

Huskers hope to right ship against Tech

Nebraska looks to rebound from three straight defeats

From staff reports

April has been the cruelest month for the Nebraska baseball team.

Starting with the three-game sweep by Texas A&M at the beginning of the month, the No. 24 Cornhuskers (30-13 overall, 13-8 in the Big 12 Conference) have gone 10-7 in April, including a dismal Big 12 record of 5-7 and a road record of 2-4.

Entering into April, NU was atop the Big 12 after a three-game sweep of Texas. Following the two losses to Missouri on April 24 and 25, Nebraska went from third in the conference standings to fifth, just ahead of Oklahoma State.

But after tonight's game at 7 with 14th-ranked Texas Tech (36-11, 16-6 in the Big 12) in Lubbock, the April deluge might be over, giving way to sunny skies in May. NU has a three-game series with the Red Raiders, including a double-header (starting at 2 p.m.) Saturday.

After losing their last three against Missouri and Creighton, the Huskers are hoping to duplicate last year's showing against Tech when NU took two of three at home from the Red Raiders.

However, that would prove to be no small task at this juncture, as Tech is on a roll through the backstretch of its season. Though on a losing skid of late, the Raiders are still 22-1 at home, having yet to lose a league contest, going 8-0, within the amicable confines of Dan Law Field.

Nebraska has not won on the road against Tech since 1991.

Still, the Raiders have expressed signs of a slump, losing three of their last seven, including their first home loss at the hands of the College of the Southwest by a count of 7-4.

As a squad, the Red Raiders are hitting .330 and the pitching staff is maintaining a 3.93



KEN HARVEY and the Husker baseball team will try to break out of an April slump this weekend. The Huskers have a three-game series against Texas Tech in Lubbock, Texas.

MATT MILLER/DN

earned run average.

The Tech offense is led by left fielder Ryan Ruiz, who is hitting .385 and has scored 69 runs. Catcher Josh Bard is also providing some punch with a .337 average, 10 home runs and 22 doubles.

On the mound, the Raiders boast a triple

threat in Shane Wright, Brad Ralston and Kevin Tracey, who have combined to start 37 of the team's 47 games.

Tracey is 9-1 with a 2.48 ERA, Ralston is 8-0, leading the team in strikeouts with 85 and Wright is 7-3 with a 4.20 ERA.

For the Huskers, first baseman and desig-

nated hitter Ken Harvey's batting average of .506 still leads the nation. Harvey is having a career-best season in the homer department with 17.

And despite hitting just .273 in April, NU is still hitting .332 as a team and the pitching staff holds steady with an ERA of 5.23.

Track team gears for Missouri meet

■ NU should do well in meet, which includes Southern Illinois, MU and Kansas State.

BY JOSH CAMENZIND
Staff writer

The Nebraska track and field team will get a chance to move up in the rankings this weekend as it travels to Columbia, Mo.

The third annual Missouri Invitational will feature four teams in head-to-head competition. The invitational will be the third of its kind for NU this season. It is a U.S. Collegiate Track and Field Series event that is used to create rankings for NCAA teams.

Other teams involved in the meet include Missouri, Kansas State and Southern Illinois-Carbondale. NU Coach Gary Pepin is looking forward to the meet as the season begins to wind down.

"The weekend is looking very good," Pepin said. "We are expecting good weather, Missouri has great facilities and we will be able to face two conference opponents that will help us in preparation for the conference meet."

The Huskers are coming off

strong performances last weekend at Brigham Young University, the Penn Relays and the Missouri-Kansas City Invite. BYU turned out to be especially fruitful for the NU throwers.

Joe Erdkamp won the discus with a throw of 187 feet, 7 1/4 inches. The shot put was highlighted by a 1-2 finish by NU. John Shovlain won the title with a heave of 56-11 and Jack Melson finished second with a mark of 55-5 3/4. The javelin also produced a sweep of the first two spots as Scott Warren threw 235-8 1/4 for first, and Aaron Gumm placed second with his best attempt being 209-6 1/4.

The women were led by first place finishes in both the hammer and javelin throws. Melissa Price took the hammer throw title with a toss of 193-8 1/2, and Cassi Morelock won the javelin with a mark of 165-9.

The Husker men entered the weekend ranked 17th in the United States Track Coaches Association dual rankings. The women were sixth in the last rankings.

As far as the meet affecting the rankings, Pepin downplays its importance.

"We as coaches don't really worry about that kind of stuff," Pepin said. "We don't believe that it is important and are just looking to be competitive and win the meet."

NU tennis beats Wildcats

BY ADAM KLINKER
Senior staff writer

The eighth-seeded Nebraska women's tennis team has advanced to the second round of the Big 12 Conference Tournament in College Station, Texas, breezing through a 5-2 win over the No. 9 seed, Kansas State.

Nos. 2 through 5 singles players Katarina Balan, Ndali Ijomah, Gina Pelazini and Amy Fritsch all won their matches and the team of Pelazini and Sandra Noetzel clinched an 8-1 victory in No. 1 doubles.

The two casualties in the round with KSU were losses in the No. 6 singles match by Danica Hardy and

Noetzel's loss in No. 1 singles ended her 15-match winning streak.

NU's victory was payback following the Wildcats' 6-3 victory over the Huskers earlier in the season.

"I was really proud of the effort our kids gave today," NU Coach Scott Jacobson said. "They beat us convincingly earlier this season and to win 5-2 is a tribute to our players' determination."

Following the victory over KSU, Nebraska advances to play the No. 1-seeded Texas Longhorns tonight at 7.

Ranked seventh in the nation, UT holds a perfect 11-0 record in Big 12 competition and is 17-6 overall. Texas received a bye into the quarterfinals as the top team in the Big 12.

Earlier in the season, NU came close to toppling the Longhorns in a contest in Austin. UT triumphed by a count of 5-4.

"I was really proud of the effort our kids gave today."

SCOTT JACOBSON
NU tennis player

The Huskers' win over KSU on Thursday upped their record to 17-8, including a 4-7 mark in the Big 12.

Going into tonight's match, Jacobson said playing Texas is just another challenge on the Big 12 tennis road.

"UT is a great program," he said. "It's an honor to be in a conference with such quality opponents."

Baffert a favorite again to win Derby

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Bob Baffert remembers going to Los Alamitos in California with four quarter horses and a goat in 1976.

"The goat was worth more than the horses," the trainer said Thursday outside Barn 33 at Churchill Downs, where he has 33 thoroughbreds stabled. There are no goats.

Among the horses are Silver Charm and Real Quiet, with whom he won the past two Kentucky Derbys. There also are the filly Excellent Meeting, the colt Prime Timber and the gelding General Challenger, Baffert's three challengers for an

unprecedented third straight victory in the race Saturday.

For good measure, there also is the sensational filly Silverbulletday, who will be odds-on in the Kentucky Oaks on Friday.

Silverbulletday is owned by Mike Pegram — who also owns Real Quiet — a friend of Baffert's, who talked him into training thoroughbreds.

"I told him if you can train a horse to go a quarter of a mile, you can train a horse to go a mile and a quarter," Pegram said. "You just have to work five times harder."

Baffert, who turned to training

thoroughbreds in 1991, has been on a roll since his first Derby starter, Cavonnier, finished a nose behind Grindstone, trainer D. Wayne Lukas' third Derby winner.

Last year Baffert, who also has two barns full of horses at Santa Anita, sent out 538 starters for 138 wins, 91 seconds and 80 thirds and earnings of \$12,605,816. About a third of the earnings came at Churchill Downs on 20 wins, 10 seconds and eight thirds in 50 starts.

"Baffert's had a very strong hand

Please see DERBY on 10