

Sports Opinion



Trevor Parks

Rutgers' shaft latest part of Nee's misfortune

Danny Nee has done it again. Nee has done something to add fuel to the fire about the feelings toward NU's basketball coach of 11 seasons.

After going on his radio show Tuesday night and saying he was interested in the vacancy at Rutgers, people were ready to drive the U-Haul to the Nee residence and help the coach pack his things.

On Wednesday, Nee, who was considered the front runner by the Scarlet Knights' alumni, fell off the top of the chart. In stepped Rider's Kevin Bannon, a 39-year-old high-intensity coach who has lived in New Jersey his entire life.

Later that night, after getting endorsements from Kentucky Coach Rick Pitino and former Princeton boss Pete Carril, Bannon was offered the job and he took it.

Nee stays, and Nebraska basketball continues on its current path into the unknown with Nee as the captain of the Titanic.

The criticism of his interview will be loud by his fans and his doubters. People in Nebraska are not happy that he wanted to jump ship when things are starting to sink.

But give Nee a little credit. Rutgers called on him and he obliged its request. The prospect of him becoming the Scarlet Knights' coach looked good, and maybe he got a little antsy.

So his energy is now back in Lincoln, where it has been for one-fifth of his 51 years on this planet.

In six days, Nee will try to sign the future of Nebraska basketball. The Huskers have added one recruit in the last year, Brant Harriman, a 6-foot-10 center from Mason City, Iowa. They are supposed to sign Rodney Williams, a 6-3 guard from Houston, next week.

But that's only two. They will replace experienced players like Mikki Moore and Bernard Garner. Without any more signatures, Nee will have nine scholarship players — barring the departure of anyone else — to use, just like this season.

Nebraska lost valuable recruiting this week, but that happens in college basketball.

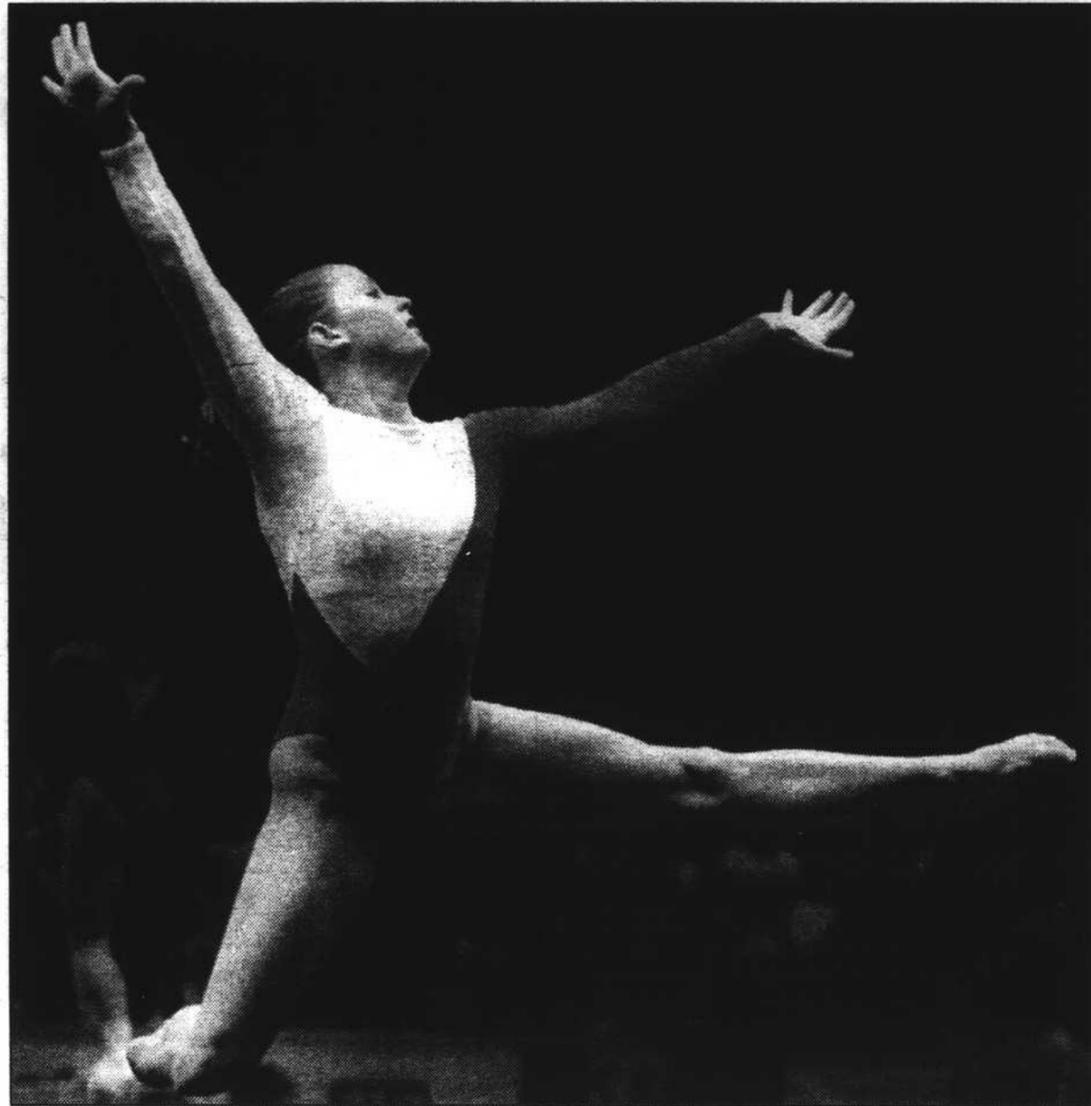
Contrary to popular belief, Nee is a good coach who wants his team to do well. He tries hard, but things haven't gone his way lately. Like last season, the year before last and Wednesday.

Nee needs to get a break in the next six days to make things easy at NU next season.

If not, I hear Rider is looking for a new basketball coach.

Parks is a graduate student and the Daily Nebraskan sports editor.

Kendig: NU can win regional



MATT MILLER/DN

COURTNEY BROWN competes on the floor exercise at the Big 12 Conference championships. Brown and NU compete at the NCAA Midwest Regional on Saturday night.

Huskers try to make NCAA Championships for third straight year.

By GREGG MADSEN
Staff Reporter

Adding more shine to the sparkle of the highest-scoring season in school history could be quite a task for the Nebraska women's gymnastics team. But it's a polishing-up job the Cornhuskers are ready to tackle.

Saturday night at 7, the eighth-ranked Cornhuskers compete in the Kendig NCAA Midwest Regional in Salt Lake City at the Huntsman Center.

The winner of the regional automatically advances to the NCAA Championships April 17-19 in Gainesville, Fla. Winners of the five regionals earn automatic bids while the next seven highest scores from around the country also advance.

NU Coach Dan Kendig said the Huskers will have their work cut out for them against No. 2 Utah and seventh-ranked Arizona State.

"I think we have a chance to win it, I really do," Kendig said. "I think that if we go out there and do our jobs that we can come out on top."

Nebraska has notched the top three team scores in school history this season, all over the 196-point mark.



Kendig

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Huskers hope to erase failure

After missing the NCAAs last year, NU looks to rebound.

By GREGG MADSEN
Staff Reporter

Francis Allen is used to being No. 1, but heading into the NCAA West Regional in Albuquerque, N.M., Allen's content with being third.

After scoring above 230 in each of their past four meets, the Cornhuskers vaulted to the No. 3 spot in the national rankings behind defending national champion Ohio State and 1996 NCAA runner-up California.

NU will take that ranking to University Arena Saturday night at 7 with hopes of finishing as one of the top three teams and earning Nebraska's 18th trip to the NCAA team finals April 17-19 in Iowa City, Iowa.

Allen said Nebraska hopes to use the momentum from a four-meet homestand in which the Huskers defeated second-ranked Cal, fourth-ranked Oklahoma, No. 5 Iowa, sixth-ranked Penn State and No. 7 Minnesota.

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Allen

"I think we're in the best possible position we could be in. We're pretty much in control of our own destiny."

FRANCIS ALLEN
NU men's gymnastics coach

The regional will be a rematch of last weekend's Mountain Pacific Sports Federation Championships with Cal and Oklahoma.

Cal leads the nation in scoring in the high bar, the parallel bars and the still rings and ranks second on the pommel horse and the floor exercise.

The Golden Bears are averaging a 231.817 team score, just ahead of Nebraska's 230.567 and Oklahoma, which averages 230.323.

Allen said NU isn't as concerned with winning the meet as it is with finishing in the top three and advancing to the championships.

The Huskers fell short of qualifying in last season's regional, ending a 17-year run of making the team championships.

"We feel like we have to get

through this storm and then come back here and get ready for the National Championship," Allen said.

The key to the meet, Allen said, will be hitting routines. The Huskers hit 85 percent of their routines at the MPSF Championships, but that percentage needs to improve, he said.

Two vital parts of the Husker attack will be senior still rings specialist Ted Harris and sophomore Marshall Nelson.

Harris, who won the still rings at the MPSF Championships with a season-high 9.85, said the Huskers had been waiting to redeem themselves from last year's failure to make the team championships.

Nelson, ranked in the Top 12 in each of his five events, will look to improve upon his performance at the MPSF individual finals. The Greeley, Colo., native won the parallel bars and the high bar and finished second on the pommel horse.

Huskers take two from Jays

By SHANNON HEFFELFINGER
Staff Reporter

With 28 consecutive road games behind it, the Nebraska softball team was more than happy to be in Lincoln for a doubleheader Thursday night against Creighton.

And with 10-1 and 4-2 victories over the Bluejays (18-22), the Cornhuskers (15-15) proved that there's no place like home.

"I realized how nice it was to be at home once we were playing," NU Coach Rhonda Revelle said. "It's so familiar, and familiarity breeds comfort, which allowed us to relax."

The Huskers relied heavily on the comforts of home in the bottom of the fifth inning of the second game. Trailing 2-1 with two runners on base, catcher Jenny Smith — who was 5 for 5 on the night — blasted a line drive to right field, sending Jennifer Lizama home with the tying run.

CU pitcher Mindy Farnsworth (2-1) walked Christie McCoy, bringing up first baseman Rachel Dunham with the bases loaded. A wild pitch by Farnsworth allowed both Kelly Pinkepank and Smith to cross the plate, giving NU a 4-2 lead. Neither

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