

NU ready to tip off season

BY DARREN IVY
Staff Reporter

Mens Basketball Bob Devaney Center
UNC Greensboro vs. Nebraska
1:05 p.m. Sunday

As the 1997 basketball season opens, Nebraska and the University of North Carolina-Greensboro share a common goal - the NCCA Tournament.

NU has hungered for a return trip since its 1994 loss to Pennsylvania. UNC-Greensboro hopes to return for the third time in the last four years after having missed out last season.

The quest for both of the veteran squads starts Sunday at 1:05 p.m. in the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

"We are on a mission this season," said Cookie Belcher, NU's starting guard. "The first game is the first stone. We have to step over it first and then move on."

To get over the first stone, NU will need big games from Andy Markowski and Venson Hamilton, said Husker Coach Danny Nee. He is confident they will perform well because they have been averaging 11 and 13 rebounds respectively in the two preseason victories.

"They've really done a nice job of establishing themselves," Nee said.

While these two Huskers have established themselves this year, the UNC-Greensboro men's basketball program has been establishing itself as

a solid Division I program the past four years.

In the 1995 NCCA Tournament the Spartans nearly upset Cincinnati in the first round. Since then, Greensboro has played with some of the top teams in the country.

UNC-Greensboro Coach Randy Peele said playing NU is great opportunity for his team. He said they are expecting a lot of defensive pressure and a physical game from the Huskers.

On the defensive side, the Spartans hope to contain Tyrone Lue and win the rebound battle, Peele said.

"Whether or not we can do those things is another question," Peele said.

Nee said NU doesn't know much about the Spartans, except that they won their first exhibition game 105-67 against a team from Lithuania.

Peele said his team likes to run and shoot the three-pointer off the break.

The Spartans return three starters from last year's 10-20 team that finished in sixth place in the Big South Conference.

Peele said senior guard Derrick Nix and senior center Larry Gilbert are going to be the keys for the

Spartan's success this season. Nix will be matched up with Lue.

"It's a great opportunity for him to play against one of the premiere players in the country," Peele said. "I think he is mentally and emotionally ready."

UNC-Greensboro will use the game with NU as a measuring stick, Peele said.

Nee has also evaluated NU's performances after each of the exhibition wins against Pella Windows and Marathon Oil.

After NU's first exhibition game against Pella, Nee said the coaches were concerned with defensive pressure and turnovers. But, after practicing these things, he was pleased with their improvement in the game against Marathon Oil.

This season, NU's first regular season game is a week earlier than last season. Even though NU's practice time has been limited, Nee said the Huskers are right on schedule for introduction of offensive plays and defenses.

Nee said the players are anxious for their first-ever meeting with UNC-Greensboro, even though he would rather have a few more weeks to prepare.

"The guys are looking forward to it," Nee said. "They'd rather play games than practice."

Huskers set for first meets

BY ANTONE OSEKA
Senior Reporter

Wrestling
Nebraska vs. Wyoming
tonight at Laramie, Wyo.
Cowboy Open Saturday at 10 a.m.

A trip to Laramie, Wyo., this weekend will allow the Nebraska wrestling team to open up both its dual and tournament seasons.

The Cornhuskers will have a dual with Wyoming tonight at 8 and then participate in the Cowboy Open Saturday at 10 a.m.

Nebraska will not be at its best when the Huskers face the Cowboys. NU will wrestle without 158-pounder Temoer Terry, a national title contender.

Terry, a senior, re-injured his shoulder Wednesday at morning practice. Freshman Brad Cooper will take his place.

The Husker lineup is composed of Paul Gomez at 118, Jeramie Welder at 126, Brad Canoyer at 134, Dusty Morris at 142, Ryan Bauer at 150, Cooper, Monte Christensen at 167, Brad Vering at 177, Scott Munson at 190 and

Ryan Tobin at heavyweight.

"That's as good of a lineup as we're going to have until Tobin goes down," Nebraska Coach Tim Neumann said.

Tobin, from Brandon, S.D., is the top-ranked 190-pounder in the country and a member of NU's Mortar Board. He is expected to cut down to 190 from heavyweight for the spring portion of the schedule.

Neumann said his team is ready to see some different faces.

"They are about ready to wrestle somebody who's not from the same team," Neumann said.

Wyoming finished last season 8-7 in duals, but lost four key letter-winners. One of their best wrestlers will face one of NU's top grapplers. Senior Bryce Bochy will square off against Canoyer at

134. "Brad will have to wrestle pretty hard," Neumann said. "They're a somewhat younger team than what we faced last year."

Neumann said all of his wrestlers, minus Terry, would be in action somewhere this weekend. He is taking 18 of his top wrestlers for the Cowboy Open Saturday in Laramie. No team scoring is kept in open meets and they don't count against a redshirt season.

The redshirt wrestlers then will travel to Ames, Iowa, for the Iowa State Open. Neumann said he expects each of them to get good experience from that trip. And lastly, for experience, Nebraska Assistant Coach Mark Cody is taking heavyweights Abe Boomer and J.R. Plienies to the North Dakota Open Tournament.

Neumann said he hopes both wrestle against the No. 2-ranked heavyweight in the country, Shelton Benjamin from Minnesota.

Teams eye NCAA qualification

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about losing," she said. "We're focused on running well."

The men's team will do more scrambling in order to qualify as a team for the NAAs. NU is among the favorites in a field that includes Minnesota, Iowa State and Missouri.

"I don't know what kind of chances the men are going to have to qualify as a team," Dirksen said. "It's going to have to be a great all-around effort to be in the top two."

Nebraska does have two individuals who should be making the trip to South Carolina regardless of the Huskers' team finish. Senior Cleophas Boor and freshman Jereon Broekzitter have consistently been in the top 10 this season, including the Big 12 Championships, where Boor was second and Broekzitter came in sixth.

Dirksen said Boor, who had been battling injuries earlier in the season, is running as well as anybody in the country now.

"Cleophas is probably the favorite

going into this race, really," Dirksen said. "He's all the way back and he's running as well as ever."

The Husker men's lineup is rounded out by senior Aaron Johnson, junior Lou Petricca and freshman Marcus Witter.

For both teams, Dirksen said a major key will be managing the course well.

"Our people have to know when to make their move," he said. "They can't start out too fast and they have to finish well."

Cross country runner exceeds expectations

RUNNER from page 9

Centerwall even surprised herself.

"I didn't really expect to be in the top seven," Centerwall said. "Jay told me it would be hard. I kind of expected to be on the lower half of the team."

"I've run the same as I always have. I don't know why I'm getting better."

Dirksen said he was not sure how to attribute her success either.

"You watch her in practice, she's

not very high in workouts," Dirksen said. "In meets, she's just fabulous."

Dirksen first heard about Centerwall from Eric Mickelson, a former NU runner who has since transferred back to Washington. After speaking with her on the phone, Dirksen traveled and paid a visit to her while he was in Washington.

As a senior last fall, Centerwall placed 18th in the Class 3A Washington cross country championships. But the difference between running in high school and running at the Division I level is huge, she

said. "In high school you have a lot of dinky meets and you just run them for fun," Centerwall said. "You didn't have to try your hardest to run well. Here I have to work my hardest in every race."

Dirksen said Centerwall has shown a good work ethic at Nebraska and has continued to improve.

Centerwall said she was just glad to be fitting in.

"I'm loving it now," Centerwall said. "I love the team and I feel like I'm doing a lot better."

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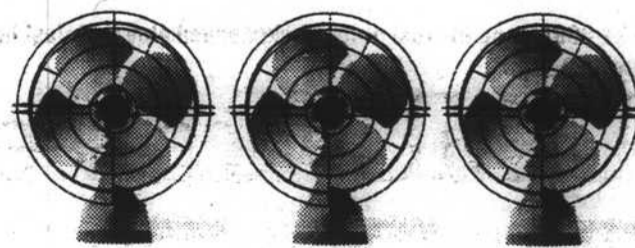
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