

# Allen says Huskers can conquer injuries

By Gregg Madsen  
Staff Reporter

Injuries have plagued the Nebraska men's gymnastics team all season.

This weekend's Mountain Pacific Sports Federation Championships in Santa Barbara, Calif., will be no different for the No. 4 Cornhuskers.

Husker all-arounder Jim Koziol, recently healed from a torn bicep muscle, will be questionable for the two-day meet because of chronic back problems.

Nebraska coach Francis Allen said Koziol would have to be healthy for the Huskers to be successful in the nine-team field that includes No. 3 California, eighth-ranked Oklahoma and No. 10 New Mexico. 1995 national champion Stanford also will be at the meet, which runs Friday and Saturday.

"If Koziol's out," Allen said, "we could be in trouble. If his back is bothering him at all, I'll take him out and save him for next week. We may take a beating, but I don't think that's going to happen. I think the guys will rally if he's out."

Koziol has emerged as the Huskers' most consistent all-arounder this season, ranking ninth in the nation in all-around standings with a 56.43 average.

The sophomore from Omaha was named the MPSF athlete of the week for his career-high 56.95 all-around score against No. 1 Ohio State in Lincoln on March 23.

Senior all-arounder Jason Christie will be counted on to pick up most of the slack if Koziol doesn't compete, Allen said. Christie, fully recovered from a sinus infection, will use a different

dismount on parallel bars at the meet.

"He's very comfortable with it," Allen said. "I think he's going to have a good meet this weekend."

Christie ranks 11th in the country in the pommel horse, ninth in the parallel bars and sixth in the horizontal bar.

Allen said California would be the team to beat this weekend. The Golden Bears are led by all-arounder Trent Wells, who shared this week's MPSF athlete-of-the-week honors with Koziol.

California leads the country in the horizontal bar (39.06) and is second in the parallel bars (38.21).

The Huskers are second in the pommel horse (38.71), fourth in the parallel bars (38.03) and seventh in the horizontal bar (38.18).

Freshman J.D. Reive will provide a needed boost for the Huskers on the vault and the parallel bars, Allen said.

Reive only competed on the still rings against Ohio State on March 23 after missing the season's first eight meets with a back injury.

All nine teams in the MPSF are also members of the NCAA Midwest region. The NCAA will select the six teams from that field with the highest three-score average to compete in the Midwest Regional meet April 13 in Lincoln. The top three teams at the regionals will advance to the NCAA Championships in Stanford, Calif., April 25-27.

The Huskers and Oklahoma joined the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation last year because they were the only two Big Eight teams still sponsoring men's gymnastics.

## Harriman

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gram after making a visit to Lincoln on Feb. 3 and attending the Huskers' 75-65 loss to Iowa State.

"This was the team he felt most comfortable around," Horner said. "The coaching staff handled things very professionally, and he was impressed with that."

Harriman, who is left-handed, helped lead Mason City to a 22-1 record and a state championship in Iowa's largest class.

He was named first-team all-state and was a member of the Class 4A state tournament team. For the season, he averaged 16.3 points, 11 rebounds and four blocked shots per game. Harriman also set a state record by making 69.7 percent of his field goal attempts and had a school-record 68 blocks.

Harriman said he chose Nebraska because he liked the school, the facilities and the coaches.

"I decided to make an early commitment, so I was not distracted by the recruiting process next season," Harriman said.

Other schools that showed interest in him were Iowa, Northwestern and Tulsa.

Horner said Harriman had qualified under NCAA academic guidelines, carrying a 3.4 grade-point average.

Before coming to Nebraska, Harriman said he needed to work on his upper-body strength as well as his footwork. He considered his good shooting touch, quickness and defensive rebounding his strengths.

Horner agreed with Harriman's assessment.

"He needs to work on the weights and build that upper-body strength," Horner said.

As a senior next season, Harriman will be playing alongside Iowa recruit Dean Oliver. Oliver, an all-state point guard, committed to play basketball for the Hawkeyes following his sophomore season.

The early signing period for basketball recruits begins Nov. 13.

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# NIT win gets Huskers on right foot for future

By Trevor Parks  
Senior Reporter

Not long after winning the National Invitation Tournament, the Nebraska basketball team was looking forward to next year and better things.

Despite losing five seniors, four of whom were among Nebraska's top seven players this season, the Cornhuskers expect to make it to the NCAA Tournament next season.

Coach Danny Nee said winning the NIT with a 60-56 victory over St. Joseph's last week was a major step for the Nebraska program.

"Our guys playing into March and playing 35 games and having to play through spring break and all, that knocks all that crap off for next year," Nee said. "They know what they want to do for next year. I've already started talking to them about that."

"I was saying it to them out on the court about being in the other tournament."

Of the four teams to make the 1995 NIT Final Four, all made the NCAA Tournament this season. Virginia Tech, the winner of last year's NIT, beat Wisconsin-Green Bay in the first round of this year's NCAA Tournament before losing to Kentucky in the second round.

Marquette, which lost in the NIT title game last year, also made it to the second round of the NCAA Tournament this year.

Canisius and Penn State, also in the 1995 NIT Final Four, lost in the first round of last month's NCAA Tournament.

Holes in Nebraska's starting lineup are left with the departure of the team's top two scorers, Erick Strickland and Jaron Boone. The Huskers' top two players off the bench, Terrance Badgett and Tom Wald, also will be gone next fall.

Overall, 52 percent of the team's scoring and 39.6 percent of its rebounding will be missing next year.

But like Virginia Tech last year, Nebraska used the NIT to gain valuable experience. Starting point guard Tyronn Lue, a sophomore next year, returns after starting 34 games as a fresh-

man. Lue was named to the Big Eight's all-freshman team and to the NIT all-tournament team. He averaged 8.5 points and a team-high 4.1 assists per game.

Winning the NIT will be a springboard for next season, Lue said.

"Everybody would have been down on the program if we hadn't made postseason play," Lue said. "I think we are going to come out and have a better season next year."

Senior-to-be Mikki Moore started 27 games and averaged nine points and 5.6 rebounds per game. He also shot a team-high 58 percent from the field. In the NIT championship game, Moore had a double-double with 11 points and 13 rebounds.

Senior forward Bernard Garner started 34 games after transferring from Western Nebraska Community College. He averaged 10.7 points and 6.3 rebounds per game, both team highs among returning players.

Another post player, Venson Hamilton, also returns. Hamilton played in 32 games, averaging six points and five rebounds per game.

Sophomore forward Andy Markowski, who cracked Nebraska's nine-man rotation as a redshirt freshman, is coming back, and sophomores Leif Nelson, Chad Ideus and junior Chester Surles also are slated to be back next season.

The Husker lineup should receive a boost from three players who were academically ineligible this season.

They are: 6-foot-6 forward Larry Florence of Phenix City, Ala.; Alvin Mitchell, a 6-1 all-state guard from Omaha Burke; and Troy Piatkowski, a 6-5 forward from Rapid City, S.D. Piatkowski's brother, Eric, now with the Los Angeles Clippers, is a former two-time All-Big Eight forward for Nebraska.

Nebraska, which now has one scholarship available and is looking to sign a guard later this month, nabbed Lue's cousin, 6-3 guard Cookie Belcher of Mexico, Mo., in November.

Nee said the talent for next season might be better than any of his first 10 years.

"I like it," Nee said. "I think we have a good base."

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