

Revelle upbeat going into break

NU hopes to improve 7-9 record

By Sean Callahan
Staff Writer

The Nebraska softball team may be 7-9, but that doesn't mean they're not a good team.

Even with a sub-.500 record, the Cornhuskers are still ranked No. 25 in this week's poll. Part of the reason is seven of the Huskers' losses have come to teams ranked 16th or higher. Five losses have come to teams currently ranked in the top 10.

NU will start their first of two tournaments in California today. Nebraska will begin play in the National Invitational Softball Tournament in Sunnyvale, Calif.

From there, the Huskers will stay in California for the week before traveling to nearby Sacramento, for the Capital Classic Tournament.

In the NIST tournament, NU opens pool play with games against Kent State (5-4), Utah State (4-8) and No. 6 California (22-1). The Huskers will then be put into a bracket based on their pool record.

Nebraska Coach Rhonda Revelle said even though their overall record doesn't show it, the Huskers are getting much better as a team.

"We were in quite a few of those games," Revelle said. "Even against No. 1 Washington, going into the fifth we were ahead 2-1."

This weekend, there are only two other ranked opponents in the field at the NIST, compared to 15 in last week's tournament.

Besides the Huskers and the Bears, No. 4 Arizona State also is ranked. NU has already lost to ASU (19-3) twice this season.

"It helps us to play against the best because we learn from the best."

Rhonda Revelle
NU softball coach

Sophomore shortstop Leigh Suhr said she is not disappointed with NU's slow start. "She said it is better to lose early than later this year."

"I think there are definitely some things we need to improve on," Suhr said. "It helps us to play against the best because we learn from the best."

Suhr said she doesn't think Nebraska has played particularly badly in some of its losses. She said she thinks NU was only one or two mistakes away from winning some of the games it lost.

"We were playing tough but it seemed like we just bite," Suhr said. "We had one bad inning, and good teams just pick up on that. So we just need to stay consistent throughout the game."

Going into this weekend Revelle said she isn't going to give any predictions on how the Huskers will finish.

Revelle said she and her team know what it is going to take to pull together.

"If we play our game, I feel we have a good opportunity to be successful," Revelle said.

WOMEN'S SWIMMING

Huskers prepare for NCAA meet

By Brian Christopherson
Staff writer

There's water to swim in, but it's not exactly a Cancun spring break on the beach for five women on the Nebraska swimming team.

Instead, these Cornhuskers have a date with laps in a swimming pool next week, climaxing with the NCAA meet March 16-18 in Indianapolis.

NU goes into the championships playing with fewer chips than it is accustomed to, having only five swimmers competing. The swimmers only qualified in three of the five relay events as a team.

"We're used to having eight or ten girls competing for us there, but with some injuries this year and people redshirting for the Olympics, we had trouble qualifying as many," Associate Coach Kelly Nordell said.

The relays are what Nordell said will keep Nebraska from improving on its No. 12 finish last year.

"Not competing in all of the relays this year like we usually do is a huge factor because relay points are worth double," Nordell said.

Nonetheless, the coaching staff is riding its hopes on some fantastic swims from the events that the swimmers will compete in.

Elvira Fischer, Helene Muller, Shandra Johnson, Sasha Pine and Lyndsey Highstrom are the survivors

"Wherever you finish up, it's not necessarily your place, but it's more about racing the time clock."

Shandra Johnson
swimmer

who will compete.

All-Americans Johnson and Muller are the headliners for the Nebraska team with both competing in three events.

Johnson is competing in the 200- and 400-meter freestyle events and the 200-meter backstroke.

Muller will race in the 50-, 100- and 200-meter freestyle events.

"I just want to go out there and put out my best times or close to them," Johnson said.

"Wherever you finish up, it's not necessarily your place, but it's more about racing the time clock."

Nordell said Nebraska might make its presence felt in the 200-meter freestyle event, which both Muller and Johnson are swimming.

"We're thinking that Helene and Shandra can finish top six in the 200, and if Elvira and Sasha post top eight, we're going to be top 20, and that would be very good for us," she said.

Fischer is swimming the 200-meter breaststroke while Sasha Pine

will wage war in the 400-meter individual medley.

Highstrom will compete in the 100-meter backstroke.

Muller said she is hoping to catch her top times at the NCAA meet after she tapers. She was not tapered for the Big 12 conference meet, and she hopes that will give her an added edge.

"I don't think the Big 12 meet had much pressure, because in the back of my mind I knew I wasn't tapered," Muller said.

"This week is more pressure, not that I mind, because I like pressure. But those two weeks of rest I got make your body ready."

Muller said she anticipates that her teammates will also handle the pressure well.

"All the girls that are going are very good individual swimmers," Muller said.

"We're all swimmers with international experience, so even without the rest of the team, we will go hard."

Clones' pressure too tough; Huskers wait for NCAA bid

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she tied the contest at 16 with 9:36 left in the first half.

Iowa State kicked its game into high gear after that. Forward Desiree Francis hit a jumper to put the Cyclones ahead 18-16. Then Frese hit two shots — the second a 22-foot three-pointer — and Erica Haugen added a trey to put ISU ahead 26-16. Sanderford called time out.

Then Iowa State's defense suffocated Leonhardt and forced her to commit a third foul at the 5:27 mark. Center Angie Welle (15 points) hit two free throws to cap a 14-0 run, leaving Nebraska down 30-16. ISU led 40-23 at halftime.

Though Sanderford said he was optimistic his team could mount a second-half comeback, the gap only widened. And Iowa State just kept getting better. It scored the first eight points of the second half for a 48-23 lead and accelerated from there.

The final statistics for Nebraska were ugly: 27 percent shooting from the field, 17 percent shooting from behind three-point line and only one player, Leonhardt, in double figures, with 11.

Schwartz only had two, Kubik,

seven, just one day after the senior from Cambridge scored a tournament-record 32 against Kansas. She fouled out with 8:10 left in the ball game, with Iowa State ahead 72-37. It was end of a long week in which NU had played four games in seven days and three games since Tuesday.

"I think the third day had to take a toll on Nebraska," ISU Coach Bill Fennelly said. "Their shots were a little short, and I think that really made a difference in the game."

Sanderford and the NU players refused to blame the loss on fatigue, saying they don't believe in excuses.

"The most frustrating thing for us is that we did not play to our potential," said Kubik, who moved into the No. 5 slot on the all-time NU scoring list. "I think a lot of that had to do with impatience."

Nebraska needs patience now in its wait for the selection show, which airs at 4 p.m. Sunday. Five teams in the Big 12 should have a lock on a Big Dance Invite. The Huskers, with their 18 wins and 10-6 conference record, make a strong case, as well.

Sanderford made that case again Thursday.

"I'll repeat what I keep saying — I don't have any control over the committee," he said. "This team has

"The most frustrating part for us is that we did not play to our potential."

Nicole Kubik
guard

played tremendously hard and tremendously well over the last month. Is the Big 12 good enough to send six teams? I certainly think they deserve to go.

A couple of those teams (Kansas and Oklahoma) went home yesterday. We're still around in the semifinals two years in a row."

But the final image tourney officials have of NU — on the wrong end of a 37-point blowout — didn't escape Sanderford's attention.

"I am concerned that people watched (the loss) on TV," he said. "But I don't think they watched the second half. I tried to leave a couple times tonight."



COACH DANNY NEE LAUGHS after a reporter asked him what he thought of his "job security" at the press conference after Thursday's game. The Huskers fell to Baylor 63-55.

NU ends season; Nee not talking about future

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a little better, and we started playing our zone a little more aggressively," Bliss said.

Baylor then hit three three-pointers between 4:12 and 2:34 remaining, including a Tevis Stukes' four-point play, to seal NU's fate and its season.

Stukes' three-pointer came with NU leading 50-49. The Huskers had just forced Charlie Naihe into a three-point miss.

Baylor's Terry Black out-hustled every Husker to the offensive rebound and kicked it out to Stukes, who took the three from the top of the key and was nailed on the head by NU's Larry Florence.

Stukes had 22 points for the game.

"It's shots like that that proves

Tevis has the green light," Bliss said.

NU would never regain the lead. A three-pointer by Wendell Greenleaf, who had 14 points off the bench, forced the Huskers to foul down the stretch.

The Bears made five of seven free throws down the stretch and sent the Huskers packing, and maybe Nee as well.

Nee declined to comment on his future at the post-game press conference and NU Athletic Director Bill Byrne said he and Nee will meet next week.

"We have a normal process that we go through with personnel evaluation," Byrne said. "We're going to be doing that and visiting with Danny just like we do with every other coach this time of year, and I'll be talking with him next week."

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