

NU splits with OU, OSU

Defense is sloppy but Huskers get timely hitting

By **BRANDON SCHULTE**
Staff writer

Despite being out-hit every game and committing seven errors along the way, the Nebraska softball team was able to come away with a pair of splits with Oklahoma and Oklahoma State.

On Saturday, NU defeated No. 11 OU in the first game 4-2, and dropped the second game 10-1 in five innings. On Sunday, a late rally by the Cornhuskers wasn't enough as they dropped the first game 6-5, but rebounded in the second, winning 3-2. With the splits, Nebraska moved to 20-13 overall, and 4-4 in the conference.

Time and time again, NU failed to drive in runners that were in scoring position.

"We're well over halfway through the year, and were not getting a lot of key hits with runners on," Coach Rhonda Revelle said. "I think we're all bracing too much."

Conversely, on defense, Revelle said the team didn't "come out and defend our turf."

In game one against OSU, NU gave up five runs (four unearned) on four hits, of which only one was hit into the outfield, and three errors through two innings.

The play led Revelle to call an impromptu team meeting at the mound during the inning to give a "fiery pep talk."

OSU added a run in the fifth to make the score 6-0 before NU mounted a five-run rally in the seventh, and had the tying run on second but Kelly Pinkepank grounded out to end the threat.

Finally, the last NU hitter in the last game of the weekend came up with a big hit to break a 2-2 tie. Ginger Taylor slapped a grounder into left, which scored Pinkepank to top OSU



MIKE WARREN/DN
NEBRASKA CATCHER Ellen Middleton guards the plate and tags out a sliding Oklahoma player during Saturday's game. Nebraska lost to OU but managed to split this weekend, winning on Sunday against Oklahoma State.

Nebraska	5	3
Oklahoma State	6	2

3-2. Taylor knew the season could be riding on her at bat.

"The win was almost do or die," Taylor said. "This game was for our regional placement. We needed to find a way to win."

While Taylor came up with a key hit to win the game, the first two Husker runs were walked in by Cowgirl pitchers.

"We shot ourselves in the foot," OSU Coach Sandy Fischer said. "Basically, we feel that we beat ourselves. You have to give NU credit for chipping away at the lead but we had opportunities that we didn't capitalize on."

Big 12 Conference leader

Oklahoma ended Nebraska's 19 game home-winning streak with a 10-1 shelling in game two of Saturday's doubleheader.

However, in the first game Nebraska started out hot, with Jennifer Lizama leading off the game with a home run. Three other runs followed in the inning and NU hung on behind the pitching of All-American Jenny Voss to win 4-2.

Though, Nebraska was able only to get a split, Revelle said, the importance of the split can't be understated.

"How we perform in our region is critical," Revelle said. "With more than four losses we probably can't win the Big 12 outright. We also need a Top 4 finish to receive a post-season berth. We didn't want to jeopardize our streak of postseason appearances."

NU rallies to beat OU in tennis

By **JAKE BLEED**
Staff writer

Weird forces were at work at the Woods Tennis complex this weekend.

The No. 66 Nebraska women's tennis team lost to No. 57 Oklahoma State on Saturday 5-4, and won against No. 56 Oklahoma 5-4 on Sunday. Both matches were finally decided by a comeback sweep of all three doubles matches.

Sunday's victory over Oklahoma will strengthen the Huskers' case for gaining acceptance to the NCAA tournament at the end of the season.

Saturday's match against Oklahoma State started promising for NU. No. 1 singles Sandra Noetzel set the pace for the Huskers, dispatching OSU's Maria

Nebraska	5
Oklahoma	4

Galoustova 6-0, 6-3. Gina Pelazini, Danica Hardy and Amy Frisch followed up with singles victories, giving the Huskers a 4-2 lead going into the doubles. But the Cowgirls came back, sweeping all three doubles matches and stealing the victory.

Just as Saturday's match started promising, Sunday's against Oklahoma began on a bad note. Despite singles victories by Noetzel and No. 2 singles Katarina Balan, NU finished singles play down 4-2.

Coach Scott Jacobson met with the team before doubles play began.

"I said 'Listen, there's no reason why what happened to us yesterday can-

not happen to Oklahoma today,'" Jacobson said.

For only the second time this season, Jacobson changed the doubles teams, trading Gina Pelazini from the No. 3 team with the No. 1 team's Indali Ijomah.

The change apparently worked. The No. 1 team of Noetzel and Pelazini beat OSU's Raluca Gheorge and Danielle Knipp 8-4. The No. 3 team of Amy Frisch and Ijomah followed suit, beating Kristen Guilford and Viviana Mrcanova 8-4. Katarina Balan and Danica Hardy in the No. 2 team, however, fell behind early in their match.

"We looked around, everyone was winning and we were like 'OK, no pressure,'" Hardy said.

The pair rallied to win 8-5, stealing the victory for NU.

Husker men will return home for NCAAs

By **JOHN GASKINS**
Staff writer

The demons that haunted the No. 5 Nebraska men's gymnastics team at last year's NCAA West Regional were nowhere to be found Saturday night in Provo, Utah.

Instead, the Huskers scared them away with the 1-2 punch of all-arounders Jason Hardabura and Derek Leiter to win the regional competition and advance to the NCAA Championships in Lincoln on April 22-24.

Last year, Nebraska went into the regional meet in Norman, Okla., as the No. 2 team in the nation and the top seed in the region, only to come up empty as a team, finishing fourth.

In 1999, NU blew away the rest of the field, outscoring No. 11 Brigham Young 229.425-228.475. No. 12 Stanford, at 226.9, came in third place to round out the teams that qualified for

the NCAAs.

No. 7 Oklahoma (226.1), at fourth place and No. 13 California (220.6), the two-time defending national champion, at fifth place, were left out of the NCAAs. NU, BYU and Stanford will join East Region qualifiers No. 1 Michigan, No. 2 Ohio State and No. 4 Penn State in the finals.

But Hardabura, the No. 1 all-arounder in the nation, with the strength of his fourth score of 58 or higher this year (58.075) and his eighth all-around title, made sure the Huskers didn't have to worry about *deja vu*.

"We're excited about how we performed tonight," Coach Francis Allen said. "Jason was pulling us along."

But don't tell Hardabura that. Leiter, last year's fifth-place finisher in the individual all-around at the NCAA Championships, showed why he is the nation's best vaulter by winning the event with a 9.85. His second-place all-around score of 57.6 was the third time he has scored 57.6 or better this season.

"Winning the all-around was important for me, but I'm just a spoke in the wheel of six guys," Hardabura said.

Senior Jim Koziol, whose season has been plagued with injuries, scored a season-high 56.45 in the all-around. Koziol is up for the 1999 Nissan Award for the most outstanding senior gymnast in the nation.

"Jim's one tough kid," Allen said earlier this season before Koziol's final regular-season home meet. "If he didn't have so many injuries, I think he definitely could've contended for the national championship."

NU qualified for the NCAA Championships for the first time since 1995, and for the 18th time in Allen's career.

The last time the Championships were in Lincoln, 1994, the Huskers won the national championship and Dennis Harrison captured the individual crown. That happened to be the last time the Huskers won their regional championship.

Huskers get nine NCAA marks at Sierra meet

By **JOSH CAMENZIND**
Staff writer

The trip to the Sierra Providence Invitational proved worthwhile for the Nebraska track and field team. The men and women combined for nine NCAA provisional marks in the meet Saturday.

The women were led by Melissa Price, who broke the meet record in the hammer throw with a heave of 191 feet, 4 inches. Price was the only women's first place finisher at the meet for NU, and is also ranked fifth in the country in the hammer throw. Erin Wibbels finished second in the hammer, with a throw of 188-5, also good for an NCAA provisional mark.

NU received a second-place finish in the javelin when third-ranked Cassie Morelock threw 161-2. Jessica Thompson cleared 5-10 1/2 in the high jump for a third-place finish, and her first provisional mark of the season.

Second place was kind to Dahlia Ingram, as she placed there in both the

triple and long jumps with marks of 42-5 and 21-4, respectively. Both jumps were provisional marks for the All-American junior.

The men's finishes were sparked by high jumpers Shane Lavy and Shaun Kologinczak. Lavy finished first with a jump of 7-1 3/4, while Kologinczak jumped 6-10 3/4 for a third-place finish. Joe Erdkamp qualified provisionally in the discus with a throw of 186-8.

Steve Warren failed to break his own school record in men's javelin for the first time this season, as he finished sixth with a throw of 218-8. Teammate Cory Lehman continued his rise, beating Warren and securing fourth place with a toss of 224-0.

Vince Brown ran a 10.85 in the 100-meter dash for a 11th place finish. Jack Melson threw 57-5 in the shot for a sixth-place finish, and Dave Riggert got ninth in the hammer throw with a toss of 182-5.

California will be the next destination for the team as it heads to Walnut for the Mt. Sac Relays on April 16-18.

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