

NU women fall just short at ISU

By Mike Warren
Senior editor

AMES, Iowa - The Nebraska women's gymnastics team missed winning the Big 12 Conference championship by inches and were upset by No. 8 Iowa State on Saturday night.

It was .025 points, the smallest margin of victory in a Big 12 championship meet, that kept the fifth-ranked Cornhuskers from winning their seventh straight conference championship.

Nebraska Coach Dan Kendig believed the difference could have come anywhere during the meet.

"When it gets that close, the difference in a judge not binging two scores or the difference in a step here or a step there is huge," he said.

Iowa State's score of 196.775 tied the Big 12 conference record, topping NU's score of 196.750. It also gave ISU its first conference title since 1977, snapping Nebraska's reign on conference domination.

"We knew they were a good team. They've definitely increased their skill level, and Betsy (Hamm)

definitely added a lot to this team," Kendig said.

Hamm, a transfer from Florida, paced the Cyclones, winning the all-around with a score of 39.60, winning the beam with a 9.925 and sharing the title on the uneven bars (9.90).

Senior Heather Brink led NU, breaking a Big 12 Championship record on the vault with a 9.975 and winning the floor exercise as well with a 9.95 performance.

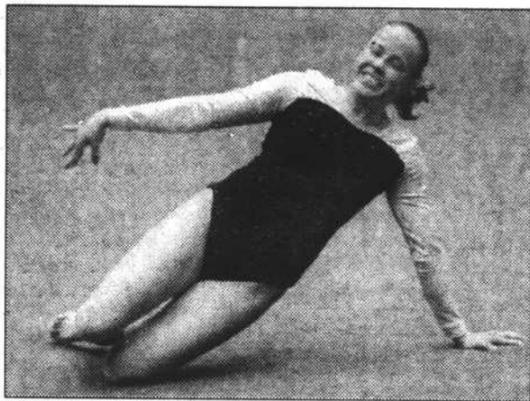
Kendig won the Big 12 coach of the year honors but would rather have the team victory.

"It's kind of bittersweet. I'd trade that in, and I'm sure Heather (Brink) would trade in her award, and A.J. (Lamb) would trade in her award for a team score tonight."

Freshman A.J. Lamb won the Big 12 Newcomer of the Year award.

The meet was close with Nebraska leading after the first rotation going into the uneven bars competition, but Nebraska faltered. For the first time in seven meets, NU failed to score a 49 or better on the uneven bars.

Lamb had the top bar slip



NEBRASKA JUNIOR Amy Ringo finishes her floor routine at the Big 12 championship. Ringo's floor exercise routine earned her a score of 9.875.

Mike Warren/DN

through her fingertips and landed on the floor scoring a fall. Lamb finished the routine with a 9.225. Brink also had problems on the bars, losing .30 for dragging her foot during her routine and finished with a 9.450.

Kendig was quick to say he couldn't put the blame solely on the bars team, but Brink was more direct.

"Had that one person hit their bar routine, we would have won, and I think that's going to be the key factor. I don't know what it was,

whether it was a lack of concentration (on bars) or whether it was just meant to be this way, but I think it'll definitely push us harder to work a little harder for regionals and nationals."

Nebraska will find out today where they will be headed for the regional tournament on April 1, and Kendig looks forward to it.

"The score we scored tonight would have won last year. We're down a little bit tonight, but we're definitely not out."



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Daily Nebraskan

Pepin sees mixed results at NCAA meet

NCAA from page 16

Pole-vaulter Eric Eshbach was the only freshman to score points for the Huskers. He bounced back from a disappointing effort at the Big 12 Conference meet by vaulting 18-0 1/2, a mark good enough for fifth place.

Nebraska sprinter Chris Chandler failed to reach the finals in both the 60- and 200-meter dash. The junior finished 14th in the 60-meter with a time of 6.74 seconds and finished ninth in the 200-meter with a time of 21.01 seconds.

"Chandler was a surprise," Pepin said. "He won his heat in the 200-meters easily, but slowed down at the end. Getting to the finals is based on time, not finish."

Sprints coach Billy Maxwell said Chandler may have run too much during the season. After Chandler won the indoor conference championships in both the 60- and 200-meters, he traveled to Atlanta to compete in the U.S. indoor championships.

"It was a rude awakening for Chandler and the rest of the team," Maxwell said.

Sophomore Shaun Kologinczak also received All-American honors after a 10th place finish in the high jump.

Seven of the nine women who competed for NU garnered All-American honors. Leading the way for the women was Stella Klassen, who finished third in the 400-meter dash and anchored the women's 4-by-400-meter relay team consisting of Klassen, Cheryl Harmon, Jelena Stanisavljevic and Lesley Owusu to sixth.

In the 400-meters, Klassen set a personal-best time in the preliminaries, and in the finals she broke her personal-best time again with a mark of 52.61 seconds.

The Huskers had a big effort in the women's high jump from Jessica Thompson and Carrie Braness. Thompson, a junior, finished fourth with a personal-best jump of 6-0 1/2, while Braness, a senior, reeled in eighth place with a jump of 5-11 1/4.

By placing 10th in the triple jump with a leap of 41-11 1/2, senior Dalhia Ingram was named an All-American for the seventh time.

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