

Wright jumps to automatic mark

BY JAY SAUNDERS
Assignment Reporter

The 1998 Frank Savigne Husker Track and Field Invitational was supposed to be a good opportunity for Cornhusker athletes to take advantage of a home meet to increase the number of NCAA automatic qualifying performances.

After two days of competition, only senior Chris Wright added his name to the list of Huskers who are assured of a chance to perform in the NCAA championships. Wright won the men's long jump with a jump of 25 feet, 11½ inches.

"It is good to know I got the automatic mark simply because I will be at nationals and competing for the national championship," Wright said. "It put me into a position knowing I am on the automatic qualifying list. It was all about fun."

Although NU was able to clinch one more spot for the national meet, there were several provisional qualifying marks. In all, NU had four athletes make provisional marks. Senior Scott Warren's throw of 66-8¾ helped him finish second in the 35-point weight throw behind Wyoming's Kevin Mannon.

Junior Shane Lavy, who had previously qualified for the NCAA championships, finished second in the high jump.

Senior Benji Prebyl finished second in the triple jump with a provisional mark of 51-6½. Senior Byron Topps' provisional time of 6.20 seconds helped him finish second in the 55-meter dash.

But it was in the 200-meter dash



MANKATO STATE mid-distance runner Joe Alexander attempts to break away from the pack in the 800-meter run Friday at the Frank Savigne Husker Invite. Alexander is followed by NU's Jeff Ganz.

that Topps got the most attention from the 4,647 fans at the Bob Devaney Sports Center track. For the first time in his collegiate career, Topps won the 200-meter dash over Oklahoma's Shomari Wilson with a time of 21.56 seconds.

"I think the last time I won a 200 was when I was 10," Topps said. "I had to win one race before I graduate."

Overall, NU won four events to go along with the four provisional quali-

fiers. NU Coach Gary Pepin said the Huskers' younger athletes struggled, while the veterans came through with a strong performance.

"We had an array of things from some very good performances to some not-so-good performances," Pepin said. "You just have to go back and hope the positives outweigh the negatives."

This year's Husker Invitational was good for other teams as well. In

all, 24 automatic marks were achieved, 17 of those coming on the women's side. There were also 74 provisional marks recorded. Five Devaney Center records were broken, including the women's pole vault mark. Kim Stewart of Nebraska and Candy Mason of Kansas each reached heights of 12-7½. Tiffany Lott of Brigham Young, who won two events, broke the record in the 55-meter hurdles with a time of 7:41 seconds.

Sports Opinion



Shannon Heffelfinger

Rembert feels joy after race

Victory eluded Meka Rembert Saturday at the Frank Savigne Husker Invitational. The senior hurdler on the Nebraska track and field team crossed the finish line in the 55-meter hurdles in a third-place time of 7.78 seconds.

But even without the win, Rembert found the success she's craved for nearly two years. And for her, success has never tasted this sweet.

Rembert is a senior, but this is the first year she's competed for the Cornhuskers. She began her collegiate career at Barton County Community College in Kansas. But Rembert - homesick, missing her fiance, who attended Kentucky, and ready to compete at the Division I level - transferred to Kentucky her junior year.

But, Rembert said, she soon discovered she went for the wrong reasons.

In December 1996, Rembert asked for a release from her scholarship and was not granted one. At the end of that summer, she left UK for Nebraska. Because UK did not grant her a release, Rembert was forced to redshirt during 1997.

It's been a long road for Rembert. Over the past five years, she's competed at three schools. For the first time this season, she is competing in the 55-meter hurdles - a new event.

Saturday, Rembert, 24, didn't win her race.

But she ran an NCAA provisional qualifying time, which will likely send her to Indianapolis March 13-14 for the NCAA Indoor Championships.

And she did it in front of the Kentucky coaches who betrayed her and the Wildcat team that no longer speaks to her.

Rembert saw her ex-coach, Don Weber Saturday at the Devaney Center, and he walked right by her.

Two Kentucky athletes competed in the two lanes to her right during the hurdle finals. Neither said a word to her.

"Oh, no," Rembert said. "They don't talk to me. They're pretty snobby to me, but I love it."

She loves it because now, after Kentucky forced her to pay the price for leaving, she sees the bigger picture that evolved from the bitter situation.

"You have to pay the price sometimes," Rembert said. "But I paid my dues, and I couldn't have asked for anything better."

Saturday, Rembert achieved success at her highest personal level.

Even if she did finish third.

Heffelfinger is a sophomore news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan senior reporter.

3-run dinger sinks Huskers in the 11th

ANDREW STRNAD
Staff Reporter

MINNEAPOLIS - After the Nebraska baseball team battled back from 1-0 and 2-1 deficits Sunday to send its season opener into extra innings, Minnesota dropped a bomb.

About 409 feet to be exact.

Gopher catcher Matt Scanlan knocked a three-run home run to right off NU reliever Brian Downing (0-1) in the bottom of the 11th inning to push Minnesota past the Huskers 6-3.

Brad Pautz (1-0), the Gophers' third pitcher of the game, earned the win for Minnesota, which improved to 1-0. The Huskers fell to 0-1 before 396 at the Metrodome.

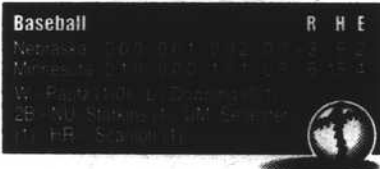
"It was a good ballgame to start the year out," said NU Coach Dave Van Horn, who made his Husker coaching debut. "I'm disappointed we didn't win, but it's a long season."

The Huskers had a chance to win in the top of the 10th after second baseman Kevin Harrington reached second on a single and an error to open the inning.

NU's next batter, Ken Harvey, was caught looking, and pinch hitter Craig Moore grounded out to first to move Harrington to third.

But catcher Brian Johnson failed to knock in the winning run as he popped up to second to end the inning.

"We could have won the game," Van Horn said. "We had a runner at second with nobody out, but we couldn't move him."



Nebraska starting lefty Kenny Duebelbeis tossed six innings and allowed one run on five hits while striking out five.

"We had several opportunities," Duebelbeis said, "but we're not going to hang our heads. We played well."

Minnesota starter Ben Birk entertained several Major League scouts striking out 10 Huskers through eight innings. Birk allowed five hits and no earned runs.

But Nebraska struck UM reliever Dan McGrath in the top of the ninth for two runs to take a 3-2 lead.

Johnson led off the inning with a single and was replaced by pinch runner Erik Mumm, who advanced on a wild pitch. NU shortstop Bryan Schmidt then singled home Mumm.

Schmidt later advanced to third and scored on a single by center fielder Justin Valasek.

In the bottom half of the ninth, Gopher shortstop Mark Devore knocked in center fielder Mike Arlt to tie the game at three and send it into extra innings.

"I was really proud of our team, the way they came back and tied it and then took the lead in the ninth," Van Horn said.

The two teams will resume their three-game series with a double-header today beginning at 1 p.m. The second game is scheduled for seven innings.

Second-half stretch lifts NU past Sooners

BY MIKE KLUCK
Staff Reporter

NORMAN, Okla. - Oklahoma Women's Basketball Coach Sherri Coale thought the first half of Saturday's game was the worst half of Sooner basketball she had seen all season.

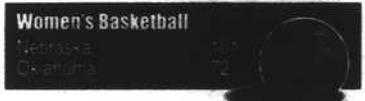
"We went into the halftime saying, 'My heavens, can we play any worse than this? And we are only down 12. How in the world is this a 12-point game?'"

"We have a very small margin of error, and when we're focused and we're intent and we're communicating then we can play with most anybody," Coale said. "When we're not, it gets ugly in a hurry - and that's what happened."

Ugly may not be a proper description as Nebraska put on a clinic in the opening six minutes of the second half. NU scored on 10 of 11 possessions - including three uncontested fast-break layups - forced OU into three turnovers and held the Sooners to 0 for 6 shooting.

By the 14-minute mark, NU's clinic and the game were over as Nebraska opened with a 23-2 run heading to a 101-72 victory. It was the most points the Huskers scored all season as NU improved to 19-7 overall and 8-4 in the Big 12 Conference.

Nebraska Coach Paul Sanderford, who saw his team beat Kansas 84-69 in an emotional victory on Wednesday night, said that emotion carried over to Saturday's victory.



"When you relax and play, everything just comes to you."

BROOKE SCHWARTZ
NU sophomore guard

"I think our kids came in on an emotional high and our kids executed extremely well offensively," Sanderford said.

The Huskers' offensive execution helped five players score in double digits, including sophomore guard Nicole Kubik, who led the Huskers with 23 points - a career high.

During NU's 23-2 run, Kubik scored six points, senior Emily Thompson added eight, sophomore Brooke Schwartz scored seven and senior Anna DeForge had two.

For Schwartz, it was her third straight game scoring double digits as she finished with 17. In the past three games, Schwartz has scored 50 points while in the previous 10 games she had 55 points.

Sanderford said Schwartz had an outstanding game against the

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