

NU's elite to compete in Atlanta

By SEAN LEWIS
Staff Reporter

Running in big meets is nothing new for some of the members of the Nebraska men's and women's track and field teams. When 11 members of the Cornhusker track team compete at the U.S. Indoor Track and Field Championships in Atlanta starting today, it won't be the first time. Although NU Coach Gary Pepin is still unsure which Huskers will travel to Atlanta, he knows Tom Fish, Shane Lavy, Willie Hibler, Angee Henry, Tressa Thompson, Kerry Doetker and the women's 4 X 400-meter relay team have all qualified for the meet. Pepin said Henry will not compete because of an injury she suffered at last weekend's Big 12 Championships, and Joe Laster has not officially qualified, but may still compete.

Pepin said this weekend's meet is the perfect time for his top athletes to have some of their best performances.

"Hopefully, it's the time of year to have terrific performances," Pepin said. "We're going to not just compete against NCAA people, but national champions and semi-pro athletes. It will be the very best in the U.S."

Fish said although he qualified for the U.S. Outdoor Track and Field Championships last year, this will be a new experience for him.

"I've never qualified for something like this indoors, but there will be some of the same faces I saw last year at outdoors," Fish said. "At the U.S. indoor meet, I'll be running against the best in America."

"After I run against those guys, I'll be prepared to run against anybody."

Although the Husker athletes know what expect against this high level of competition, Pepin said no one knows what to expect what results will happen this weekend.

"I have no idea what the fields look like because I don't know who's entered and what they've done," Pepin said. "This meet will help them get confidence indoors and will put them up against great competition."

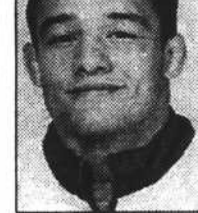
Coming off a second-place finish in the 200 meters and a fifth-place finish in the 55 meters at the Big 12 Indoor Championships, Fish said he is confident entering the meet.

"I expect to run well in the prelims — that's the big thing," Fish said. "You've got to be ready to run and run well that first round so you can qualify for finals."

Oklahoma trip starts with loss

By ANTONE OSEKA
Staff Reporter

Oklahoma snapped the Nebraska wrestling team's seven match dual win streak Thursday night with a 27-9 win over the No. 8 Cornhuskers in Norman, Okla.



NU posted only three victories against the Sooners, and lost three tough matches by one point. Coach Tim Neumann said he wasn't happy with the Huskers' performance. At the Cliff Keen National Duals in Lincoln last month, Nebraska posted a 22-12 victory over the Sooners to begin NU's seven match winning streak.

"We wrestled at 60 percent of our normal intensity and focus," Neumann said from Norman following the meet.

Nebraska fell behind 8-0 before 10th-ranked Brad Canoyer pulled out

a 5-4 win over Bo Eubanks at 134 pounds. Todd Beckerman (118 pounds) lost on a technical fall and No. 9 126-pounder Jeramie Welder lost 10-9 to put NU in an 8-0 whole. Freshman 177-pounder Charles McTorry posted a 14-8 victory over Waymon May to score the NU's final points.

NU's biggest win came at 158 pounds with Jason Kraft — ranked 11th — beating sixth-ranked Byron Tucker 8-6 on a takedown in overtime. Tucker defeated Kraft 5-2 earlier this season at the National Duals.

Neumann said Kraft was the Husker wrestler to compete at his potential against OU.

"Kraft beating Byron Tucker was a big win for him," Neumann said.

Kraft will have a chance to complete a stellar weekend as he faces No. 4 Hardell Moore of Oklahoma State on Sunday.

The Huskers dual the top-ranked Cowboys at 1 p.m. in Stillwater, Okla. OSU Coach John Smith said he is looking for a good dual from the Huskers.

"I'll be starting my starting team," Smith said. "This isn't the time to be

getting upset."

Neither Smith, nor Neumann expects NU to upset the Cowboys. Eight of OSU's 10 starters are rated in the country's Top 10, with four being Nos. 1 or 2, and one — 150-pounder Jimmy Arias — ranked 11th. The only unranked wrestler for the Cowboys is heavyweight Ben Lee.

Lee will have the task of facing one of the four rated wrestlers for NU, No. 3 Tolly Thompson. Thompson sat out the dual against the Sooners to be eligible to wrestle against the Cowboys.

Both coaches can't wait to see the two big men square off on the mat.

Neumann said he wants Thompson to see all the possible competition before the Big 12 Championships next week.

Smith said wrestling Thompson is a positive for Lee.

"There's a lot of things to gain," Smith said of the matchup. "The only thing to lose is an injury."

Neumann said a team loss by the Huskers is avoidable.

"We need to upset some people for seedings for the Big 12's," Neumann said. "But a win probably isn't in the cards for us."

NU tries to stop skid at tourney

By DAVID WILSON
Staff Reporter

With a solid pitching rotation, the Nebraska baseball team is only as good as its hits — and through eight games, the Cornhuskers are batting .242.

Nebraska (5-3) will look to snap a three-game losing skid tonight at 6:30 against Minnesota (1-6) in the first game of the Hormel Foods Classic at the Metrodome in Minneapolis.

Against the Gophers, the Husker offense needs to produce, NU Coach John Sanders said.

"We need to score runs," Sanders said. "Right now our offense is lagging and that's why we've lost three games. I'm really pleased with our pitching and our defense."

Senior right-hander Steve Fish (2-0), who will make his second start of the season for the Huskers today, was named the Big 12 pitcher of the week after tossing a complete-game one-hitter Feb. 21 against Creighton.

In 13 innings this season, Fish has struck out 17 batters and has only allowed one earned run.

"I feel confident," Fish said. "When I'm out there, I feel that the only person that can beat me is myself."

The Huskers, who were shut out 3-0 by Kansas in Lawrence on Tuesday, have scored 12 runs in their last four games while being out-hit by their opponents 40-27.

But outfielder Gabe Garcia said he is confident the Nebraska bats will break out of their slumps.

"This is a new experience for a lot of guys," Garcia said.

Even senior Francis Collins, who led the team with a .424 average last season, has struggled. Collins has started all eight games for the Huskers but has produced a team-low .171 average.

"He's not used to that," Sanders said. "He's a catalyst. As he goes, we go."

Nebraska will face Minnesota sophomore right-hander Brad Pautz (0-1), who was rocked for eight runs in 4 1/3 innings in his first outing Feb. 17 against South Alabama.

Nebraska will pit senior left-hander Pat Driscoll against second-ranked UCLA (17-2-1) at 7 p.m. on Saturday. Driscoll (0-1) has struck out 18 hitters in 15 1/3 innings and boasts a 2.35 earned-run average.

Senior right-hander Peter Lythgoe will take the hill against Washington (4-6) at 5 p.m. Sunday to close out the tournament.

Swim teams in second at conference meet

By JAY SAUNDERS
Staff Reporter

Nebraska Swimming and Diving Coach Cal Bentz has talked about getting a shot at Texas all season long.

But after the first two days of the Big 12 Conference Swimming and Diving Championships, the Cornhuskers need a big boost to catch the Longhorns.

The Husker men and women, who finished 4-0 in Big 12 Conference dual meets, are both in second place at the Big 12 meet in College Station, Texas.

The NU men trail UT 290.50-200.50. The Husker women are in second behind the Longhorns, trailing 355-287.

On the second day of competition the Nebraska women combined to have six NCAA automatic qualifying times, three NCAA provisional qualifying times, two school records and a pair of Texas A&M Student Recreation Center pool records.

Senior Julia Russell set a school record in the 200-yard individual medley with an automatic NCAA qualifying time of 1:59.13. Anna Windsor finished third with an NCAA qualifying time of 2:01.42.

Helene Muller and Beth Karaica each finished with NCAA automatic qualifying times in the 50-yard freestyle. Muller finished first with a pool-record time of 22.98 seconds. Karaica was third with a season-best time of 23.04.

The 200-yard freestyle relay team

of Muller, Karaica, Russell and Windsor won the event in an NCAA automatic qualifying time of 1:31.60. That was also a pool record and smashed the former NU record of 1:33.01 set in 1991.

On the men's side, Nebraska began the day with a second-place finish in the 200-yard freestyle relay. Juan Benavides, Adam Pine, Alex Shleifman and Mark Bennett finished behind Texas with a time of 1:19.22.

The 400-yard medley relay team of Pine, Shleifman, Valery Kalmikov and Benavides finished fourth with a school-record time of 3:16.70.

NU placed three swimmers in the finals: Michael Windisch in the 500-yard freestyle with a school-record time of 4:23.86, Kalmikov in the 200-yard IM and Benavides in the 50-yard freestyle.

With the dual season the Huskers put together, Bentz said Nebraska will benefit from the opportunity to prove itself in the new conference.

"We feel we have everything to gain and nothing to lose," Bentz said. "It is uplifting to know you are in a position to make a big impact."

An impact is not the only thing the Huskers want to accomplish, Bentz said.

"The best possible outcome is to win two championships," Bentz said. "We all believe it isn't above the realm of possibility."

On the first day of competition, NU diver Danny Bergman finished second in the one-meter diving competition.

Title game may move to Texas

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — The Big 12 Conference football championship game likely will move to San Antonio's Alamodome from St. Louis, a published report said Thursday.

The Austin American-Statesman reported in Thursday editions, quoting an unnamed source familiar with the selection process, as saying the choice might be made Friday.

If not, the league may wait more than a week to make an announcement so attention will not be diverted from the Big 12 men's and women's basketball tournaments in Kansas City, Mo.

Big 12 Conference spokesman Bo Carter said the proposal to move the game had been under discussion since the first conference championship game in December, but said he did not know when an announcement might be made.

"They're getting into the final stages but they haven't finalized it yet," he said Thursday.

The newspaper's source said San Antonio had a 90-percent chance of landing the game.

Big 12 athletic directors hope to discuss proposals from San Antonio, St. Louis, Dallas and Houston by telephone on Friday, and could reach a decision about where the Dec. 6 game will be played.

Last year's game was held at the Trans World Dome in St. Louis where Texas beat Nebraska 37-27.

NU happy for homestand

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"We just need to capitalize on things and start to do better in taking advantage of opportunities," he said.

Allen said the Huskers have used strong performances from each gymnast to stay in contention for the school's ninth national title.

Despite a foot injury, sophomore Marshall Nelson has emerged as one of the NU's top scorers on the parallel bars, high bar, floor exercise and pommel horse, Allen said.

At Oklahoma last Friday, Nelson won the parallel bars (9.85), the high bar (9.75) and was second on the vault (9.55).

"I just think maybe he's matured a little bit, both physically and mentally," Allen said. "I tell you what, he's a pretty fierce competitor. A few little nagging injuries slow some people down, but they don't slow Marshall down."

Injured or not, Nelson and the rest of the Huskers should benefit from having their next four meets at home, Allen said.

Freshman all-arounder Derek Leiter said competing in three straight meets on the road has been hard on the team.

After losing to Oklahoma Feb. 1 in Lincoln, the Huskers went 2-3 on the road with losses at No. 7 New Mexico, No. 6 Oklahoma and top-ranked Ohio State.

Leiter, who had a career-high 57.1 all-around score at Ohio State, said the Huskers are anxious for the chance to have four home meets in a row.

"I would say it's going to be a big confidence factor," Leiter said. "Most people that come in here are going to be looking to knock us off."

The Hawkeyes don't have a top-20 all-arounder, but Leiter said the meet is one of NU's toughest of the season.

NU duals ISU minus two

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Kendig said.

Kendig said sophomore Courtney Brown will not compete Saturday, either. Brown was held out of practice this week to rest a stress fracture in her left leg.

Brown, who will return next week, has been a consistent scorer for the Huskers on the vault and the floor exercise, he said.

"With Courtney and Laura out, we've basically lost an all-arounder," Kendig said. "But if the other girls do their job, we shouldn't feel the loss too much."

Kendig said the Huskers — who are oth-

erwise healthy — will not have much room for error against ISU.

Nebraska defeated the Cyclones in the season-opener at Ames, 193.675-191.675. Since the Jan. 11 meeting, both teams have improved considerably, Kendig said.

The Huskers set a school record Sunday in defeating fifth-ranked Arizona State, 196.625-195.6. The Cyclones also set a school record last week, knocking off Oklahoma 195.6-190.75.

Thursday night the Cyclones played host to Iowa before turning their attention to NU.

Kendig said the injuries to Ohlendorf and Brown will be harmful, but not totally devastating.

"We'll probably struggle to get the score that we got last weekend," Kendig said. "But I don't think they're better than us."