

RUNNING DOWN A DREAM



Father's influence helps NU's Wiseman excel on the track

JAMES NICAS
Staff Reporter

Parents often travel great lengths to support their children. For Nebraska freshman distance runner Amy Wiseman, her father's influence has helped her become a major contributor for the Cornhuskers.

When Amy was 3, her father, Pat, was in a car accident that left him in a wheelchair for life.

The accident left Pat with more free time. When Amy was in elementary school, Pat saw a gift in Amy that would shape her childhood.

"I thought she was good, so I took her to a coach for (USA Track and Field)," Pat Wiseman said. "He thought Amy would be good on the first day so she started running in the summer."

The first trip to the USA Track and Field coach quickly turned into a daily occurrence for the Wiseman's. Beginning in the seventh grade, the Wiseman's would travel 45 minutes each way from

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Three share No. 1 spot at I-back

BY SAM MCKEWON
Senior Reporter

As the quarterback controversy ended in the spring for the Nebraska football team, another position battle may start brewing this fall.

When the post-spring depth chart was released Tuesday, it revealed a three-way tie for the top I-back spot between sophomore DeAngelo Evans, sophomore Correll Buckhalter and sophomore Dan Alexander.

"Going into fall camp, any one of those three guys could go in being the starter," Solich said. "I think I and (NU Running Backs Coach) Dave Gillespie feel the same way on that."

Solich, who coached the running backs for 13 seasons before taking over head-coaching duties in

January, said Alexander progressed quickly this spring. The native of Wentzville, Mo., rushed for 101 yards and two touchdowns on 15 carries in scrimmages this spring.

Alexander also tested out physically better than any Cornhusker, scoring 3,114 performance index points, 216 points ahead of second-place Chad Kelsay.

"Dan got about everything out of a play that he could," Solich said. "We were real pleased with his play."

Evans did not get many carries in scrimmage work this spring. Still recovering from a pelvic injury he suffered in October 1996, Evans got spot duty in two scrimmages before an ankle injury kept him out of most of the Red-White Spring Game.

Solich said Evans, who had 11 carries for 65 yards in three scrimmages, is near his freshman form,

"We've got a lot of quality athletes there. They'll need to stay on top of their game. ..."

FRANK SOLICH
head coach

when he ran for 776 yards and 14 touchdowns.

"When we watched practice tapes, I saw him making the kind of cuts and moves that he made as true freshman," Solich said. "We started him off a little slow, so he had fewer reps."

Buckhalter was the backup to Ahman Green most of last year. After running for 313 yards and six touchdowns in 1997, Solich said he ran hard this spring.

When fall practice begins, Solich said, any player could surface to the top of the depth chart. Solich said he does not know what kind of race to expect in August but promised that whoever wins the job will have to play well.

"We've got a lot of quality athletes there," Solich said. "They'll need to stay on top of their game in order to be the starter."

"What kind of race that will be, I don't know."

NU looks to take Big 12 tourney

BY SHANNON HEFFELFINGER
Senior Reporter

Most Big 12 Conference softball coaches agree that Nebraska is the team to beat in the league tournament this weekend.

The Cornhuskers breezed through its conference schedule with a perfect 16-0 record, handily defeating all five ranked Big 12 teams and capturing the league championship.

The Huskers (40-10 overall and 16-0 in the Big 12) are sure to get every team's best shot in Oklahoma City, Okla., where No. 1 seeded NU begins tournament play today at 10 a.m. against the winner of Thursday's Iowa State-Missouri game.

But NU catcher Jenny Smith said the Huskers aren't feeling any pressure.

"They're confident they can win some more hardware as long as they approach the tournament as they have approached every game this season."

"There hasn't been a consensus between us that we're feeling pressure going into this," Smith said. "We'll just take one game at a time and stay with the mental aspect of things. We don't think about the future because that's when it can hurt you."

When Smith refers to the future, she means the May 15 NCAA

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Huskers make strides under Van Horn

BY ANDREW STRNAD
Staff Reporter

When Dave Van Horn was hired as Nebraska's baseball coach on Jan. 8, the event went virtually unnoticed.

The Cornhuskers had been a perennial doormat when it came to baseball. NU hasn't been to an NCAA Regional since 1985 and hasn't finished first in the conference since 1950.

Van Horn came to Lincoln from Northwestern (La.) State, and had just 35 days to prepare the Huskers for the team's opening season series



Van Horn

at Minnesota.

The Huskers lost all three games of the opening series, but bounced back quickly to a start of 6-4 after 10 games.

"We were really just getting to know each other right as the season started, which might have been a factor to our slow start," Van Horn said.

NU was predicted to finish near the bottom of the 11-team Big 12 Conference, but the Huskers have surprised many teams this season, including some of the conference powers.

Pitching Coach Rob Childress followed Van Horn to Nebraska and said the Husker pitching staff is what has caught most teams off guard.

"Our staff is fifth in the league in team ERA, so we've definitely surprised some people," Childress said. "We've got a lot of guys that com-

pete down here just like anybody else."

The Huskers have competed their way to a 21-17 record and a 7-10 mark in the Big 12 Conference.

This weekend, the sixth-place Huskers will be in Austin, Texas, for a three-game series with the Longhorns.

Texas is 21-27-1 and 9-14 in the conference and displays a lineup rich in left-handed bats.

Senior right-hander Matt Schuldt (4-0, 2.40) will start for the Huskers Friday, but Saturday and Sunday's probable starters are still unknown.

"We might go with a lefty on Saturday, but if we need them on Friday then we'll go with (Pete) Lythgoe," Childress said.

This weekend's series is crucial for NU's hopes of qualifying for the conference tournament.

Only the top six teams - according to winning percentage - are invited to the tournament, which will be played May 14-17 in Oklahoma City, Okla.

"We have six conference games remaining and five of six just might not be enough," Van Horn said.

Childress said the main goal of the season was to get to the conference tournament, and despite the team's better-than-expected season so far, he won't be satisfied without a bid to the tournament.

Tournament or not, Van Horn said, his first season is just the first step in establishing Nebraska as a legitimate power in the Big 12.

"We've got some good players coming in next season ready to find their roles," Van Horn said. "If we can get some pitchers in here that can throw with good command we'll be a good team."