

SPORTS WEEKEND

Friday, February 9, 1996

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SPORTS OPINION



Mike Kluck

Invite allows fans to watch mini-Olympics

My father once told me that if I practiced and worked hard every day — just as they say in the Visa commercial — I would be able to compete in the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta.

Those of you who know me can tell the only competition I could compete in with any chance of dignity is the Budweiser dash or the Miller mile.

So until the International Olympic Committee approves those sports as legitimate competition, it looks as if I am going to be confined to watching the Olympics this year.

Also, since most of my money has gone to training for the Michelob marathon, I am going to be limited to viewing the Olympics from my nearest sports bar television.

This weekend, however, part of the Olympics will come to Lincoln when Nebraska plays host to the Frank Sevigne Husker Invitational today and Saturday at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Since 1975, the Husker Invite has had more than 50 Olympians compete, and in 21 years, there have been four world records set at the invite.

This year, more than 850 athletes from colleges all across the United States and towns around the world will compete at the Husker Invite. The competition for both men and women will start at 4 p.m., on Friday and at noon on Saturday.

"There's going to be numerous people in the meet this weekend that will be in the Olympic Games," Nebraska track and field coach Gary Pepin said. "We've always had a history here of all kinds of Olympians, and that will be the same thing this year."

"We've got people who will be Olympians, and a lot who will be contending to try to make our Olympic team. And there will be people that have already qualified for the Olympic Trials."

Nebraska's Angee Henry already has qualified for the Olympic Trials in the long jump. Henry leads the nation with a 21-feet, 6 1/4-inch mark.

One of the other Nebraska Olympic hopefuls will be senior Kathy Travis Miiller, a Lincoln native, who leads the nation in the 55-meter dash.

"Now that doesn't happen very often in Lincoln, Neb.," Pepin said.

So if you don't have the thousands of dollars to get to Atlanta this summer, head on down to the Devaney Center today and Saturday. You'll see Olympic competition for just a couple of bucks.

And I'm sure if you beg or plead, the ticket department may take Visa or American Express. But they won't be serving beer at the invite.

Kluck is a journalism graduate student and a Daily Nebraskan senior reporter.

NU hopes to gain speed on road

By Trevor Parks
Senior Reporter

The Nebraska basketball team hopes a successful second half at Missouri on Wednesday night is a sign that things are turning around.

Now, after losing four straight games, the Cornhuskers will try to carry some momentum into Ames, Iowa, Saturday when they play Iowa State.

Nebraska, 15-8 overall and 3-5 in the Big Eight, travels to play the Cyclones, 16-5 and 5-2, at 12:45 p.m. at Hilton Coliseum.

Senior guard Erick Strickland, who was ejected with 14:35 remaining in the Huskers' 99-98 loss to the Tigers, and spent the last 10 minutes of the game getting the score from a door-man, said Saturday's game could decide the outcome of the season.

"It's very, very, very important," Strickland said. "We're going to have to make a run here soon, a long run. I don't think we can lose more than one game."

He was referring to his team's chances at making the NCAA Tournament for the fifth time in six years.

If Nebraska loses only one of its final six regular-season games, it will end up 20-10 with a conference record of 8-6, which should be good enough to get back to the tournament, Strickland said.

After Saturday's game, the Huskers have remaining contests at Colorado and Kansas in addition to home games against Kansas State, Oklahoma and Oklahoma State.

Coach Danny Nee said making a run now would be important for Nebraska's postseason chances.

"Now we have six games left, and our attitude is that we are going to play the next one just as hard as this," Nee said.

After allowing the Tigers to score 61 points in the first half and take a 20-point lead with 12:03 left, the Huskers' confidence began to grow.

Missouri led 79-59 before Nebraska cut into that lead and went on top at 98-97 with 12.4 seconds remaining.

That lead was short-lived as the Tigers' Kendrick Moore made two free throws with seven seconds left,

Basketball Starters

Hilton Coliseum
Ames, Iowa
Saturday, 12:45 p.m.

Nebraska 15-8, 3-5	Ht.	Wt.	Class	PPG	RPG
G Tyronn Lue	6-0	165	Fr.	8.3	3.0
G Jaron Boone	6-6	195	Sr.	15.6	2.6
F Erick Strickland	6-3	210	Sr.	15.2	4.5
F Bernard Garner	6-7	225	Jr.	10.9	6.4
C Mikki Moore	6-11	205	Jr.	8.3	5.2

Iowa State 16-5, 5-2

G Jacy Holloway	6-0	160	Jr.	4.4	2.3
G Dedric Willoughby	6-3	180	Jr.	20.4	4.3
F Kenny Pratt	6-4	215	Jr.	14.0	5.8
F Shawn Bankhead	6-6	215	Jr.	2.9	8.0
C Kelvin Cato	6-11	245	Jr.	9.8	8.6

giving them a 99-98 lead and the win.

Getting the lead has been a problem for the Huskers recently. In a span of 111 minutes and 38 seconds over the past three games, Nebraska has led for just over five seconds.

Strickland said that had to be turned around if Nebraska wanted to make a

late-season run.

But Nebraska must begin that run against a team that defeated it earlier this season in Lincoln. Iowa State, which is in sole possession of second place in the conference, beat the Hus-

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Scott Bruhn/DN

Nebraska senior gymnast Joy Taylor, a second-team All-American on the uneven bars last season, will lead the Huskers into action tonight at 7 against Boise State.

NU gymnast leads by example

By Gregg Madsen
Staff Reporter

Determination is a necessity for success in any sport.

It comes from the heart, and it cannot be coached. Joy Taylor has determination, and over the past four years, she has used it.

The senior Cornhusker gymnast has earned all-conference honors in the vault, balance beam and the all-around while maintaining a perfect 4.0 grade-point average in biological sciences.

"Sometimes people say I'm too determined," Taylor said.

Taylor, who has competed in the all-around since she was a freshman, said this season she was determined to help lead the Huskers to the NCAA finals and earn first-team All-American honors.

"I try to set my goals a little higher than I can achieve," she said. "It can be disappointing if you lose perspective, but it's also better because you push yourself to the max and see just how far you can go."

In addition to gymnastics and going to class, Taylor has applied to several medical schools this year.

She said she hoped to have her own family practice someday. Having a heavy workload makes her comfortable, she said.

"I really think that it's easier sometimes because you're so busy, and the discipline you learn in gymnastics carries over," she said.

In 1995, Taylor was a second-team All-American in the uneven bars, scoring a 9.80 at the NCAA Championships meet.

The senior from New Palestine, Ind., has finished in the top four of the all-around in every meet this season. Last Sunday at Oklahoma, she scored a season-high 38.80.

Nebraska coach Dan Kendig said Taylor, along with juniors Shelly Bartlett and Kim DeHaan, had been leading the Huskers' four new freshmen by example.

"The discipline and work ethic of our upperclassmen has been contagious," Kendig said.

Husker fans will have a chance to see how Taylor's determination has infected the rest of the team tonight when the seventh-ranked Huskers (4-2) face No. 19 Boise State at 7 p.m. at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

"The discipline and work ethic of our upperclassmen has been contagious."

DAN KENDIG

NU women's gymnastics coach

Last Sunday's 193.875 performance at Oklahoma was the all-time high in a regular-season meet. It was also the Huskers' fourth-best total in school history, occurring almost a month earlier into the season than the top three scores.

But Kendig and Taylor both said there was still room for improvement.

"We're at a point where we can start to look at the little things that we want to add on to our routines," Kendig said.

Improvement in confidence and endurance were the focus of practice this week, Kendig said.

"The more they are able to hit consistently," he said, "the more confidence they will have."

Track meet showcases 55 teams

By Andrew Strnad
Staff Reporter

Coming off impressive victories over Arkansas last weekend, the Nebraska women's and men's track teams will compete in the 22nd annual Frank Sevigne Husker Invite at the Bob Devaney Sports Center today and Saturday.

Competition begins today at 4 p.m. On Saturday, events will start at noon.

The Cornhuskers will be joined by 54 other teams and 850 athletes at a meet that is regarded around the nation as one of the top indoor events of the year.

Nebraska coach Gary Pepin said that other than the NCAA Championships, this meet may have more talent than any other meet in the country.

"You might very well see some athletes this weekend that will be contending for medals in this summer's Olympics in Atlanta," Pepin said.

The Huskers boast a few prospective Olympians of their own. Two-time NCAA triple jump champion Nicola Martial and All-American long jumper Angee Henry lead the women's team into this weekend's meet. Henry, a junior from Omaha, is the nation's No. 1 long jumper with a season-best leap of 21 feet, 6 1/4 inches.

In the women's shot put, Nebraska has two of the nation's best in senior Paulette Mitchell and junior Tressa Thompson. They will be challenged by UCLA's Valeyta Althouse, whom Pepin said was the best shot putter in the country.

On the men's side, the nation's best athletes will compete in the mile run. The first sub-four-minute mile in Husker Invite history could be recorded this weekend.

Milers Balazs Tolgyesi from Szekesfehervar, Hungary, and teammate Jonah Kipartus should be among the leaders, Pepin said. They will take on conference foe Jon Wild of Oklahoma State, who has broken the four-minute barrier with a personal-best time of 3 minutes, 59.79 seconds.

Pepin said he and his team were excited to play host to this meet and were looking forward to the competition.

"This meet is important to every-

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