

Taking Aim

Nebraska shooters set to hit the range

BY ERIC RINEER
Staff writer

The five women representing the Nebraska Women's Rifle Team say they will be eager to begin opening fire Saturday at their first collegiate match of the fall.

The team, headed by Coach Karen Anthony, will be competing at West Point, N.Y., before traveling to Wilkes-Barre, Penn., on Sunday. The latter match is at King's College.

Saturday's match features shooters from Texas-El Paso, Norwich University in Vermont and the U.S. Military Academy in West Point.

Nebraska's shooters said the match will help them gain valuable experience, which, in turn, could help them earn a spot in the National Rifle Competitions in March.

At Saturday's match, the NU women will take part both in the air rifle and smallbore competitions.

In the air rifle, the women shoot pellet guns at stationary targets from a 10-meter distance.

Smallbore shooters fire from a 50-foot range.

"We have some great recruits this year," team captain Rachel Spiry said. "Things are really looking good at how we're shooting in practice. I think this will be a good experience for us, and we'll get an idea of where we'll be at for the year."

Nicole Allaire, one of the team's three freshman recruits this year, said

she was eager about Saturday's match though she knows her team faces a major test.

"This is our first match as a team," Allaire said. "None of us have shot together before. These matches are really long, and it's the first time we'll be going through the full course."

Allaire said having Anthony as a coach was a large plus in trying to get the team to nationals.

"She's a real good coach," Allaire said. "She knows where to help us and how to get us mentally prepared. You have to be mentally prepared in this sport. About 90 percent (of shooting) is mental."

Terim Richards, who is shooting in the air rifle competition, said she was also excited about her team's opening debut.

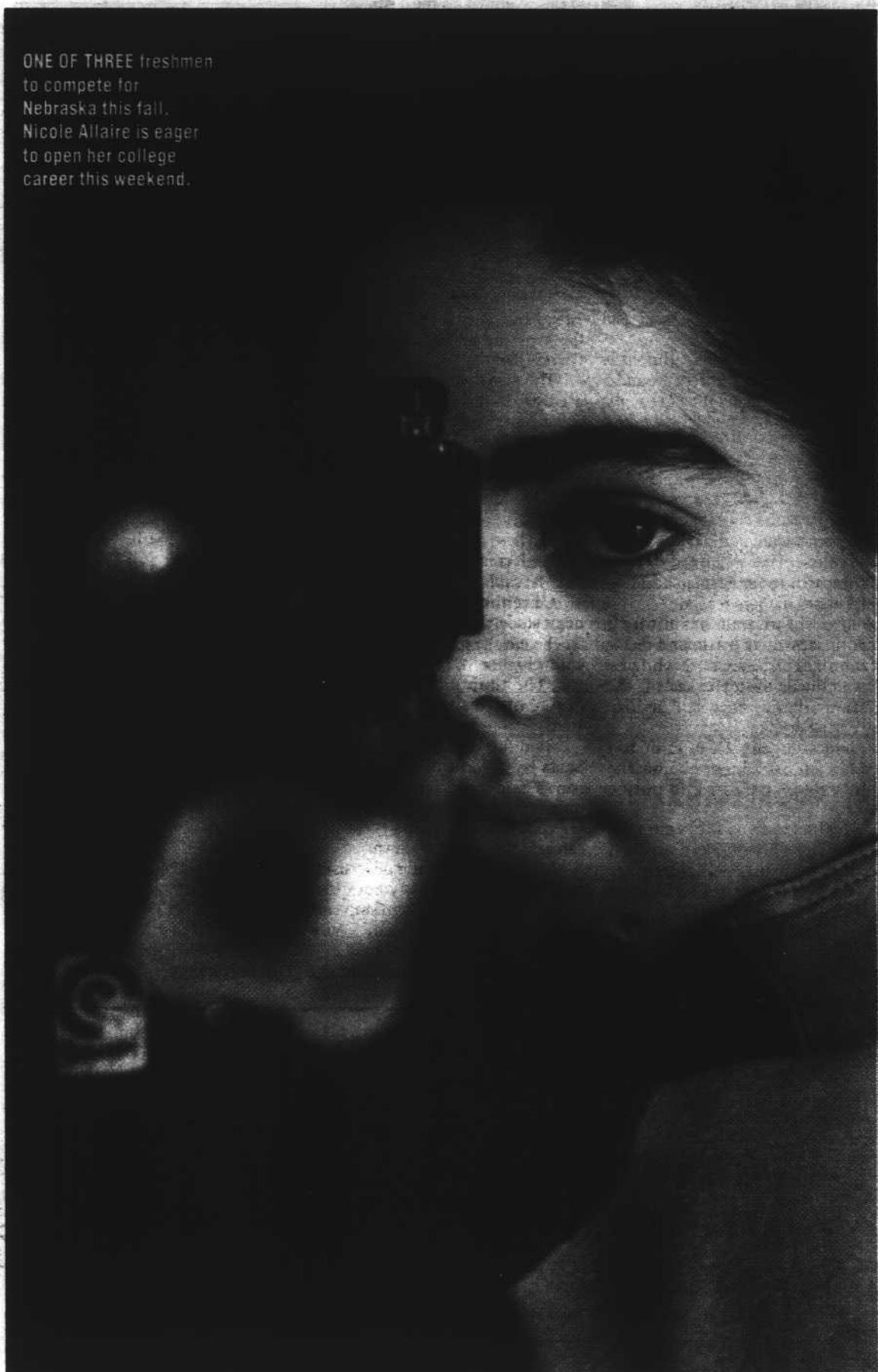
"This is really going to help us to see what we need to work on," said Richards, who was notified Tuesday by the NCAA she was eligible for West Point's competition.

The NCAA declared Richards ineligible for reasons relating to transfer credits she accumulated at Southeast Community College.

After hearing her appeal went through, Richards said she was somewhat surprised.

"I wasn't eligible at the beginning because my credits were screwed up from Southeast Community College," she said. "But this is awesome. I knew I had a possibility of going, but I really didn't get my hopes up."

ONE OF THREE freshmen to compete for Nebraska this fall. Nicole Allaire is eager to open her college career this weekend.



New faces lead to new Husker offense

BY MATTHEW HANSEN
Staff writer

As the construction inside the Devaney Center continued just feet away, Head Coach Danny Nee outlined his plans for the Nebraska basketball team's own improvement project. Call it rebuilding, reloading or whatever you wish; the fact remains that Nee and the Cornhuskers are on the brink of considerable change.

Things look different for the Huskers already. A glance at the roster reveals six new faces alongside only four experienced returnees.

Freshman Kenny Booker and junior college transfers Danny Walker, Kimani Friend and Steffon Bradford are expected to see significant playing time this year, Nee said. Returning starters Cookie Belcher and Larry Florence and top reserves Cary Cochran and Louis Truscott are the only members back from last year's 20-13 squad. Redshirt Rodney Fields rounds out the active roster.

While Nee is concerned about this

lack of experience, the newcomers excite him.

"With the new people coming in, I think we have a chance," Nee said. "Our recruiting class is the best we ever had - talent-wise. There's no question about it. The minute the fans see it, it'll be obvious."

Nee Belcher was as impressed as his coach with the collection of players on the team.

"I don't think people realize how much talent we have on this team," said Belcher. "This is the most talent we have had since I've been here."

According to Nee, though, a talented recruiting class doesn't necessarily translate into wins.

Nee said that it was the coaching staff's duty to develop this chemistry as quickly as possible.

"That's probably the biggest ques-

tion mark of Nebraska basketball," Nee said. "How will the new people blend with the old people? They certainly have the talent, but now can we pull it together in a team-oriented offense and defense? That's my job."

The considerable change in personnel also prompted Nee to further tinker with the Husker program, namely its style of play.

In the last few seasons, Nebraska basketball increasingly has relied on defense and a methodical half-court offense to win basketball games. The coach said that this philosophy is about to change.

"What we are going to try to do is open it up," Nee said. "We're trying to go high-octane. ... When I came here in '86, I told Nebraska fans that we were going to run and play 94 feet. Through the years, things get stale. This year we are going to reinvent ourselves and get back to an up-tempo offense."

Nee added that the Husker faithful will like what they see from the new style of play. Judging by the reaction of Cochran, the players also welcome a faster pace.

"The difference between us being an unbelievably great team and us being a good team could ride on a right wrist."

CARY COCHRAN
NU guard

"I'm excited about it," Cochran said. "We're kind of tailor-making something to what we have in the closet."

Some news the Huskers are not excited about is the uncertainty of Belcher's availability this season. The senior guard is currently rehabilitating a wrist injured last season. Belcher is still unable to shoot because of the injury.

Both Nee and Belcher said that the final decision on his status will be made six games into the season. At that point, Belcher can still choose to redshirt.

Cochran said that Belcher's absence would, in fact, change a lot for the Huskers, making the construction pro-

ject that much tougher.

"We are only going to go so far as Cookie can take us," Cochran said. "The difference between us being an unbelievably great team and us being a good team could ride on a right wrist, so to speak."

With Cookie or without him, Cochran said that expectations within the program are high.

"As far as expectations, that tournament NIT is starting to be a profanity to me," Cochran said. "We feel we should make the NCAA tournament and, I'm not going to lie to you, get to the Sweet 16. That's what the guys are talking about."