

SPORTS

Thursday, April 4, 1996

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Huskers stun ranked Sooners

By Todd Walkenhorst
Staff Reporter

Just when the Nebraska baseball team appeared to be incapable of competing against the upper echelon of the Big Eight, the Cornhuskers pulled off a shocker at Buck Beltzer Field on Wednesday afternoon.

After losing its last two games to conference powers Oklahoma State and Oklahoma by a combined score of 42-15, Nebraska beat 21st-ranked Oklahoma 8-2 behind a complete game from Pat Driscoll.

The Huskers have had problems this season finding strong pitching, but one night after using six pitchers in a 24-7 loss to the Sooners, Nebraska was able to hold Oklahoma in check with one pitcher in front of a crowd of 123 fans.

Oklahoma, 21-11 and 8-3 in Big Eight play, jumped ahead 2-0 on second baseman Jesse Zepeda's two-out single in the second inning, scoring Brian Shackleford and Jamie Gann.

Shackleford and Gann were the Sooners' primary sources of offense Wednesday. Shackleford was 3 for 4 and Gann was 2 for 4. The pair combined for five of Oklahoma's six hits and scored the Sooners' only two runs.

Driscoll (1-1) took advantage of his first start by pitching a complete game eight-hitter. The junior college transfer from Neosho (Kan.) Community College allowed only three hits after the second inning, posting Nebraska's first complete game of the season.

Nebraska coach John Sanders was impressed with Driscoll's command of his pitches.

"The performance was outstanding," Sanders said. "This Oklahoma team is one of the best teams they've had in a long time."

Nebraska (11-18-1 and 3-8) did not collect a hit off Sooner starter Joe Victory until the fourth inning when senior right fielder Mel Motley hit a one-out triple. The Huskers took ad-



Jay Calderon/DN

Nebraska freshman Craig Moore slides into third base Wednesday afternoon as Oklahoma's Israel Gonzalez tries to apply the tag. The 8-2 Husker victory was Nebraska's first win over a ranked opponent this season.

vantage of the hit when first baseman Jason Fry lined an RBI double to right field.

Fry, in replacing sophomore Todd Sears — who suffered a bruised right foot after fouling a pitch off Tuesday night — finished 2 for 4 with three RBI and one run scored. Designated hitter Craig Moore scored Fry on a two-out double to tie the game at two.

The Huskers took the lead in the sixth when senior left fielder Matt Meyer scored on a Motley single.

The seventh inning looked favorable for Victory as he struck out catcher Scott Schultz to begin the inning. But the ball rolled away from

Sooner catcher Javier Flores, allowing Schultz to advance to first.

Francis Collins reached safely on a bunt and Meyer was intentionally walked, leaving the bases loaded for Motley. Motley grounded out, scoring Schultz, and then Fry singled to score Collins and Meyer to put the Huskers ahead 6-2.

Victory, who fell to 6-2, was replaced by junior Brett Pennington in the eighth. Victory finished the day giving up six runs on nine hits, with four walks and five strikeouts.

Nebraska added two insurance runs off Pennington in the eighth inning. "I told them before the game that

baseball is a game where you can turn the page very easily and put the previous day behind you," Sanders said.

After having nine games canceled this season because of bad weather, Nebraska has scheduled two double-headers later this season to fill the holes in its schedule. The Huskers will play host to Nebraska-Omaha on April 25 at 4 p.m., and on May 6, Nebraska will play two games against Peru State at Buck Beltzer Field at 2:30 p.m.

Next up for Nebraska is a three-game series against Oral Roberts Friday, Saturday and Sunday at Buck Beltzer Field.

Viola leads NU to win over ISU

By Mike Kluck
Senior Reporter

For more than a year, one play has haunted Ali Viola.

Last season Viola had a chance to provide Nebraska with a game-winning hit that would have allowed the Cornhuskers to sweep their series with Iowa State.

With two outs in the bottom of the seventh inning, the bases loaded and the Huskers down one run, Viola came to the plate facing Cyclone pitcher Debbie Nease. But Viola was unable to produce, hitting a weak grounder to second base as the Huskers lost 6-5.

Viola, a second-team All-American, went on to earn 1995 Big Eight player-of-the-year honors and set school records for hits (87), home runs (13), RBI (72), total bases (149) and assists (160), but she knew she owed Nease and Iowa State.

On Wednesday, Viola had her chance.

With two outs in the bottom of the 10th inning, Viola came to the plate against Nease.

"I was going to go hard," Viola said. "I knew ahead of time I was going to swing at the first pitch. So I stepped in the box and I just took my biggest cut."

The cut against a high fastball turned into a two-run home run, which gave the 23-11 Huskers a 9-7 win over the Cyclones in Nebraska's first-ever Big 12 Conference regular-season

Good grades a habit for NU's gymnasts

By Gregg Madsen
Staff Reporter

Before the Nebraska women's gymnastics team accepted its third consecutive Big Eight Championship trophy Saturday night in Ames, Iowa, f i v e Cornhuskers were honored for their work in the class-



Nicolini

room. Nebraska's Joy Taylor, Kim DeHaan, Shelly Bartlett and Misty Oxford all were named to the first team of the 1996 Academic All-Big Eight team. Senior Meghan Nicolini received honorable mention.

DeHaan and Taylor, both biological science majors, joined Oklahoma's Michelle Antinoro in receiving special recognition for maintaining a 4.0 grade-point average.

Taylor, who won the all-around title with a Big Eight-record 39.375, has been a first-team selection for four consecutive years.

"It's not something I'm always thinking about," said Taylor, a senior from New Palestine, Ind. "It's not like I say: 'I've got to keep that 4.0.' It's just been a habit that I haven't had to think about."

DeHaan, a junior from Sioux Falls, S.D., has been an academic

all-conference selection in each of her three seasons at Nebraska. On Saturday, she won the uneven bars with a 9.9 and tied for first in the floor exercise with a 9.85.

Bartlett, a junior all-arounder who is majoring in education, owns a 3.82 GPA.

"We study a lot," Bartlett said. "We study on bus and plane trips all the time, and then if we have time in the hotel rooms, we study."

Coach Dan Kendig hasn't made an effort to control the athletes' study habits — he hasn't had to.

"That's the key. They are determined," Kendig said. "Yeah, I make a point of making sure that they're in classes. But I can't control how well they do on tests. It comes down to their determination, and I think that has been contagious."

The desire has spread to freshman Misty Oxford, who holds a 3.64 GPA after taking a year off to improve her SAT score following her senior year of high school.

Oxford was named the conference newcomer of the year Saturday and finished second in the all-around with a career-high 38.9.

Nicolini, a senior psychology major from Annapolis, Md., has a 3.34 GPA. Kendig said Nicolini had improved dramatically in the classroom this semester.

Nebraska's academic success hasn't been limited to the Big Eight. The Huskers won the 1995 academic national championship and finished second in 1994.

Gymnast fights back after injury

By Gregg Madsen
Staff Reporter

After a two-year absence from competition, the gymnast labeled "the next



Reive

Jim Hartung" by Nebraska men's gymnastics coach Francis Allen is back.

Hartung, a two-time NCAA all-around champion and 1982 Nissen Award winner at Nebraska, was a

two-time Olympian and a gold medalist in 1984. Hartung's a tough act to follow. But J.D. Reive is going to try.

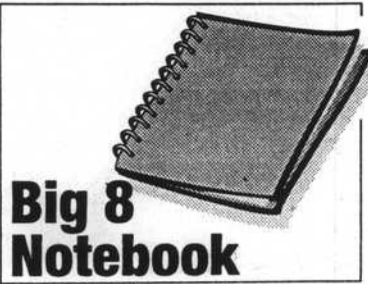
Reive, a true freshman from Fair Lawn, N.J., has been sidelined this season by a slightly cracked vertebra in his lower back, an injury that he originally suffered in April 1995 and aggravated last December.

Coming back from that injury, Reive said, has not been as easy as he would have liked.

"I was able to train for a few months after I was first injured back in 1995," he said. "But then this December I hurt it again. I have this bad habit of working out until I hurt myself."

This season, Reive has endured a rigorous upper-body strength regimen that has kept him in shape and enabled him to get back into action. Allen said Reive's workouts were just another example of his desire to be the best.

See REIVE on 8



The Nebraska baseball team's 8-2 win over Oklahoma on Wednesday afternoon saved the Cornhuskers from falling into last place in the Big Eight. The Cornhuskers, whose roster features 24 newcomers, raised their Big Eight record to 3-8 in the league. The Sooners, 8-3 in Big Eight play, are a half-game ahead of Oklahoma State and Missouri. The Cowboys were swept in a pair of games at Kansas on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Kansas State is 2-3 in the conference and Kansas is 6-7. Iowa State, the only Big Eight team other than Nebraska with a sub-.500 overall record, is 2-8 in the league. Conference play will not get any easier next year for the Huskers in the Big 12. Texas Tech is ranked second nationally behind defending national champion Cal State Fullerton, and Texas is ranked 24th in the nation.

Last week was productive for a pair of Kansas baseball players. Freshman Chris Williams was named Big Eight pitcher of the week. Williams, from Edmond, Okla., fired 7 2/3 scoreless innings last week. He holds a 2-0 record in seven appearances. Against Missouri, sophomore Casey Barrett racked up his sixth save, which ties him for the second-highest total in a season at Kansas.

Missouri outfielder Matt Nivens hit .476 (10 for 21) last week, earning the Big Eight position player of the week. As the Tigers lead-off batter, Nivens reached base in 27 of Missouri's first 28 games.

On the softball diamond, Big 12 competition has started one season ahead of the rest of the league this spring, and the conference is faring well in the polls. In the latest USA Today/National Softball Coaches' poll, Oklahoma ranked 12th, Texas A&M 13th and Nebraska 17th.

During the outdoor season, the Nebraska men's and women's track and field teams have picked up right where they left off in the indoor season. On the men's side, the Cornhuskers lead the Big Eight with five individual NCAA provisional qualifiers. The qualifiers are hurdlers Willie Hibler, Frank Mensah and Miklos Roth, hammer thrower Greg Armitage and high jumper Shane Lavy.

On the women's side, shot putter Tressa Thompson is one of only two automatic individual NCAA qualifiers in the Big Eight. The Huskers also have three provisional qualifiers. They are: hammer thrower Doreen Heldt, heptathlete Janet Blomstedt and shot putter Paulette Mitchell.

The NCAA Division I Directors' Cup competition, which ranks schools using 22 Division-I sports, has Nebraska ranked eighth after its indoor track performances. Nebraska's men finished second and the women were fifth. UCLA leads the competition, and Nebraska's Big Eight rival Colorado is fourth.

Notebook compiled by staff reporter Vince D'Adamo.

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