

NU swimmer sets sights on title

By Andrew Strnad
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska men's swimming team is taking aim at its 16th straight Big Eight championship.

And if Justin Finney has any say in the matter, the Cornhuskers are on the right track for another title.

The Huskers are returning 20 letter winners from last year's team, including conference champions in four events. One Husker that is looking to lead Nebraska to the promised land is Finney, a six-time Big Eight champion.

The junior from Quebec, who was an All-American as a freshman in the 100-yard butterfly, expects to reach that level again this year.

"My goal this year is to not only win the Big Eight," he said, "but to also become an All-American."

Finney set the Big Eight record in the 100 butterfly at 48.03 seconds as a freshman and won three Big Eight titles.

"I didn't expect to be an All-American as a freshman," he said. "I was too busy adjusting from meters to yards."

"My goal this year is to not only win the Big Eight but to also become an All-American."

JUSTIN FINNEY
Nebraska swimmer

But Finney has made the adjustment.

This year Finney is competing in the 100- and 200-yard butterfly events, as well as several relays.

And Finney said there was no reason why Nebraska couldn't win another Big Eight title. As a team, Nebraska is as talented as any, he said.

"Our recruiting here is just great," he said. "We have freshmen that come in here and win Big Eight championships."

But Finney said a lot of credit should go to Coach Cal Bentz, who has coached the Huskers to all 15 consecutive conference titles.

"Coach Bentz is a great motivator," he said. "He's just incredible."

Finney expects the team to be in peak form for the Big Eight Championships in late February.

Until then, the Huskers' season continues this weekend at the USS Nebraska Winter Classic at the Bob Devaney Sports Center pool.

The spring semester begins on Jan. 9, and the men's swimming team will compete in four dual meets in nine days in January. The Huskers begin their run with a home meet against Arizona State on Jan. 13.

Finney said Kansas was the only possible team that could stand between Nebraska and another Big Eight title.

"Kansas has a good team, but they don't have as many great swimmers as we do."

Safety said the issue in locker room change

By Andrew Strnad
Staff Reporter

Nebraska is currently 1 1/2-point underdogs to Miami, which will be playing on its home field for the 61st Orange Bowl Classic.

And days after deciding to let Nebraska dress in the home locker room at the Orange Bowl on Jan. 1, the Orange Bowl officials have changed their minds.

Steve Pederson, Nebraska's associate athletic director for football operations, said bowl officials contacted Nebraska on Thursday to tell Nebraska that the Cornhuskers would be assigned to the smaller, visitors' locker room.

Pederson said Nebraska never had

been offered a choice of locker rooms prior to this year.

"We chose the larger locker room so we could have more space," Pederson said.

Miami, whose regular-season locker room has been assigned to Florida State in each of the last two Orange Bowls, will use the larger locker room this year.

"They called today and said it was better if we were in the smaller locker room," Pederson said. "They said they were concerned with our safety."

Pederson said the bowl officials didn't specify exactly how Nebraska would be in danger by dressing in the home locker room.

Senior Reporter Mitch Sherman also contributed to this report.

Wiegert wins Outland

From Staff Reports

Nebraska lineman Zach Wiegert Thursday night was awarded the Outland Trophy, given annually to the nation's top interior lineman.

Wiegert's award gives Nebraska the distinction of having won the

award seven times, more than any other school in the country.

Wiegert, a 6-foot-5-inch senior offensive tackle from Fremont, is also a first-team All-American.

Wiegert's companion at the other tackle spot, Rob Zatechka, won the Honda Scholar-Athlete award.

Penn St. excited for big crowd

By Mitch Sherman
Senior Reporter

Penn State volleyball coach Russ Rose said his attitude heading into a match might not be too imaginative, but it had been successful.

"It's really not who you play," Rose said. "It's how you play."

Rose, a former Nebraska assistant, leads the 29-3 Nittany Lions into the Midwest Regional semifinal match of the NCAA tournament on Friday night at the NU Coliseum against

33-3 Notre Dame.

Penn State, which is ranked No. 5, has lost only to Ohio State twice and Michigan once this year. The Nittany Lions advanced to the regional semifinal by virtue of their three-game victory over Ball State last week.

"All four teams (in the regional) have demonstrated that they've had some highs," Rose said. "And, except for Nebraska, they've all shown they have some weaknesses. The other three teams have had some real glar-

ing weaknesses that other teams have displayed at times."

A year ago, the Nittany Lions advanced to the championship match of the NCAA tournament, losing to

Long Beach State.

In last year's Midwest regional, two of this year's participants joined Penn State. Colorado, which will play Nebraska before the Penn State-Notre Dame match on Friday, fell to the Nittany Lions in a regional semifinal last year.

In the regional final, Penn State swept Notre Dame, making it the second consecutive year the Lions ended Notre Dame's season.

Rose, who has been awarded the Volleyball Monthly national coach-of-the-year award in two of the last five seasons, said it would be difficult to beat Notre Dame in three straight tournaments.

"It's not a match where you spend a lot of time preparing for what the other team is going to do," said Rose, who owns a 528-105 record in 16 seasons at Penn State.

"It's a match where you hope your players play well, and you hope the other team plays well. You have an opportunity to put on a good show for certainly one of the bright spots

"And, except for Nebraska, they've all shown they have some weaknesses. The other three teams have had some real glaring weaknesses that other teams have displayed at times."

RUSS ROSE

Penn State volleyball coach

of volleyball in this country."

Playing before a large crowd is something the Nittany Lion players enjoy, Rose said. A sold-out Coliseum is expected for Friday's early match between Nebraska and Colorado. Rose said he hoped the fans stayed to watch Penn State and Notre Dame play.

"We have had some great matches in front of big crowds," he said.

Notre Dame set to turn tables

By Trevor Parks
Staff Reporter

The Notre Dame volleyball team knows what it feels like to be eliminated from the NCAA tournament.

This year, 33-3 Notre Dame has a chance to give that feeling to 29-3 Penn State when the two teams meet in an 8 p.m. regional semifinal match tonight at the NU Coliseum.

"We're definitely looking forward to playing them," Notre Dame coach Debbie Brown said. "It is something that we feel like we would like to turn the table a little bit."

The Fighting Irish lost to Penn State 15-12, 15-5, 15-12 in the NCAA Midwest Regional last season.

The year before, the Nittany Lions defeated Notre Dame 15-13, 15-8, 15-9 in the first round of the NCAA tournament at University Park, Pa.

Brown said she hoped her team could use the two losses to its advantage.

"It's definitely a friendly rivalry,"

"We'd really like to upset (Penn State) and send them home, instead of the reverse as it has been in the past."

NICOLE COATES

Notre Dame outside hitter

Brown said. "We hope we make it much more competitive than we have the last few years."

Senior Nicole Coates said Notre Dame was looking forward to gaining revenge on the Nittany Lions.

"It's a good source of motivation," Coates said. "We'd really like to upset them and send them home, instead of the reverse as it has been in the past."

The Fighting Irish have had a successful season and shouldn't have any problems getting ready for the Nittany Lions, Coates said. She and Christy Peters are the only seniors on the team.

"At this stage of the game, I think any team that is playing will be highly motivated," she said.

Also at this point, the Fighting Irish must be concerned with where they are playing.

Notre Dame has a 16-3 record outside of South Bend, Ind., including a 5-1 record on neutral courts.

Brown said the environment at the NU Coliseum should be a great experience for her club.

"We're very excited to play at Nebraska because of the great following of the crowds," Brown said. "Our team really enjoys playing in front of

a large crowd, and that makes the game more exciting."

Brown said Penn State coach Russ Rose would be coaching a Nittany Lion team in regular form tonight.

"Russ' teams are always very consistent," Brown said. "They make very few errors, and they are not going to beat themselves. We are going to have to go out and play our best."

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