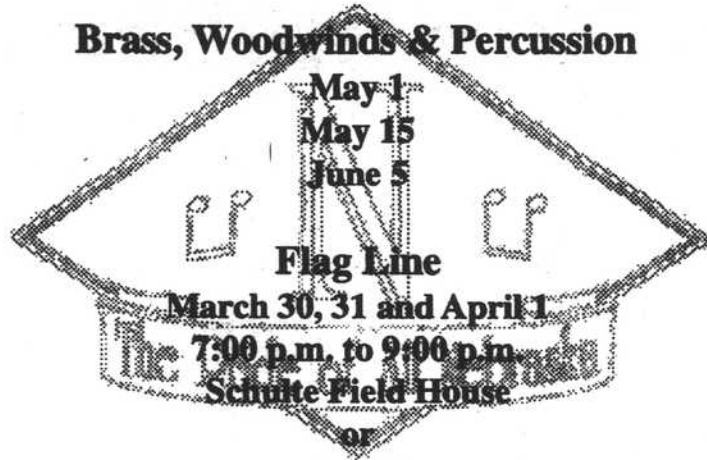


1999 Cornhusker Marching Band Auditions

Brass, Woodwinds & Percussion



May 1

May 15

June 5

Flag Line

March 30, 31 and April 1

7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Schutte Field House

June 5

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Westbrook Music Building

Twirler

April 25

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Memorial Stadium

Call the Band Office at 472.2505 for more information

Leiter practices success

Husker dreams of winning national title at Devaney Center

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had such an indelible gymnastics career. After all, Leiter is an All-American and finished fifth at the NCAA Championships in the all-around last year.

Not to mention that he's also already a cornerstone in Nebraska gymnastics history, and not just at NU. At the club level from the time he was 10 years old to a senior in high school, he won the state all-around title six times in nine years.

Such a record would command a little more respect from teammates.

"That's just the way it is on this team. With me, with anyone," Leiter said.

"Everyone takes their beatings. No one is safe. It's pretty much whoever you're around is going to make fun of you. That's what keeps it fun down here."

And it's been fun for quite a while. Plus, Leiter does have at least the admiration from his coaches.

"Derek is without a doubt someone I would definitely want to have as a son," Assistant Coach Chuck Chmelka said.

"He's not just an outstanding gymnast, but he's a nice kid and a hard worker."

Chmelka should know. Leiter has practiced under Chmelka every day at NU's gymnastics facility in the Bob Devaney Sports Center since he arrived at Chmelka's Nebraska School of Gymnastics, which trains in the facility, at age 10.

If you've been a part of Lincoln's gymnastics community for the last 11 years, you probably know who Derek Leiter is.

You probably know Bukacek, too. Bukacek was a gym prodigy in Lincoln well before Leiter even arrived on the scene from North Platte.

"When he got here, I was the best gymnast at the school," Bukacek says. "And quite honestly, he wasn't very good his first year. He was quiet and I didn't pay much attention to him. But by the second or third year, he moved up to the top."

Chmelka said it wasn't tough to figure out why.

"Derek just does the little extra things that 99 percent of the other gymnasts don't do," Chmelka said while his newest group of young gymnasts scattered around the room.

"He's just got that innate tick inside of him to excel when the pressure's greatest. This is a difficult sport. It takes a whole lot of time and determination. Because it's so difficult, a lot of kids give up and don't want to work that hard. There are dozens of kids that come here and leave. About two percent make it. It's those kids that make this job worthwhile."

Leiter's work ethic carries over into everything else he does, including academics. As a 3.62 GPA carrier, he's been on the Big 12 Commissioner's Honor Roll four times. His teammates know this. And what kind of respect does he get?

"Oh, yeah, another thing. He never stops studying," Bukacek says.

"Here's his typical day: he gets up, goes to class. Studies. Goes to class. Studies. Goes to practice. Studies. Watches 'Seinfeld.' Goes to bed. Oh yeah, and feeds his fish from time to time."

"Watch this," Bukacek said. He looked over to Leiter, about 20 feet away. "Hey, Derek, want to do something tonight?"

"No, man, I've got studying to do," Leiter replies. Bukacek laughs.

Leiter doesn't seem to mind the abuse. He and Bukacek have known each other for too long. The two are known well now for trying new tricks together, being roommates on road trips and constantly ripping each other.

Truth is, Leiter does have his friend's respect.

In addition to being one of the top five gymnasts in the nation last year, he was ranked in the top 20 in five of six events, including the vault, where he established a career best in the event with a 9.875 at the Rocky Mountain Open that earned him the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation's Gymnast of the Week honors.

And this year, despite a bad back, Leiter is the No. 1 vaulter in the nation, and placed 16th at the U.S. Winter Cup competing against top collegiate and even Olympic gymnasts. He's right on the heels of the team's all-around leader, sophomore Jason Hardabura, who has won four all-around titles this season.

He is one of six Lincoln gymnasts who have competed for the Huskers since 1991 and one of four who have captured All-American honors. The fifth, Bukacek, is a two-time NCAA qualifier.

"If I had the attitude he's had, I'd probably be at his level," Bukacek said.

"It was disappointing at first when he passed everyone, but in the long run it helped me out. I'm always trying to get to his level. Any time I score higher than him on an event, it's kind of a cool thing."

And when he gets downright serious about gymnastics, Leiter can be quite sincere, too.

After all, he's been working in the same room at NU for 11 years. He has quite a vast knowledge on 30-year, eight-time National Champion Francis Allen's teams' history. And when he talks about it, it even gives the listener goose bumps.

"Did you know that (since 1979) only three gymnasts have gone here and not been a part of an NCAA Championship team?" Leiter says, then quickly names them.

"It's always nice to have a home-grown kid make it for your team," Allen said.

"That says a lot about the Nebraska program and about the Lincoln gymnastics community, when you have a gymnast like Derek do what he's done."

Or what he could do. After finishing fifth last year, Leiter, along with Hardabura, is predicted by at least both coaches to have a sure shot at the NCAA all-around title for two years. And how sweet it would be for a hometown boy to do it right in his own backyard, in Lincoln at this April's Championships.

"Ever since I was a little kid, I wanted to go here," Leiter says. "I just remember those guys competing, thinking how good they were. I saw them on that floor when they won it all and said to myself, 'I want that to be there someday.'"

"Those guys, all the greats of Nebraska gymnastics are going to come back and watch the NCAA's this year. None of us want to let them down. It will be such a thrill if we'll be on the floor as champions just like they were. I think we can do it."

Such a moment would cap off a career that every Lincoln gymnast dreams of. Leiter's been dreaming about it every day for 11 years in that same room. And he never once got tired of it.

"Sure, I realize I've been in this room forever, but you know what, times change. People change. There's a new experience every year, every day. That's why I like it so much," Leiter says.

Like the experiences he's had with Bukacek, either in serious competition or sarcastic, insulting BS sessions.

The two go out and grab a bite to eat at the same place they've been several times before. They argue and bicker like two grumpy old men, or whiny little children, like most long-time friends.

Leiter says something obvious and makes Bukacek laugh in ridicule. This time, no explanation about Leiter is needed from Bukacek, just a smile.

He knows Derek Leiter well enough by now.

UK coach confident

UK from page 9

Nebraska runs is called "Kentucky Motion."

"With (Sanderford's) knowledge," Mattox said, "he is going to be ready for us. You don't have the record he has and not be a successful coach."

One of the Mattox's main worries is Nicole Kubik. Kubik has fueled the Huskers on both sides of the ball this season.

The junior guard is the nation's steals leader and is averaging 19.4 points per game.

"When (Kubik) is on," Mattox said, "their team is on. We will have to put the clamps on her."

If Kentucky can stop the Huskers, it will continue the Wildcats' hot streak. UK has won five of its last seven games.

Those numbers helped get Kentucky into the tournament for the first time in Mattox's four years as the team's head coach.

"We celebrated, but now it's time to refocus on the task at hand," Mattox said. "It is going to be a competitive game."

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