

NU women get strong senior help

By Sean Callahan
Staff writer

Coaches know it would always be good to have seniors step up and perform well at the nation's best indoor track meet.

At this weekend's 26th annual Frank Sevigne Husker Invitational, the seniors from Coach Gary Pepin's Nebraska women's track team did just that.

All together, four seniors from the Cornhusker women's track team claimed titles at the 41-team Husker Invitational.

Three of those titles were claimed on the meet's opening day from Carrie Braness in the high jump, Dalhia Ingram in the long jump and Michelle Brooks in the 3,000 meters. The final title for the Huskers came on Saturday from Stella Klassen in the 800 meters.

One disappointment in the day for the NU women came in the 4-by-400 relay.

Coming into the Husker Invitational, they were ranked fourth in the nation and favored to win Saturday's race. Because of a late injury to Jelena Stanisavljevic, the relay team was unable to compete.

Klassen, a member of the relay team, was upset the team couldn't compete on Saturday.

"Disappointed would be an understatement," Klassen said.

Right now the relay team has provisionally qualified, but Klassen said she would like to see the team reach the automatic mark at the Big 12 meet in two weeks.

In the women's high jump on Friday, there was a mild upset when Braness defeated Latifah Long of Georgia, who was ranked No. 1 in the country.

Braness cleared the 6-foot mark on Friday for the first time in her career.

"This gives me a lot more confidence," Braness said. "I'm sure she (Long) just had a bad day, but it is all about being consistent."

The Husker Invite title was Braness' first in her career. Her previous best finish was fourth place during her freshman season.

By clearing the 6-foot mark,

"These kind of meets you always have some pluses and some minuses. When you look at them, you just hope the pluses outweigh the minuses."

Gary Pepin
track coach

Braness put herself in fourth place on the national chart.

Pepin said he was not surprised to see Braness clear six feet.

"She's had a real good season, and a lot of jumps have been close to that," Pepin said. "It was just a matter of time for her to clear that mark. I think she will jump higher."

In the women's 3,000 meters, Brooks claimed the title but fell 1.75 seconds short of provisionally qualifying for nationals.

Brooks was happy with the win but said she wants to get provisionally qualified.

"I would have liked to have run faster, but I am just happy with the win," Brooks said. "There were three girls who were supposed to be faster than me."

Overall, Pepin was very pleased with the results of the meet.

"These kinds of meets you always have some pluses and minuses," Pepin said. "When you look at them, you just hope the pluses outweigh the minuses."

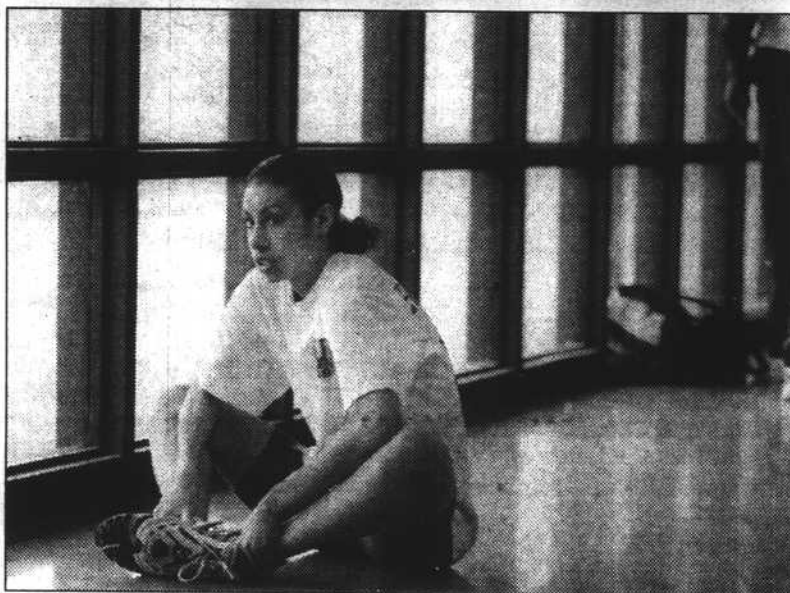
Nebraska also fared well in the women's shot put. Redshirt freshman Leann Boerema took second in the event with a throw of 50-5 1/2.

NU junior Lesley Owusu placed fourth in the 400 meters with a time of 54.66 seconds.



Mike Warren/DN
KIRSTEN BOLM of BYU and Joyce Bates of LSU sprint over the finish line in the finals of the 60-meter hurdles event on Saturday at the indoor track facility at the Bob Devaney Sports Center. Bolm of BYU narrowly defeated Bates in the final running a time of 8.13 while Bates ran an 8.16.

RIGHT: MICHELLE BROOKS, a senior distance runner for Nebraska, stretches in the hallway outside of the indoor track facility minutes before running in the distance medley relay. Brooks ran the anchor leg in the race, and the NU squad finished second behind K-State.



Eshbach finishes 2nd

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cleared 17-10 1/2 and struggled a good part of the day, needing three attempts at 17-6 and at 17-10 1/2 before missing three times at 18-2 1/4.

"I usually jump more consistently," Eshbach said. "I usually clear those heights a lot quicker than I did today. But every meet is a step forward. Russ gives me someone to compete against."

Buller narrowly missed on his first attempt at 18-8, before falling short on his next two.

The Cornhuskers had no other

major moves on the men's side. Marcus Witter picked up third in the 5,000-meter run, and the distance medley team, made up of three freshmen and a sophomore, took third.

"That's pretty impressive for them to do that so early," Coach Gary Pepin said.

NU also had four triple jumpers finish in the top 11 of the event, while Sheldon Hutchison finished third in the long jump. Both events were won by Barton County (Kan.) Community College star Walter Davis.

Ingram finally wins Sevigne title

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Ingram said she was fortunate because she thought she'd have to jump at least 21 feet to claim the title.

Saturday, Ingram marked a personal-indoor-best 44 feet, 1 1/4 inches in the triple jump, good for an automatic bid to nationals, but only good enough for second place.

Spencer, named most outstanding female performer at the Invitational, got the final word on Saturday by leaping a Sevigne Invitational and Bob Devaney Sports Center record of 46 feet in the

triple jump - nine inches short of the collegiate record.

She did it in her first jump of preliminaries - scratching on four other jumps afterward. Her previous high mark of 45 feet, 10 1/2 inches in the triple jump was already good for No. 1 in the country.

Spencer, a three-time All-American from Clarendon, Jamaica, said she expected to win despite the competition from Ingram and Texas-El Paso's Anna Tarasova.

"It was good competition," Spencer said. "Dalhia's a great competitor."

Ingram knew she was going to

need a personal best to compete with Spencer.

"It's good to win, but getting the personal record is good, too," Ingram said.

Ingram said this was the best indoor performance of her career.

Coach Gary Pepin agreed. "It's her best series she's ever had indoors," Pepin said. "She really jumped well."

Now that Ingram has automatically qualified for the NCAA Indoor Track Championships, she said she would not be competing next week in the NIAC Invitational at the Devaney Sports Center Track.

Noetzel gets even with Texas

By Trevor Johnson

Staff writer

Believe it or not, tennis is a team sport. At least, college tennis is. Just ask Sandra Noetzel about that one.

Last year, Noetzel was beating Texas' Michelle Faucher handily in the Big 12 finals. Then the match was called off because Texas had already beaten Nebraska in other matches. Texas moved on; Nebraska didn't. Noetzel didn't finish her match and got a No. 57 ranking this year, while Faucher was ranked 10th.

On Saturday, Noetzel, Nebraska's No. 1 singles player, was an unstoppable individual. She avenged last year's called match to beat Faucher 6-1, 6-4, in a victory she described as "easy" and won her doubles match with Gina Pelazini over Texas' Janet Walker and Kaysie Smashie 9-8.

But without Noetzel, Nebraska got stampered by the 7th ranked Longhorns as Texas took six out of seven non-Noetzel matches.

No. 2 in singles, Ndali Ijomal, was swept by

Janet Walker 6-3, 6-1, and Maria Fernandez, Gina Pelazini and Amy Frish also bowed out in straight set losses.

Katarina Balan, Nebraska's No. 4 singles player, was the only other winner as she beat Joanne Masongsong 6-4, 7-5.

Nebraska Coach Scott Jacobson stayed confident, though. He pointed out that nine teams in the Big 12 are ranked within the top 75, and Texas' No. 7 ranking is tops among those teams. Nebraska is currently ranked 67th. He said if a couple of points would have gone another way then "we would have won 5-4."

Considering that Texas has won 84 straight matches in conference play going back to the old Southwest conference, those points would have been huge.

But for Nebraska to increase its ranking as a team, it's going to have to get those points from players other than Noetzel. She can only play two matches a meet, and as she knows so well from last year, her team needs to get the rest ... so maybe she can complete her match during the championships this year.

Vering, Snyder roll in California

From staff reports

A two-day stay in California left the seventh-ranked Cornhusker wrestlers with a little bit of steam rolling into Friday's matchup with No. 2 Iowa State.

Nebraska went 3-1 in four duals vs. Fresno State, California-Davis, California-Poly and No. 16 Cal State-Bakersfield, besting its record to 10-6-1. Coach Tim Neumann now has won 10 or more duals for 12-straight years.

On Friday, Nebraska warmed up with UC-Davis, winning easily 43-6. NU won nine of 10 matches, and four Huskers pinned their opponents. Freshman Joe Malia, 125 pounds, pinned UCD's Randy Katz in 37 seconds, tying the second-quickest pin this season for NU.

Fresno State proved to be a tougher matchup, but Nebraska won the dual's last four matches to take home a 28-12 win. The Bulldogs were tied up, 12-12, with NU, but Joe Henson, No. 14 at 149 pounds, notched a major decision vs.

Darrick Duram, sparking the run.

NU was tied 12-12 with Cal-Poly, but 125-pounder Paul Gomez provided the spark with his 5-1 decision over Jaime Garza, breaking the tie. Nebraska won three of the next four en route to a 30-18 victory.

The weekend ended sourly, however. Cal-State Bakersfield won the first three matches and six of 10 for the dual, downing NU 27-14.

Brad Vering, No. 3 at 197 pounds, went 4-0 for the weekend, picking up two major decisions, a technical fall and a pin. He raised his overall record to 31-2 and 16-1 in duals.

Bryan Snyder, ranked No. 3 at 157 pounds, also won his four matches, picking up a pin along the way over Fresno State's Tim Cornish. Snyder now has won 16-straight matches and is 33-1.

Henson didn't lose a match in his three tries. Along with his major decision vs. Fresno State, he pinned UC-Davis' Kief Zangaro.

Todd Beckerman, ranked No. 10 at 133 pounds, improved his quietly successful year to 25-6 with his three wins.