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Huskers will face first Big 12 teams

By ANDREW STRNAD
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska men's and women's track and field teams will get their first taste of Big 12 Conference outdoor competition this weekend as they travel to Norman, Okla., for the Oklahoma Invite.

The Cornhuskers will compete against Kansas as well as the host Sooners.

NU will send its top sprinters and throwers to the invite in order to improve its already impressive list of qualifying marks.

The Huskers have 21 NCAA provisional and automatic qualifying marks on both teams, including 10 for the women's team and 11 for the men's team.

Both squads, however, have experienced an abundance of injury problems lately, particularly on the men's side.

Five of the 11 Huskers with qualifying marks for nationals will not compete this weekend, most notably distance runner Philip Maiyo, who is lost for the remainder of the outdoor season because of a stress fracture.

NU Coach Gary Pepin said the injuries are becoming a concern for the team with the conference meet quickly approaching. The Big 12 outdoors are

May 16-18 at Waco, Texas.

"It's very difficult for the men to compete because we have so few scholarships," Pepin said. "So we have no one to replace them when they get hurt."

On the women's side, leg injuries continue to hamper NCAA defending long jump champion Angee Henry.

Henry has qualified for this year's NCAA's in three events, and Pepin believes that despite all of the injuries that have plagued Henry this outdoor season, she should be ready to contend for another title in a little more than a month at the NCAA meet in Bloomington, Ind.

"Angee hasn't been 100 percent most of the year, but she does have the fourth-longest jump this year," Pepin said.

Athletes not competing at the Oklahoma Invite will travel with NU Distance Coach Jay Dirksen to the 73rd annual Howard Wood Dakota Relays which start today in Sioux Falls, S.D.

"It's a nice, short trip for them, and it should offer some good competition," Pepin said.

With the conference meet only two weeks away, Pepin said the Huskers need to start picking up the pace now.

"We've only got this meet and the dual next week here in Lincoln before the conference meet," he said.

Devaney is finally released

From The Associated Press

Former Nebraska Coach and Athletic Director Bob Devaney has been released from Lincoln General Hospital after suffering a heart attack and a bout with pneumonia, his wife Phyllis said Thursday.

Devaney, 81, had entered the hospital March 19 after suffering a heart attack. Devaney battled pneumonia about two weeks later while still hospitalized.

He was being cared for in a health center in the Devaney's apartment building, Phyllis Devaney said.

"He doesn't seem to change too much. ... He's very quiet," she said. "Right now, we're worried about him having a relapse of his pneumonia."

Devaney brought Nebraska's football program into national prominence and won back-to-back national championships in 1970 and 1971. As athletic director, Devaney helped raise NU's other athletic programs to new levels before stepping down in January 1993.

He suffered a stroke in March 1995, and his health prompted him to resign in June 1996 as athletic director emeritus.

NU must win six games to be .500

TEXAS from page 9

Only the top six teams will qualify for the conference tournament May 15-18 in Oklahoma City. Top-ranked Texas Tech, No. 16 Oklahoma State, No. 18 Oklahoma, No. 23 Texas A&M and Baylor have clinched places in the postseason.

Last season, the Longhorns finished 39-24 and won the Southwest Conference championship with a 17-7 record.

Under the direction of first-year Coach Augie Garrido, Texas is in danger of not qualifying for postseason play for the first time since 1978. Garrido, who won three national championships at Cal-State Fullerton, was hired to replace 29-year mainstay Cliff Gustafson.

Sanders said he isn't fooled by Texas' position in the standings.

"On record, they're not as good as the other southern schools," Sanders said, "but they're still Texas."

The Longhorns are led by Brett

"On record, they're not as good as the other southern schools, but they're still Texas."

JOHN SANDERS
NU baseball coach

Loeffler, who has hit a team-high 11 homers and is batting .389. As a team, Texas is batting .317 — which ranks fifth-best in Longhorn history.

On the mound tonight, the Longhorns will start true-freshman righty Scott Dunn (4-0). Dunn owns a team-best 3.92 ERA and has struck out 49 batters in 43 2/3 innings.

Texas will face NU senior left-hander Pat Driscoll (2-7) today. Driscoll, who posts a 6.57 ERA, has struck out 59 batters in 74 innings.

Longhorn lefty Kendal Adare (4-3 and 5.04) will face NU lefty Kenny Duebelbeis (3-4 and 6.85) on Saturday. On Sunday, Texas righty Rad

Weaver (4-6 and 6.62) will meet Husker righty Steve Fish (8-5 and 5.09).

Despite being eliminated from postseason play, not all is lost for Nebraska, right fielder Gabe Garcia said.

"I guess now it's more personal," Garcia said. "We need to get some kind of respect and win a couple more series."

In their last meeting in 1989 at Disch-Falk Field in Austin, Texas, the Longhorns and Huskers split a double-header.

Nebraska will finish its season with a three-game series in Ames, Iowa, May 10-11 against Iowa State.

Huskers focus on Oklahoma State

OSU from page 9

Fame Stadium at noon today against fifth-seed Oklahoma State (34-18 and 10-7).

"I just want us to continue to play with a lot of heart and a lot of hustle," Revelle said. "I want us to play well. I want us to play to our capabilities."

Nebraska finished its regular season with a split against the No. 20 Cowgirls last Sunday at the NU Softball Complex.

NU won the first game 9-3, but lost the second one 4-1. The game-one win allowed the Huskers to finish a half game ahead of OSU in the final league standings. The two teams also met March 16 in the finals of the Cowgirl Invitational with OSU claiming a 2-1 win in the 11th inning.

If the Huskers defeat Oklahoma State, they most likely would face top-seed Missouri at 6 p.m. Friday. If it loses, NU will play at 4.

Revelle said this is the most competitive tournament she has seen in her five years as Nebraska's coach.

"I think there's six teams that can win it, and Texas A&M (the

tournament's sixth seed) is playing really well right now," Revelle said. "It's a real compliment to the conference and shows we have some very quality softball programs. We have had as many as six teams ranked this year."

The league tournament is divided into two brackets with Nebraska, Missouri, Oklahoma State, Baylor and Texas Tech in one bracket and No. 2-seed Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas A&M, Texas and Iowa State in the other.

The two brackets play a double-elimination format with the winners from each bracket meeting for a single-game championship at 2 p.m. on Sunday.

Revelle said the Big 12 Tournament's format is better than the Big Eight's, which was double elimination throughout the entire tournament.

"In order to keep the players in the game at their best," Revelle said, "you can't play them and play them and play them. That one-game, winner-take-all means everybody is fresh because everything is on the line."

"I know that if we win it we're in."

RHONDA REVELLE
NU softball coach

However, NU's season may be on the line even before the championship game.

The winner of the tournament earns one of the 16 automatic bids to the 32-team NCAA Tournament. Nebraska has qualified for regionals the past two years.

"I know that if we win it we're in," Revelle said. "I know that if we are in the top two or three they are going to give us serious consideration."

"I don't know if that's going to get us in. I thought our women's basketball team was going to be in and they didn't get a bid. I don't like to project like that because you never know what a selection committee is going to do."

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