

# SPORTS

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## Huskers hope to go tumbling to nationals

By Trevor Parks  
Staff Reporter

Nebraska women's gymnastics coach Dan Kendig knows how important seniors are to success.

And his team is no exception.

Seniors Jennifer Hawkinson, Martha Jenkins, Nicole Duval and Kristi Camp will try to help Nebraska qualify for the NCAA Championships for the first time since 1990 at the NCAA Midwest Regionals this weekend.



The 13th-ranked Cornhuskers, 16-4, play host to the regional 6 p.m. Saturday at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Those four seniors are a major reason why Nebraska is in the position it is now, Kendig said.

"Our four seniors are making up four-sevenths of our team scoring," Kendig said.

"The fact is they have not been to nationals, but they deserved to be there last year."

Last year, injuries plagued the Huskers' chances.

Jenkins was injured, and Duval did not compete on the floor exercise at the Midwest Regional.

Kendig said injuries were the major factor. "If those injuries didn't happen, we'd have been there last year," Kendig said. "We've been a better competitive group this year and handled pressure a lot better."

One person who survived last year's injury bug is Hawkinson.

Hawkinson finished second in last year's NCAA Midwest Regional all-around with a score of 38.725 and was the lone Husker to qualify for the NCAA meet.

But Hawkinson probably won't compete in the all-around Saturday.

Hawkinson said she was disappointed, but she was more concerned that the team made nationals this year.

"Going in as an individual compares very little to what it would be like as a team," Hawkinson said. "It would be really special for us, especially since we haven't qualified as a team."

The Huskers will be competing with seven gymnasts this weekend. Shelly Bartlett, Duval, Jenkins and Joy Taylor will compete in the all-around. Kim DeHaan also may compete in the all-around, but she has been nursing a sore back.

Nebraska won't feel any added pressure performing at home, Hawkinson said.

"This is our last meet at Devaney, so maybe that aspect will push us a little more," Hawkinson said. "Maybe there is something in our hearts that makes us give a little bit extra."

That extra heart has shown throughout the season as Nebraska had a school-record score of 194.45 at the Big Eight Championships.

Kendig said since that performance, his team had been gunning for this weekend.

"We've been ready since Big Eights," Kendig said. "We felt we could have done better. But if we'd have topped out in every event, it would have been tough for us to get back in the gym."

Hopefully the improvement will show against this weekend's competition, Kendig said.

Seven of the nation's top 18 teams will be competing, including defending NCAA champion Utah.

Utah comes into the meet 16-1 this year and ranked No. 2.

Also, eighth-ranked Arizona State, 10th-ranked Arizona, 14th-ranked Utah State, 15th-ranked Oklahoma and 18th-ranked Brigham Young will be competing.

Kendig said any of those teams could put up a good score.

"There's not a team coming into this meet that if they hit four events won't have a shot at making nationals," Kendig said.

### NOTE:

• Tickets for the NCAA Midwest Regional are \$6 at the door for adults and \$2 for children 12 and under.

## Spike!



Jon Waller/DN

Nebraska's Christy Johnson sets the ball during practice on Wednesday. The Huskers are in the middle of spring practice in preparation for next season.

## Huskers warm up for fall with spring practice, games

By Mitch Sherman  
Senior Reporter

It's only April, but the Nebraska volleyball team is already piling up the wins.

Only problem is, these wins don't mean anything—unless you're a big fan of spring volleyball.

The Nebraska volleyball team spent its spring break in Tucson, Ariz., participating in a tournament involving Texas, Arizona, Arizona State, Northern Arizona and New Mexico State. The Huskers swept the field.

This weekend at the NU Coliseum, Nebraska will play host to its own spring invite featuring Kansas, Kansas State, Iowa State and UNO.

The Cornhuskers, who return all but three members of last season's 31-1 team, have been practicing five times a week since March 12. Spring practice, Coach Terry Pettit said, is a time for the Huskers to sharpen their skills and concentrate on the tactical side of the game.

Spring drills conclude with a Big 12 tournament, April 15-16 in Manhattan, Kan. Pettit said eight of the future conference's 12 teams would participate.

"The ball-handling tends to be not as strong in the spring," Pettit said. "Offensively, we were very good (playing in Arizona). We were very strong at the net in terms of blocking. But our overall ball handling is not where it needs to be."

Pettit said the spring was a chance for all the Huskers to improve, some in different ways than others. He said Nebraska's experienced players — seniors-to-be Allison Weston, Christy Johnson and Billie Winsett and junior Maria Hedbeck — needed to raise their levels of play.

"They need to be more consistent than they are," Pettit said. "They need to better the ball each time they touch it."

The less experienced Huskers — redshirt freshman Stacie Maser, sophomores Lisa Reitsma and Kim Legg and junior Kate Crnich — should take advantage of the spring to become more accustomed to the Nebraska offensive and defensive schemes, Pettit said.

"We are watching them," he said, "and trying to get them to step up. It seems to be happening, but we have a lot of work to do in the next two weeks."

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## NU fired up for rematch with Cowboys

By Jeff Griesch  
Senior Reporter

The Nebraska baseball team will take a mini-winning streak of three games to Stillwater, Okla., for a three-game series against Oklahoma State this weekend.

The Cornhuskers, 7-5 in the Big Eight and 18-11 overall, have a chance to move into a tie for first place with a sweep of the Cowboys, who are leading the conference with a 9-2 Big Eight mark and 29-4 overall record.

Nebraska coach John Sanders said the Huskers were eager for the chance to play the Cowboys.

"The way you jump into the limelight is by beating good people," Sanders said. "We are definitely excited about the opportunity to play them right now."

But Oklahoma State has been streaking too.

The Cowboys, ranked No. 1 in the latest Collegiate Baseball poll, had won 10 straight games before losing at Missouri Wednesday. During the streak, Oklahoma outscored its opponents 156-49.

And unfortunately for the Huskers, Oklahoma State has not lost consecutive games this season.

While the Cowboys' numbers are imposing, the Huskers have one number in their favor. Nebraska is 1-0 this season against Oklahoma State.

The Huskers beat the Cowboys 6-5 at the Arthur Gallagher Tournament in San Diego, Feb. 26. It was the Cowboys' first loss of the season and ended an 11-game winning streak.

But Sanders said he didn't think revenge would be on the minds of the Cowboys.

"They'll just come out and play, and we'll just come out and play and have a lot of fun," Sanders said. "It doesn't matter when you catch Oklahoma State, they're always ready to play."

The Cowboys are always ready to hit too.

Oklahoma State is hitting .331 as a team and has seven starters batting higher than .300.

Peter Prodanov leads the Cowboys with a .452 season batting average to go along with eight home runs and 49 RBI. And the senior outfielder's numbers are even better in the Big Eight. Prodanov is hitting .595 with four homers and 22 RBI in 11 games.

Junior third baseman Tal Light carries a .386 average with 11 homers and 52 RBI. Junior outfielder Chris Richard is hitting .359 with 53 RBI and seven home runs.

"There is never a good time to play Oklahoma State," Sanders said. "They are one of the best teams in the country, and we are going to have to be ready to play a complete game."

## Softball coach swinging for series sweep

By Derek Samson  
Senior Reporter

In Rhonda Revelle's previous two seasons as Nebraska's softball coach, she watched her teams go 0-16 against Kansas and Oklahoma State. And before this season, she knew the eight straight games against the two conference rivals in April could be a pivotal point for her team.

Revell got her first two wins against Oklahoma State last weekend when the Huskers split a four-game home stand with the Cowgirls.

Now, Revelle has her chance to get her first wins against the Jayhawks when Nebraska travels to Lawrence, Kan., this weekend for double-headers on Saturday and Sunday.

But just getting her first win against 11-9 Kansas won't be enough for Revelle.

"Even a split would be what I consider as disappointing," Revelle said. "We have to win the series outright. I feel Oklahoma State is a much stronger team than Kansas. Even though we could have got one more win against Oklahoma State, I was glad to get two out of four."

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