA meet

Huskers hope to overcome nemesis

Senior class wants place in history

By Mitch Sherman
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska men's gymnastics team will try to win its eighth national title in the last 15 years this weekend at the NCAA Gymnastics Championships held at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

The preliminary round of the NCAA championships will take place tonight at 7 p.m. in the Devaney Center main arena. Three teams will qualify for the final round, which will be held Saturday at 2 p.m.

Allen

The top-ranked Cornhuskers will have to do something they haven't done in the last two years if they want to take the title.

They have to beat Stanford. The Cardinal, ranked No. 5, comes into the meet as an underdog to Nebraska, but that hasn't stopped it in the past.

Last year, Stanford came from behind to shock Nebraska by one point at the national meet in Albuquerque, N.M. Two years ago, the Cardinal sent the Huskers home with a second-place finish, overcoming Nebraska's score of 288.95, an all-time high.

Although Stanford has not been dominating this year, Coach Sadao Hamada said the Cardi-

/ See NCAA on 8

By Mitch Sherman
Staff Reporter

Four years ago, Nebraska men's gymnastics coach Francis Allen recruited four high school seniors who were considered among the best in the nation.

Their first year in Lincoln, the four freshmen were the nucleus of a team that finished seventh at the NCAA meet, Nebraska's lowest finish in 13 years.

"Normally at Nebraska, that is not a good season," Allen said. "But that year, I considered it a positive because nobody

thought we were going to do anything."

The next year, the four helped the Huskers to a second-place finish behind Stanford. The following year, the Cardinal beat the Huskers again.

This year, Dennis Harrison, Che Bowers, Sumner Darling and Burkett Powell said they were refusing to stop short of a national title.

They have their chance this weekend at the NCAA Gymnastics Championships Friday night at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

A look at the four seniors' credentials shows that each has made his mark at Nebraska.

The four seniors have combined for 10 All-American awards, one NCAA individual title

See SENIORS on 8

Huskers hope to sweep KU, move up in Big Eight, nation

Coach says NU capable of keeping its streak going

By Jeff Griesch
Senior Editor

The Nebraska baseball team will look to add to its 12-game winning streak tonight as it opens a three-game weekend series with Kansas at Buck Beltzer Field at 7.

The Cornhuskers have won eight straight Big Eight games, including two games on Tuesday and Wednesday over the 21st-ranked Jayhawks, to move ahead of Kansas into third place in the conference.

With the wins, the Huskers improved to 10-7 in the conference and 26-16 overall, while the Jayhawks fell to 11-9 and 27-13.

Despite the Jayhawks' 17-2 record at home before the two-game set with the Huskers, Nebraska baseball coach John Sanders said he wasn't surprised with the wins.

"I think we are very capable of continuing this streak," Sanders said. "We are playing well, and we have also got some breaks, but we still need to work on some things. I know we can still play a lot better."

While Sanders and the Huskers weren't surprised at winning two games at Kansas, they were surprised that they didn't have to face the Jayhawks' ace Jamie Splittorff.

Splittorff, who is the Big Eight's top pitcher with an 8-0 record and a 2.91 ERA, hasn't pitched since April 13 against Wichita State.

Kansas assistant sports information director Chris Padgett said Splittorff missed his regular turn in the rotation because of a "tired arm," and his status is still unknown for this weekend's series with the Huskers.

While Kansas' starting rotation is missing its biggest gun, the Huskers are well-rested.

Sophomore Alvie Shepherd will open the series for the Huskers on the mound.

BIG 8 CONFERENCE							
Baseball Standings							
TEAM	W	L	Pct.	W	L	Pct.	
Oklahoma State	16	5	.762	30	12	.714	
Oklahoma	12	7	.632	30	12	.714	
Nebraska	10	7	.558	26	16	.619	
Kansas	11	6	.550	27	13	.675	
Missouri	8	7	.533	28	12	.700	
Iowa State	6	13	.316	14	23	.378	
Kansas State	2	17	.105	11	31	.262	

Shepherd, 1-3, is coming off his best performance of the season on April 15 with a 4-2 victory over Kansas State.

Jeff Strasser, who will also be pitching with a week's rest, will get the nod Saturday, Sanders said.

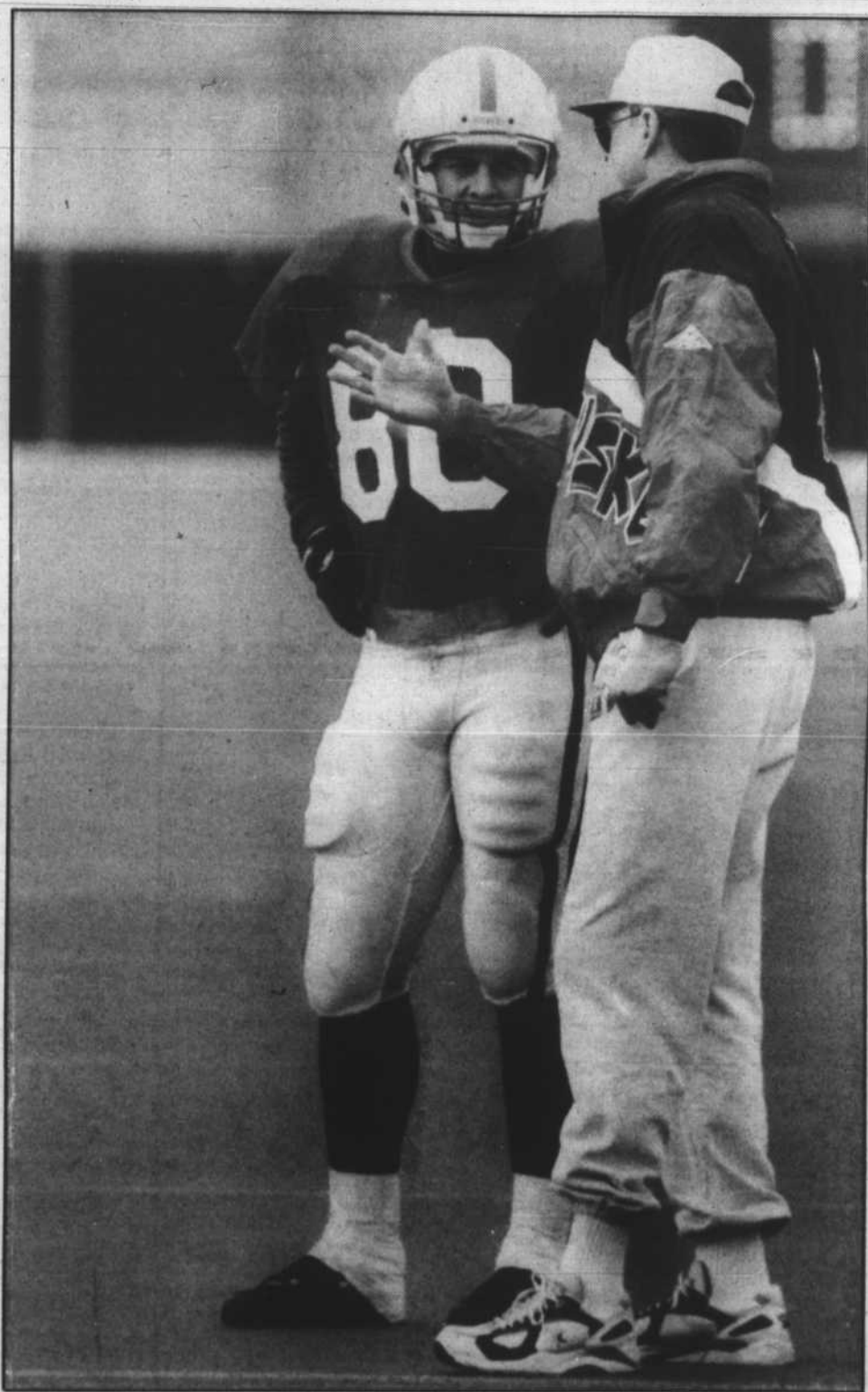
And Husker All-American Troy Brohawn, who is 3-0 since returning to the rotation on April 8, will close the series for the Huskers on Sunday.

"We are definitely in a solid position with our rotation right now," Sanders said. "We have been pitching well, and we just hope we can continue to throw strikes and play solid defense behind them."

The Huskers have rebounded from an 0-6 start in the conference and could move into second place in the conference with a sweep of Kansas.

Sanders said the Huskers also had a chance to gain some exposure in the national rankings.

"We have some really quality opportunities to move, not only in the Big Eight but on the national level," he said. "We are playing some teams over the next couple of weeks that really give us an opportunity to move, and that is really all you can hope for late in the year."



Shaun Sartin/DN

Nebraska coach Tom Osborne talks to junior split end Brett Popplewell during a recent practice.

Draft forecasts mixed for former Cornhusker players

By Derek Samson
Senior Reporter

Trev Alberts should not have to wait long to see where his future lies in Sunday's National Football League draft.

Alberts is a consensus first-round pick and is expected by most to be the first Big Eight player chosen in the draft, which will be televised by ESPN beginning at 2:30 p.m.

Iowa State coach Jim Walden said the Butkus Award winner and Big Eight defensive player of the year would go high in the draft.

"Trev Alberts is the first guy that comes to my mind," Walden said. "There was not a more dominating player than him last year in our league. The timing is perfect for Trev."



Alberts



Jones

"With NFL clubs dishing out huge sums of money these days, you don't want any part of a prospect that has questionable work habits or won't play with pain," Kiper said. "With Trev, you have a model team leader. He also has the smarts to pick up any system."

When Alberts ran a 4.49 during workouts for NFL scouts in March, his stock increased greatly, Sports Illustrated's draft analyst Paul Zimmerman said.

"My opinion was very high of him even before he ran the 4.49, but because of what teams needed, I thought he would be about the 15th pick," he said. "Now, I think he could go as high as the fourth pick."

"Running the 4.49 also made him very wealthy. That alone should make him about \$300,000 more. I think the

logical spot for him will be Cleveland at the ninth pick."

Three other Huskers besides Alberts—safety John Reece, running back Calvin Jones and rover Toby Wright—were among Kiper's top 150 players available on draft day.

Kiper projected Reece as a second rounder, the 46th pick overall. He said he thought Jones and Wright would both be selected in the third round.

Nebraska coach Tom Osborne agreed with Kiper's projections.

"I think we'll get three or four people taken in the first couple of rounds or so," he said. "I'd be shocked if Alberts wasn't in the first round, and I'd be fairly surprised if he wasn't taken early in the first round."

There are mixed feelings about Jones, who became the third straight

Nebraska player to leave Nebraska early for the NFL.

Jones will have no problem succeeding in the NFL, Walden said.

"Oh hell, he's going to make it," Walden said. "I'm just glad he's gone."

"Jones is as good as Brown, and, if I'm not mistaken, Brown did pretty well last year. I'm not sure how high he'll go, but he'll make it."

Kiper, who predicted Jones would be the first pick of the third round, was not as optimistic about Jones' chances.

"(Jones) is not afraid to lower his shoulder and take it to a linebacker or defensive back," he said. "However, in the NFL, he won't win many of those battles, lacking the elusiveness and natural change-of-direction skills to leave defenders in his wake."