

Lamb, Nelson nail routines for NU

NU whips Tigers with strong lineup

By Joshua Camenzind

Staff writer

Nebraska freshman gymnast A.J. Lamb put on a show in her first home meet, helping the Cornhuskers to a 195.70-194.325 defeat of the Missouri Tigers on Saturday before 1,813 fans at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

The Lincoln Northeast graduate won three individual titles and won the all-around title with a score of 39.425 — the highest score ever for a NU freshman.

"Not bad for a freshman," Coach Dan Kendig said. "She is a tremendous talent and loves to perform."

After placing fifth in Nebraska's first event, the vault, Lamb swept the final three events. She won the uneven bars with a score of 9.875, the beam with a 9.900 and the floor exercise with a 9.925 — all career bests.

"I was hoping to come in and hit all my routines," Lamb said. "But I did not know I was going to do that well. I was a little nervous, especially after last week, because I had a rough meet."

Senior Heather Brink won the vault title with a score of 9.925 and finished third in the all-around with 38.475.

Kendig said NU's first event, the vault, set the tone for the day.

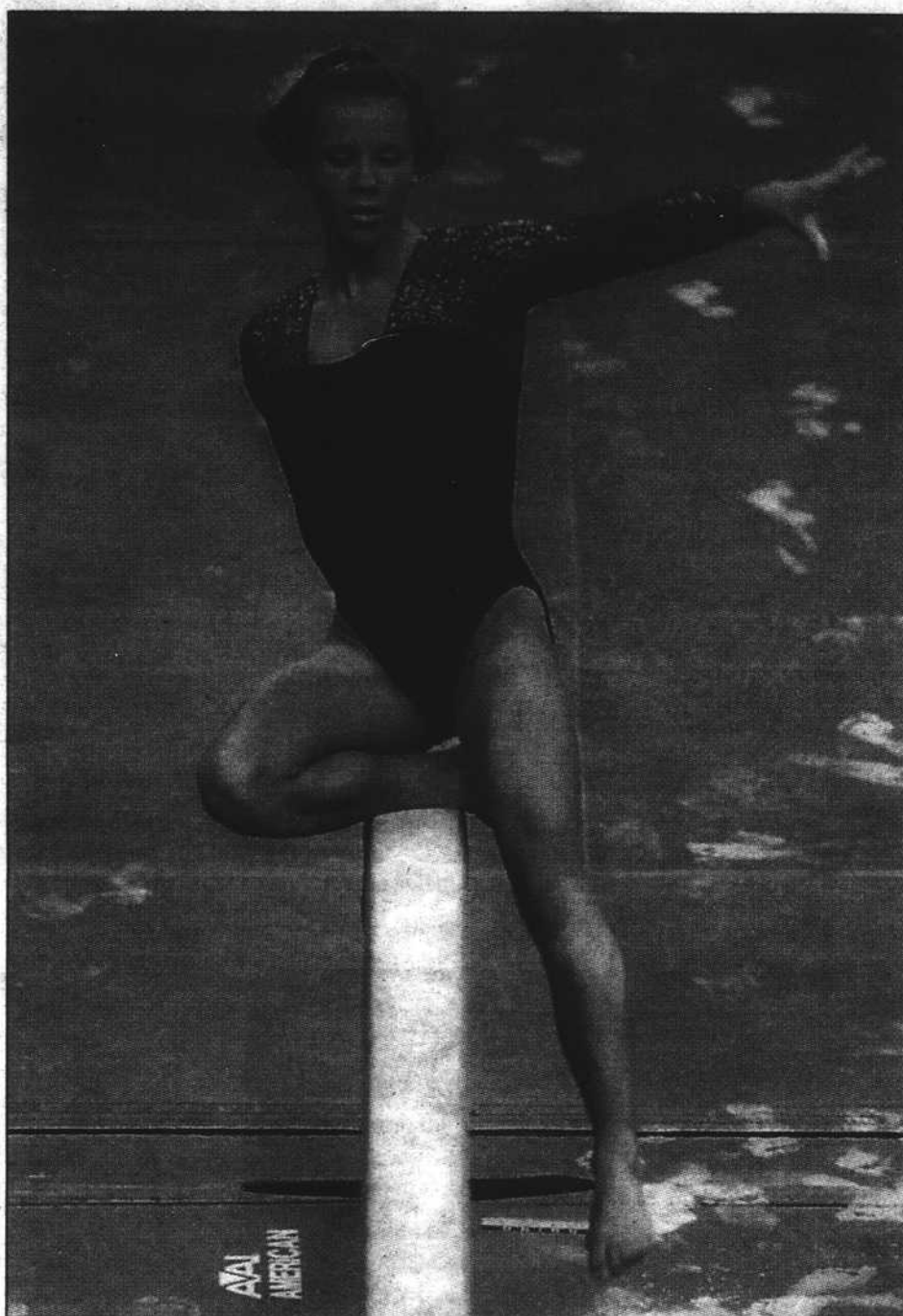
"We started out really well on vault," Kendig said. "Jen (French) started us out with a tremendous vault. It just kept going. We did really well and the girls adjusted well to the bars."

The balance beam followed the uneven bars and NU just got better as they set a season high score in the event at 49.15. Nicole Wilkinson finished third in the event with a 9.850.

Leading 146.350 to 145.475, Nebraska showed in its final event that it was not done yet.

The Huskers again set another season high, this time on the floor exercise, with a 49.350. NU swept the event with Brink and Julie Houk tying for second place, scoring a 9.875 behind Lamb.

"We went to floor and really took off," Kendig said. "That is what competing at home is all about when you hit the floor. You get to sell your routines at home and the crowd is involved."



NEBRASKA FRESHMAN A.J. Lamb performs her balance beam routine in the Devaney Center on Saturday. Lamb scored a 9.900 for her beam routine and won every event on the day except for the vault which made her the all-around winner with a total of 39.425.

Mike Warren/DN

NU stays strong, USAF stumbles

By John Gaskins

Staff writer

Before Saturday, it had been nearly two years since Nebraska Senior Gymnast Marshall Nelson had performed in a meet in front of his home fans at Bob Devaney Sports Center.

For all those in attendance knew, it could have been yesterday.

Competing in his first meet at the Devaney Sports Center since tearing his anterior cruciate ligament in November 1998 and missing all of last season, Nelson won four of his five events and tied two school records in the sixth-ranked Cornhuskers' 223.925-214.425 victory over Air Force.

More importantly, he proved he's lost little — if any — of the form that won him three national championships as a sophomore and junior before the injury.

"It felt good to compete at home again," Nelson said. "I'm in my fifth year here, and there's no better place in the U.S. to compete than this arena."

Having the entire crowd of 1,813 give him a standing ovation probably helped Nelson's excitement. His pinnacle moment came after he stuck the landing on his school-record-tying horizontal bar routine, NU's final routine of the dual.

The score of 9.95 tied the school record set by Scott Johnson in 1983. Nelson repeated his school-record-tying performance on the pommel horse with a 9.90, which he also made in last week's Rocky Mountain Open.

In his three other events, Nelson won the floor exercise with a 9.65, tied teammate Martin Fournier to win the parallel bars with a 9.65 and tied for third on the vault with a 9.35.

"It was nice to see him come back," NU Coach Francis Allen said. "It's just neat to see a gymnast like Marshall, a three-time national champion, do what he's done after tearing his ACL. He was super."

"That pommel horse routine was unbelievable. He should've got a 10 on that."

Allen was just glad to see one of his national champions completely healthy Saturday. Defending NCAA All-Around Champion Jason

Please see NELSON on 14

Vering, McTorry save NU from loss

■ The Huskers notch out a 20-20 tie with the No. 10 Panthers after falling behind 20-12.

Rob Petzold

Staff Reporter

In dramatic fashion, the Nebraska wrestling team pulled out a 20-20 tie with the Northern Iowa Panthers.

It took back-to-back victories from Charles McTorry and Brad Vering to pull out the tie for NU.

At one point, the Cornhuskers were in danger of being blown out by UNI, ranked No. 10 in the nation.

Going into the last two matches, NU was trailing by eight points, 20-12. That's when McTorry and Vering stepped up.

McTorry, No. 5 in the country at 184 pounds, dominated his match against No. 13 Kyle Hanson and won a major decision 14-5.

McTorry's match set the table for Vering, No. 3 in the nation at 197 pounds. Vering entered the match with a gaudy 25-1 record.

Squaring off against UNI's Tony Weiland, No. 16 in the country, Vering won a major decision 13-3 to secure the tie for NU.

It was a valiant effort by Vering. After getting head-butted, which opened a cut on Vering's chin, Vering went to the bench, had his head

wrapped in a bandage to stop the bleeding and went back out to the mat to finish off his opponent.

Vering downplayed the incident. "I've cut my chin a few times and got some stitches," Vering said. "Sometimes it could get brushed and open up."

Vering's performance earned him high praise by UNI's Coach Mark Manning.

"Vering, if he keeps wrestling the way he did tonight, is going to be a national champion," Manning said. "He's also a great kid."

NU Coach Tim Neumann knew his team had its work cut out for it going into the match.

"Going in we thought it was going to be a war," Neumann said. "I feel a little frustrated because this is a team sport. I thought it would be something like five to five."

Although Neumann would have liked to have more individual wins from his team, he said he feels the excitement of the match was good for the program.

"I thought it was a great match for wrestling," Neumann said. "To be within 4 points of a tie and Brad (Vering) coming on, it's great for the sport and the fans. Plus it was televised. Hopefully more people are going to come out and watch wrestling."

NU got off on the wrong track from the beginning. Heavyweight Matt Zutavern was pinned at the four-



NU'S PAUL GOMEZ and University of Northern Iowa's Eric Dunmire each grab an opponent's leg that led to a stalemate. Thirteenth-ranked Gomez won the match, but the two squads tied 20-20 Saturday night at the Devaney Sports Center.

Matt Miller/DN

minute mark of the second period.

Paul Gomez, No. 13 in the nation, lost a decision in the second match putting NU behind 6-3.

In what was billed as the most competitive match of the evening, the contest between UNI's Tony Davis, No. 1 in the nation at 149 pounds, and No. 13 Joe Henson ended in a technical default with a score of 20-5.

Brian Snyder, No. 3 at 157

pounds, pulled NU within points with a 16-10 decision over UNI's Bob Koenig.

NU then proceeded to lose its next two matches.

Tony Denke, 165 pounds, and Ati Conner, No. 18 in the nation at 174, lost on decisions putting the Cornhuskers in serious trouble trailing 20-12.

Jones saves Super Bowl for St. Louis

ATLANTA (AP) - The St. Louis Rams rediscovered their offensive firepower just in time, and the Tennessee Titans came up just 1 yard short.

Kurt Warner's 73-yard touchdown pass to Isaac Bruce with 1 minute, 54 seconds left gave the Rams their first Super Bowl win Sunday, 23-16.

The TD capped an improbable turnaround for St. Louis, which was 3-13 a year ago and 13-3 this season as they scored 526 points, third best in NFL history.

But Steve McNair and Eddie George almost led Tennessee to another miracle finish, rallying them from a 16-0 deficit.

On the game's final play with six seconds left, McNair's pass was caught by Kevin Dyson at the Rams 5. He scrambled for the end zone only to be stopped just short by Mike Jones, as Dyson's outstretched arm held the ball toward the goal line in vain.

"I always believed in myself, and had a whole bunch of people who believed in me," said Warner, the Super Bowl MVP who did a victory lap around the Georgia Dome.

Please see SUPER on 14