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Shot put duo carries Huskers

By Vince D'Adamo
Staff Reporter

The shot put has been double trouble for Nebraska's opponents this indoor track season.

Cornhusker shot putters Paulette Mitchell and Tressa Thompson will lead their Nebraska teammates into this weekend's NCAA Indoor Championships in Indianapolis, a meet in which the Huskers are expected to challenge for the national title.

Trips to the NCAA Championships have become commonplace for both Husker throwers. This is Thompson's third trip to the NCAA indoor championship meet. The junior from Bloomfield placed sixth in the shot put last year at the outdoor championships.

"Every time I go, it gets sweeter and sweeter," Thompson said. "I'm really looking forward to it."

Mitchell, a senior from Council Bluffs, Iowa, is making her fourth appearance at the NCAA Championships. Participating in the NCAA championship meet has become business as usual for the five-time All-American. A year ago, she was the national runner-up in the shot put.

"This year, it was nice because I qualified at the first meet," Mitchell said. "It gave me more time to relax and perform without the pressure."

The Huskers won their 33rd consecutive Big Eight championship last month. According to Mitchell, that serves as a motivating factor to perform well.

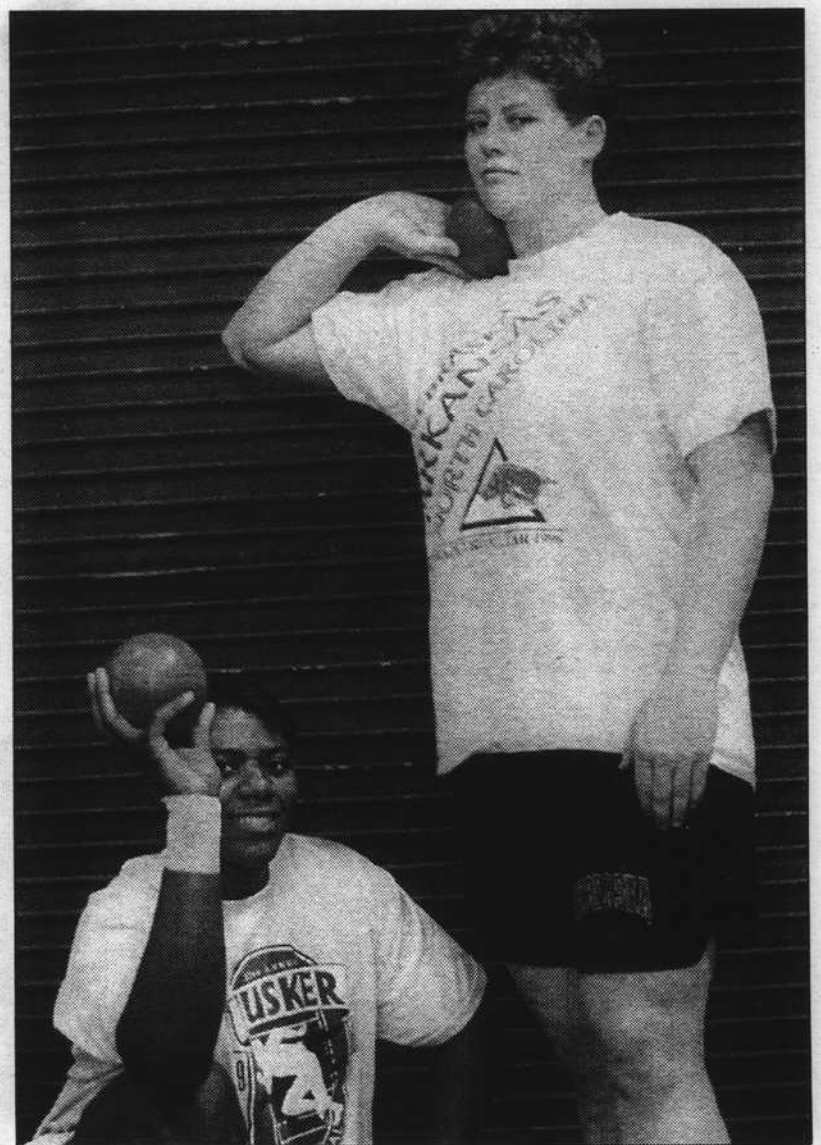
"When I see the team performing well," Mitchell said, "it makes me feel like I need to participate."

Nebraska throws coach Mark Colligan said Thompson and Mitchell's achievements were a result of hard work.

"They've done their homework and are very good at preparing themselves," Colligan said. "They've been smart about when to push hard."

Great athletes are often team leaders. Thompson and Mitchell are no exception.

"To compare it to another sport, these ladies are give-me-the-ball type



Matt Miller/DN

Nebraska throwers Paulette Mitchell (left) and Tressa Thompson are among the national leaders in the shot put. They will lead the Husker women into the NCAA Championships this weekend in Indianapolis.

of people," Colligan said. "It's like, 'Hop on board, people. The Paulette and Tressa train is leaving, and we'll carry you as far as you want to go.'"

Both throwers have thrived against tougher competition. At the Frank Sevigne Husker Invitational last

month, Thompson eclipsed Mitchell's school record in the shot put with a throw of 57-feet.

"We both want to do well," Mitchell said. "So it's a friendly rivalry type of thing."

NU golf team looks toward NCAA bid

By Antone Oseka
Staff Reporter

Nebraska women's golf coach Robin Krapfl said her team was right where it should be after its first meet.

The Cornhuskers placed third at the Texas A&M Bookstore/Monica Welsh Memorial Golf Tournament on Feb. 26-27 in College Station, Texas.

Krapfl

Texas A&M won the tournament after shooting a 932 for the meet. Southern Methodist finished second with a 957 while Nebraska finished three strokes behind at 960.

Krapfl said those teams had an advantage over the Huskers, having played a tournament before the Welsh Memorial.

"Those teams improved a lot between the first and second tournament," Krapfl said.

Krapfl expects that of her team, too.

"Our big area is the short game and putting," Krapfl said. "If we improve there, we improve our scoring."

Krapfl said she wanted the Huskers to average a score of around 304 per round. To get that average, she said, everyone must concentrate for all 18 holes.

"We need to maintain our concentration the entire four or five hours that a round lasts," Krapfl said.

Nebraska's going to need that concentration as it tries to qualify

for a spot in the NCAA Tournament this spring. The Huskers missed the tournament last year by one stroke.

That was an improvement over 1994 when Nebraska made the NCAA West Regional for the first time.

Like last year, Nebraska will rack up a lot of frequent flier miles over the course of the spring. The Huskers do not play host to any meets and must travel to every tournament before the NCAA Regionals, which are 50 miles away in Omaha, May 9-11.

Fifteen days after coming back from the Ben Hogan Invite in Fripp Island, Fla., the Huskers will travel to Honolulu to play in the Rainbow Wahine Invitational.

Nebraska returns to the mainland and wraps up the regular season at the Utah/Dixie Classic on April 8-9.

Next up on the Huskers' U.S. tour will be the Big Eight Championships. Nebraska will be close to home with the tournament in Des Moines, Iowa, April 22-23.

To qualify for NCAAs, the Huskers need a good finish at the regional tournament at the Champions Club golf course in Omaha.

"We can compete with anyone in the region," Krapfl said. "Oklahoma State is the team to beat, but we see them three times before regionals."

Three seniors will play an important role in defeating the Cowgirls.

Molly Mullin, Heidi Wall and Michelle Patterson have led Nebraska to its only two NCAA West Regional appearances in school history, and Krapfl said she hoped this year they could make the NCAAs.

"Hopefully, it won't get too emotional," Krapfl said. "I just want to maintain an even keel."

Spartans come under scrutiny

EAST LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Michigan State has received an official letter of inquiry from the NCAA about possible rules violations in its football program.

The case stems from a 17-month investigation of 68 allegations made in October 1994 by Roosevelt Wagner, a player from 1988 to 1991.

Wagner said grades were changed to preserve eligibility, and boosters gave players payments of up to \$700. The alleged violations occurred under former coach George Perles, who was replaced last season by Nick Saban. Saban lost to Nebraska 50-10 in his coaching debut Sept. 9.

In January, Michigan State began imposing penalties as a result of its own investigation. The university voluntarily reduced the number of new scholarships for this season from 25 to 23, cut campus visits by prospective recruits from 54 to 48 and prohibited an assistant coach from recruiting.

The letter of inquiry is standard procedure and doesn't necessarily mean the NCAA found potential rules violations that were missed by Michigan State's own investigation.

Michigan State received the letter from the NCAA late last week, describing possible rules violations and asking questions about them, university vice president Terry Denbow said Tuesday.

"We take possible violations very seriously," Denbow said. "They are receiving our intense review. We intend to defend the university where we believe we have not violated the NCAA rules, and we will do the right thing where there are violations."

Contents of the letter will be released to the public after Michigan State has completed its own investigation and learns what action the NCAA will take, Denbow said.