

# NU enters NCAAs with momentum

By JAY SAUNDERS  
Staff Reporter

A huge win in the Big 12 Championships two weeks ago will help the Nebraska women's swimming and diving team at the NCAA Championships, which begin Thursday.



Bentz

Cal Bentz said the impact will have a great effect on the women's program heading into this weekend.

Nebraska hardly dominated the conference meet. The Cornhuskers were trailing after the first three days. NU held a slim lead on the third day, but the Longhorns stormed back quickly to take a one-point lead.

"We are traditionally soft in the first day," Bentz said. "We grew a lot stronger as the meet unfolded."

The Huskers dominated the final day with 16 swimmers in five events — four of whom won titles. Bentz said

the performance showed exactly what NU is capable of doing.

"We went down there, looked them straight in the eye and went after them," Bentz said. "We didn't fold. We came back from being down one and went roaring by."

The Huskers' roar came from several different people. Julia Russell, who was named the meet's outstanding female swimmer, won the 100- and 200-meter breaststroke. But the big push for Nebraska came in the relays where it won all four.

"Relays are a key because they bring four people together as a unit," Bentz said. "Those were moral victories."

One of those victories was in the 400-yard freestyle relay. Beth Karaica came back on the final leg to beat Texas. Karaica touched the wall first with a time of 3:42.06, edging the Longhorns who finished with a time of 3:42.10.

"That takes a lot out of a team," Bentz said. "A lot of damage is done to the spirit. That is a psychological battle, not just a physical one."

Now that the Huskers have accomplished their goal of beating Texas, they must focus on a trip to the NCAA Championships at Indianapolis. Bentz said he hopes this is a big step for the Nebraska program.

**"This win is certainly enough of an eye-opener that this is a real team."**

CAL BENTZ  
NU swimming coach

"It raises the level of expectations for the NCAAs," Bentz said. "When you beat a team with that much tradition in a head-to-head competition, you are well on your way."

The Huskers could very well be on their way to opening the nation's eyes. Heading into the Big 12 meet, Nebraska was ranked 16th, but jumped up the polls to finish 10th in the final regular-season poll.

Bentz said now the swimming world can see what kind of a team is in Lincoln.

"This win is certainly enough of an eye-opener that this is a real team," Bentz said. "I don't think it is much of a stretch to realize we are far better than what we have been ranked."

# Huskies topple Braves

From Staff Reports

NIT Roundup

Connecticut advanced to play Nebraska in the National Invitation Tournament quarterfinals with a 63-47 win over Bradley Tuesday night.

The Huskies (16-14) used a 24-point effort from Richard Hamilton — who was 10 of 11 from the line — and 15 points from Kevin Freeman to end the Braves' season at 17-13 in front of a crowd of 8,338 at Harry A. Gampel Pavilion in Storrs, Conn.

Connecticut struggled from the field making just 8 of 28 shots (28.6 percent) in the first half and fell behind 23-21 at halftime. In the second half, the Huskies came back

strong making 11 of 24 shots from the field and 18 of 23 free-throw attempts.

Anthony Parker led Bradley with 25 points and eight rebounds. The Braves made 18 field goals the entire contest shooting 37.5 percent.

NU remained the only Big 12 Conference team left in the NIT when Michigan defeated Oklahoma State 75-65 at Ann Arbor.

Notre Dame will play the Wolverines in the quarterfinals after beating TCU 82-72 in South Bend on Tuesday night.

The other NIT quarterfinals pit Florida State against West Virginia and Arkansas against UNLV.

# Springtime prepares NU for fall

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different roles," Pettit said. "The main thing is working to improve individual skills, and it's different with every player."

"With Fiona, we're working on getting her in a more consistent position before she sets. With Reitsma, we're looking to develop a quicker attack."

Although each player concentrates on individual skills, the team collectively works to improve its passing.

Sophomore middle blocker Megan Korver — NU's leading blocker last season — believes the greatest opportunities for playing time in the fall will come to those players who improve in the back row, where NU lost two of its most consistent passers. Defensive specialist Maria Hedbeck and outside hitter Kate Crnich completed their eli-

**"They know they can win spots for the fall during the spring."**

TERRY PETTIT  
NU volleyball coach

gibility in December.

"We lost some great passers in Maria and Kate," Korver said. "Now, there are quite a few of us who are evenly skilled, so we're working to step it up with our passing."

Pettit agreed that passing consistently is one of the Huskers' major concerns.

"We're really looking to develop some primary passers," Pettit said. "We have Renee (Saunders) back, but

Korver and Reitsma and (Mandy) Monson are really working hard to improve their passing."

Despite the attention given to individual work, Reitsma, NU's lone senior, said the Huskers will not lose sight of their team goals.

"We work on more individual skills in the spring so we can come together as a team during the fall," Reitsma said. "That's where we find our motivation."

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