

Tigers in first despite struggles

By DAVID WILSON
Staff Reporter

Numbers can be misleading. The Missouri baseball team, which is first in the Big 12 Conference with a 5-1 record, has a team batting average of .255 and boasts a 6.56 earned-run average.



Jamieson

"Considering where our numbers are," MU Coach Tim Jamieson said, "we're fortunate to be where we are." The Tigers (9-10) visit Lincoln this weekend for a three-game series against Nebraska (5-13 and 0-6). Today's game, which was cancelled because of possible freezing rain, will be made up as part of a doubleheader beginning at noon Saturday at Buck Beltzer Field — weather permitting. The two teams are scheduled to play one game Sunday at 1 p.m. After a 2-5 start, MU won five straight games, but in its last nine games, the Tigers' only two wins have come against Texas A&M. "We got off to a slow start,"

Jamieson said. "We went up to California and got thumped a little bit. We've had a tough schedule."

Offensively, Missouri is led by junior outfielder Ryan Fry, who led the team with a .389 average last season. This year, Fry is batting .329 with four home runs and a team-high 22 RBIs. But junior All-America candidate Aaron Jaworowski, who led the nation with 101 RBIs last season, has struggled. Jaworowski is batting .203 with three homers and 17 RBIs.

"We haven't been too consistent offensively," Jamieson said. "We've played a lot of different people in a lot of different places in the lineup. Our trouble is that we haven't been able to get consistent play from our top players."

Freshman Mike Rallo — who has played in just 11 games — leads Missouri with five home runs, four of which have tied games or given the Tigers a lead.

"He has swung the bat well," Jamieson said.

Missouri will send lefty Justin Stine and right-hander Jeremy Callier to the mound Saturday to face the Cornhuskers. Stine (4-2) leads Missouri with a 4.41 ERA, while Callier (1-0) posts a 4.98 ERA and leads the Tiger staff with 23 strikeouts.

"We're not as deep on the mound,"

"You have to play your best baseball against conference teams."

TIM JAMIESON
MU baseball coach

Jamieson said, "but we have some good pitchers."

The Tigers, who lost to Kansas in non-conference games last Tuesday and Wednesday, will look to take sole possession of the conference lead this weekend. Baylor is also 5-1 against league opponents.

"You have to play your best baseball against conference teams," Jamieson said. "We have to continue that. It's a very difficult conference to be competitive in."

The Huskers, who have been outscored by their opponents 55-19 in their last four games, look to snap a 13-game losing streak. Nebraska is the only Big 12 team without a conference win.

Opponents know NU will break out of skid

By MIKE KLUCK
Senior Reporter

A different setting awaits the Nebraska softball team this weekend as the Cornhuskers participate in the Cowgirl Spring Classic in Stillwater, Okla.

The Huskers (4-8) take a break this week from competing against Top 25 teams. In NU's first two tournaments of the season the Huskers faced nine different teams ranked in the Top 25.

Nebraska will play Wichita State (4-8) in its first game at 12:30 p.m. and then will face Big 12 Conference rival Kansas (10-7) at 6 p.m. in pool-play format. The other half of the bracket consists of Mississippi, Southwest Missouri State and Oklahoma State.

Despite playing unranked teams and games that don't count in the conference race, it doesn't mean the intensity won't be as strong.

"Just because this is a non-conference game doesn't mean any less," said Kansas first-year coach Tracy Bunge. "It's going to be just as intense as if it was a late-season game."

Bunge, a native of Oklahoma, said she is looking forward to seeing Husker pitcher Angela Blackwood. Bunge's father, Al, coached and worked with

Blackwood when she was in junior and senior high at Broken Arrow, Okla.

Today's game will be the first time Bunge will get to see Blackwood play for NU.

Wichita State Coach Jim Maynard is not looking forward to seeing Blackwood.

NU and the Shockers haven't met since the 1995 season when the Huskers swept a doubleheader 6-0 and 4-2. Maynard said he doesn't remember much about the game, except Nebraska's pitcher hitting a home run.

"I wish Nebraska was 12-0," Maynard said. "Them going 4-8 doesn't affect me at all. I know they are good."

Maynard said he doesn't know much about this year's NU squad but he knows about the Huskers' shortstop.

"Nebraska always seems to have a great shortstop," Maynard said. "Just when they have one graduating, you're thinking 'Oh, boy! She's finally gone.' But then they bring in a freshman who is great, and you're asking yourself, 'Where did she come from?'"

Husker junior shortstop Ali Viola fits Maynard's description. She leads NU with three home runs, six RBIs, 31 total bases and seven walks.

Alamodome new site for game

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — The Alamodome was named Thursday as the site for the Big 12's football championship game.

"We're excited about giving football fans in this region a chance to see one of the nation's premiere championship games," said Commissioner Steve Hatchell.

"We have been pleased with the bids we received from a number of cities for the game and we are really happy about the 1997 site. San Antonio offers a great atmosphere, many local attractions and a fine facility in the Alamodome."

In the first-ever title game, the Trans World Dome in St. Louis played host to the first game between Texas and Nebraska. But the game fell short of capacity although it produced \$500,000 in additional revenue for conference schools.

Missouri Athletic Director Joe Castiglione — who is the Big 12 director of athletics chairman — said a change in venue will be good for the game.

"The directors liked the idea of moving the championship to different geographical sites to offer increased exposure in new areas for the Big 12," Castiglione said.

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