

Tennis team beats OCU

■ Despite win, NU's top two players, Noetzel and Ijomah, lose their matches.
By Brandon Schulte
Staff writer

It took three opponents this weekend, but the Nebraska women's tennis team finally found a worthy adversary.

The Cornhuskers swept their last five foes by a 5-0 margin going into their match against Oklahoma City, ranked No. 3 in the NAIA, at the Woods Tennis Center, Sunday.

NU's top two players, No. 1 Sandra Noetzel and No. 2 Ndali Ijomah, both dropped their singles matches, but Nebraska won its other

four singles matches and two of three doubles matches to defeat Oklahoma City 6-3. The loss was Noetzel's first of the season.

Husker freshman Maria Fernandez, said the close nature of Sunday's matches would serve NU well later this season. Fernandez defeated OCU's Melisa Lemus 6-4, 6-1 in her singles match and combined with Kararina Balan to win their doubles match 8-6 after trailing 5-3.

"We were nervous, but we knew we could do it," Fernandez said. "(This match) gives us more confidence knowing that we can be down and still win. It will just make us better."

While Nebraska was pushed to the limit on Sunday, it barely needed to try on Friday and Saturday. The

now 10-1 Huskers blasted past both Oklahoma Christian on Friday and Northern Iowa on Saturday by 9-0 margins. In both meets, not one Husker was taken to three sets in a singles match.

Ijomah was the big winner for Nebraska. She defeated Amie Crowley of UNI 6-0, 6-1 and performed even better against Oklahoma Christian's Gabriela Lancman. She didn't drop a game and won 6-0, 6-0.

NU Coach Scott Jacobsen was impressed by both his team and the results posted by Ijomah this weekend.

"Our team has improved a lot so far this season," Jacobsen said. "Ndali (Ijomah) is playing at levels that I have never seen from her before."

Women's relay team smashes meet record

From Staff Reports

In one of the most prestigious indoor track meets in the nation, the women's 4-by-400 meter relay team broke a meet record in a victory at the USA Indoor Track and Field Championships Saturday in Atlanta.

The relay team, comprised of Stella Klassen, Lesley Owusu, Cheryl Harmon and Jelena Stanisavljevic, with a time of 3:35.49, broke the mark set four years ago by Louisiana State.

Chris Chandler, the only collegian in the finals, won the 200-meter dash with a time of 20.84 seconds. Chandler holds the fastest NCAA time in the country.

In the high jump, Carrie Bransess

and Jessica Thompson finished 7th and 12th place respectively by making the height of 5 feet, 9 1/4 inches. Bransess placed higher because she attempted more jumps at the same height.

Husker shot-putter Leann Boerema finished 10th with a throw of 50-11.

Next for those Huskers who have automatically qualified is the NCAA Indoor Track and Field Championships March 10-11 in Fayetteville, Ark.

Provisional qualifiers for the national meet find out their fate Monday at 6 p.m. when the NCAA announces the championship's competitors.

Women's gymnastics falls to Oregon State

From Staff Reports

For the second consecutive meet, the fifth-ranked Nebraska women's gymnastics team broke the school team-score record, posting a 196.80 score at the Shanico Inn-vitational.

Unfortunately for the Cornhuskers, the home team, 24th-ranked Oregon State, scored a 196.975 to take the team crown.

The Huskers' new school record, which had been previously set at the Masters Classic last Sunday, placed NU second, in front of Brigham Young University. The 10th-ranked Cougars scored a 194.975 to place third ahead of Seattle Pacific, which tallied a 188.875 score.

Nebraska was led once again by senior All-American Heather Brink. The Lincoln native posted a 39.55 score on her way to her sixth all-around title of the season.

For the first time since the Super Six at the beginning of the season, Brink, the second-ranked vaulter in the nation, was unable to bring home the event title. Brink tied for second with

Oregon State's Katrina Severin with a 9.95 score. Lara Degenhardt of OSU won the event with a 9.975.

Brink found herself in a three-way tie for first place with two Beavers on the floor exercise, scoring a 9.95 on the event.

Freshman Julie Houk was the only other Husker to claim an event title. Houk scored a 9.925 on the uneven bars to edge out teammate A.J. Lamb, who placed second in the event with a 9.90.

Senior Nicole Wilkinson put forth a solid performance for Nebraska at the quadrangular. Wilkinson scored a 9.875 on the beams, placing her second on the apparatus. On the uneven bars, Wilkinson came in sixth with a 9.825.

In all-around competition, Lamb placed fourth with a 39.225 score, while junior Amy Ringo placed sixth with a 39.025 showing.

Nebraska will next be in action this weekend when it hosts Iowa on Sunday, March 12 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center. The dual is scheduled to begin at 4 p.m.

Leiter's career high not enough to win

By John Gaskins

Staff writer

Career highs should leave a gymnast feeling like he or she is on top of the world.

But in the case of Nebraska gymnast Derek Leiter, a career-high 57.80 in the all-around Saturday left him looking up at Penn State's Jose Palacios.

Going into the meet, Leiter was ranked No. 1 nationally in the all-around and the vault. Leiter continued his banner senior season. He posted a career high 57.80 in the all-around but finished runner-up to Palacios' 57.925.

Still, NU's co-captain won the vault with a 9.75 while helping the Huskers to their second-best team score of the season. PSU beat NU 231.05-223.70 to hand the Huskers (5-4 and 2-4 in dual meets) their fourth consecutive head-to-head loss.

Despite the Nittany Lions' dominance, NU Coach Francis Allen saw plenty of bright spots. Without

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Francis Allen

NU coach

NCAA champions Marshall Nelson and Jason Hardabura - both out for the rest of the season with injuries - the Huskers posted a score above 223.

The score was more than a five-point improvement from both of their meets last weekend in losses to then-No. 4 Iowa and No. 7 Oklahoma. NU also recovered from its disasters on the horizontal bar last week by scoring a team season high 37.70.

"Tonight, we looked like a team that wants to qualify for nationals," Allen said after the dual. "I was really happy. We hit 76 percent of our routines. We struggled on parallel bars, or we would have scored 225 or 226."

The dramatically higher score was just what NU needed to stay in contention for qualifying for the NCAA Championships as a team.

Only the nation's top 12 teams will compete in Iowa City on March 30-April 1. NU is currently ranked No. 10.

Leiter was the only Husker to score in the top three in any of the events. Along with the vault title, the All-American took third place on the pommel horse (9.675) and still rings (9.60).

Another bright spot for NU was senior Blake Bukacek who was barely able to land routines less than a month ago because of a torn left anterior cruciate ligament. He suffered the injury last November.

The Lincoln native struck a season-high 9.5 on the horizontal bar, the same event in which he finished runner-up at last year's NCAA Championships.

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