

NU's Koziol wins shot at Olympics

By Gregg Madsen
Staff Reporter

Nebraska gymnast Jim Koziol gained a spot on the U.S. Team 2000 Saturday by winning the all-around at the Winter Cup Challenge in Colorado Springs, Colo.

The sophomore from Millard South High School scored a 53.45 to win the over-19 division. The victory does not guarantee Koziol a spot on the 2000 Olympic team, but it gives him a spot on a provisional squad and makes him a front-runner to earn a spot.

Although he missed practice last week after having two cortisone shots because of a sore back, Koziol said he expected to finish in the top six.

Nebraska coach Francis Allen wasn't surprised by Koziol's performance. Allen said the victory would help Koziol's confidence.

"This gives him a chance to compete and get a foot in the door," Allen said. "Besides the bragging rights now, he knows he's a good gymnast. This is a springboard for him."

Although he was plagued by shin splints last season, Koziol is expected to be one of the Huskers' most improved this year, Allen said.

Also competing in the Winter Cup Challenge were Nebraska senior Jason Christie and former Cornhusker Richard Grace, who battled for a spot on the Olympic team in the 1996 division.

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FRANCIS ALLEN

Nebraska men's gymnastics coach

Grace finished 19th with a combined score of 105.44. Christie finished 23rd with a score of 104.1.

Christie, a Lincoln High graduate, was not far behind the competition, Allen said. A few points separated Christie and the rest of the pack, Allen said.

Grace, the 1995 national champion in the all-around and parallel bars, had a strong performance despite recently having shoulder surgery.

A former member of the Cahoy School of Gymnastics in Omaha, Koziol said he felt most comfortable this weekend on the pommel horse and the rings, where he scored a 9.3 and 9.2, respectively. He said the experience he gained would help his future performances.

The Huskers will travel to Norman, Okla., to face Oklahoma and Brigham Young in a triangular meet on Sunday.

Track teams take titles at Arkansas

By Andrew Strnad
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska men's and women's track and field teams took it to the nation's best at the National Elite Track and Field Invite on Saturday in Fayetteville, Ark.



Pepin

Arkansas, the 12-time defending NCAA indoor national champions.

"It was a heck of a win to go down there and beat Arkansas," Nebraska coach Gary Pepin said. "And not only did we beat them, we beat them in a couple of key events."

The Husker women's team tied for first place with North Carolina, scoring 118 points. Arkansas finished third with 77 points.

Junior Angee Henry of Bellevue notched a personal-best and NCAA-qualifying mark of 21 feet, 6 1/4 inches in the long jump. Nicola Martial won the triple jump with a leap of

42-9. Other first-place finishes for the women included senior Kathy Travis Mueller, who won the 55-meter dash and the 200-meter dash.

Senior Paulette Mitchell won the 20-pound weight throw with a Big Eight record mark of 63-4 1/2, and teammate Tressa Thompson had a NCAA-qualifying toss of 56-1 in the shot put.

"This meet let us know that we have one of the best men's and women's teams in the country," Pepin said.

The Husker men made a 1-2-3-4 sweep of the 35-pound weight throw to open the door for an easy victory. Greg Armitage won the event with a throw of 61-6.

Other top finishes for the men included senior Robert Thomas, who won the long jump with a leap of 25-8 1/2.

Husker milers finished 1-2 as senior Balazs Tolgyesi posted a mark of 4:02.98 to beat out teammate Jonah Kiptarus, who finished second at 4:02.99.

"I don't know of very many teams who have gone into Arkansas' place and beat them," he said. "We really kind of tore them up in the short sprints, hurdles and the mile. Our milers were exceptional."

Loss

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The third-ranked Cowboys probably clinched the No. 2 spot from the Huskers after a 22-16 win at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

"This team is nowhere close to No. 2," Cowboy coach John Smith said of Oklahoma State after the win.

Husker coach Tim Neumann said he was impressed with an improved Oklahoma State team. Nebraska, however, suffered from injuries at 126 pounds and 158 pounds that could have changed the outcome of the dual.

"Jeramie (Welder at 126) and Temoer (Terry at 158) hurt us," Neumann said. "Anytime you pull a potential national champ out of your lineup is not going to help you. And Welder, he's a great wrestler."

Welder has had an ankle injury since December, and Terry was forced to sit out after hurting his knee in practice last week.

Nebraska, which also wrestled Oklahoma on Saturday, went into the 177-pound match trailing both teams. Against the Sooners, two of Nebraska's top three weights picked up victories to win the dual 19-17.

All three upper weights won again on Sunday, but the wins weren't enough for the dual victory.

"I was impressed with (Erik) Josephson and (Ryan) Tobin because they were trying to pin," Neumann said. "They were going for a team win. It was fun to see that."

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