

Redshirts learn from year's playing break

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development of his game.

He said he already has gained 20 pounds on his 6-11 frame, and Roth hopes to add another five to 10 pounds before the season ends.

While he admits he is getting better, Conklin said the season has been a drain.

"It has been tough going to games knowing that I can't help the team out," said Conklin, who has been on the bench for nearly all of NU's 12 losses. "I see attitudes going up and down on this team, and it's hard."

It is a drain that Roth said he understands.

"It will probably be the hardest thing he ever does," Roth said. "But in the long run, he will be glad he did it."

Fellow teammate and former redshirt himself, Cary Cochran said he

understands what Conklin is going through.

"It is a long process mentally more than anything," Cochran said. "When you sit out and see a game, your emotions get going, and you wish you were in the game. To sit out and not play takes a toll."

That toll gets especially difficult around the time of February and March, women's Coach Paul Sanderford said.

Championship time has meant so much to Candace Blackbird, a player who is redshirting in her sophomore year.

Blackbird went to high school powerhouse South Sioux City and is a veteran to playing in championship games during this month.

"It has been really hard since I have been playing since fourth grade," said Blackbird, who is redshirting because of academic trouble in her freshman year. "It is hard to

watch close games, but it is part of the whole maturing process."

Even though redshirts can't play in games, they still have a huge impact on the development of the team. They are required to spend the season on the scout team and act as every opponent that the Huskers might face.

"They are huge," said Peterson, who looked to be on her way to sitting out the season before receiving permission to play from the NCAA on Dec. 21. "They play a big part. I was in that position and know how it feels."

Nee agrees with Peterson. "Brian Conklin is getting a free lesson," Nee said. "He is doing excellent - an A-plus in my class. While he was being one of the Colorado players, he was giving (Kimani) Ffriend and (Steffon) Bradford all they could handle. He killed us."

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Candace Blackbird
NU basketball player

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Stars will be out for track meet

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Kostek said.

In women's jumps, Georgia arguably has the best duo of jumpers in the country. Junior Latifah Long, who leads the nation in the high jump, and sophomore Tasha Malone, who is second in the long jump, are both scheduled to jump for UGA this weekend.

Bulldog Coach Wayne Norton said he has been sending his team to the Husker Open for seven years.

"This meet has a high level of competition, and it's in an area against people we wouldn't normally see," Norton said. "We'll keep on coming here as long as we're invited."

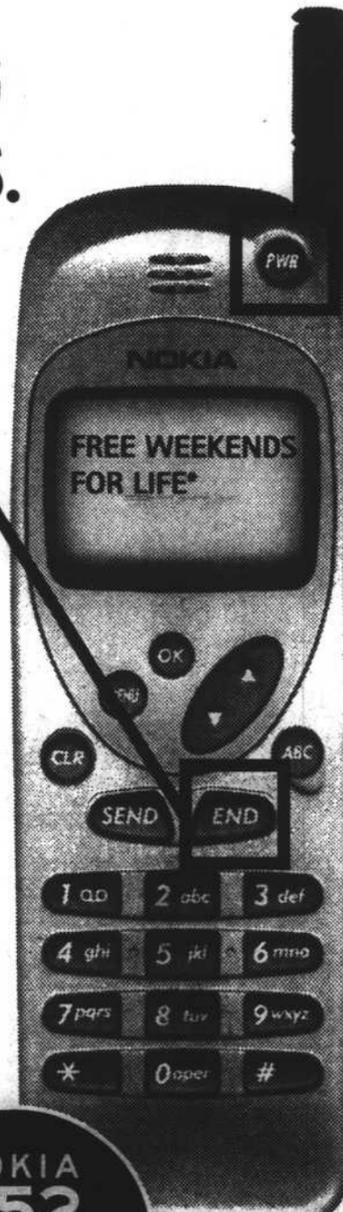
Norton said this is a good meet to help his team prepare for the Southeastern Conference meet, which is also a two-day meet.

In the men's pole vault, NU freshman Eric Eshbach will face the hardest challenge of his young career when he faces off against Louisiana State senior Russ Buller and Northern Iowa junior Jacob Pauli, who have season bests equal to Eshbach's.

Kostek said the Husker Invite is not only the best overall meet in the country, but it is also a big economic boost to the city of Lincoln.

"It's a great financial impact for the city Lincoln," he said. "Whenever you provide a competition like this with quality officiating, great fans and a television camera, then all of a sudden the athletes raise their competitive levels up to another notch."

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