

— SOFTBALL —

Revelle hopes offense gets in gear for Bluejay twinbill

By Jamie Suhr
Staff writer

Rhonda Revelle said her Nebraska softball team tries to approach each opponent with fire and emotion.

But Revelle admitted there's something a little extra with NU's in-state rivalry with Creighton, which reconvenes for a twilight double-header on Wednesday in Omaha.

"It's special when the only two Division I schools in Nebraska face off," Revelle said. "Many of the girls grew up facing each other."

The Cornhuskers (16-15) will carry a three-game winning streak into the game, along with a five-game winning streak against CU, which is 14-6.

Though Revelle hadn't named starters for tonight's games as of Tuesday, NU pitcher Leigh Ann Walker hasn't allowed an earned run in her last seven innings pitched, and Jenny Voss had her third career no-hitter in a 7-2 win over Southeast Missouri State. Nebraska has not allowed an earned run in its last three games.

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Ginger Taylor
UNL outfielder

But the Huskers' problems haven't been from a lack of quality pitching, Revelle said. Rather, the lineup has failed to produce runs on a consistent basis, leaving numerous stranded base runners. So Revelle would tinker with the batting order in hopes for a spark, she said.

"We've been flip-flopping our lineup anywhere from the Nos. 3-9 hitters," Revelle said.

The Bluejays, who are coming off a season in which they qualified for the NCAA Regionals, head into the games with a three-game winning streak.

Both games look to be pitcher's duels. Creighton's top two starting pitchers, Marie Cieron and Kristan

Melton, have ERAs below one run. Its other starter, Shelli Mellegaard, leads the team with six wins. Creighton's staff ERA is 1.60, while NU has an ERA of 2.75.

Despite the glowing numbers, NU outfielder Ginger Taylor wasn't impressed.

"We don't like to look at stats," Taylor said. "We just look at what's out there on the field and go get it."

Revelle contended the lineup was beginning to snap out of its funk, and she pointed to infielder Jamie Fuente, who has had bad luck at the plate.

"Fuente's average might not be that good, but she hit a number of hard line drives right at people," Revelle said.

— RIFLE —

NU's Allaire helps team finish strong at nationals

From staff reports

Nebraska's Nicole Allaire proved this past weekend that she is one of the sharpest shots in the nation.

The freshman All-American from Kearney, N.J., claimed the smallbore national title on Friday at the NCAA championships. Allaire's season-best mark of 1,183 out of 1,200 tied Alaska-Fairbanks' Matt Emmons, but Allaire's 80 center shots, compared to Emmons' 78, gave her the title.

Allaire's performance helped the Nebraska team, in only its second year of competition and in its first trip to the NAAs, finish third at the event held at the Virginia Military Institute. The Cornhuskers' aggregate score of 6,122 points came from their 1,545 points in the air-rifle competition and 4,577 in the smallbore. Alaska-Fairbanks took the overall team title.

Nebraska sophomore Terim Richards was the highest-placing Husker in the air-rifle shot, firing a 190 out of 400, good enough for fifth place.

Coach Karen Anthony was honored, along with Xavier Coach Alan Joseph, as the Collegiate Rifle Coaches Association's Coaches of the Year.

Along with Allaire, freshman Amanda Trujillo, was also named as an All-American, earning second-team honors in both the smallbore and air-rifle competitions.

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McKewon: Byrne the man to hire a coach

BYRNE from page 20

Walker has built a national soccer power within five seasons. Another, Bowling Coach Bill Straub, took Nebraska to a national title after it was made an NCAA-sanctioned sport.

In other words, don't worry about Byrne — he'll get his man. And don't worry about the Nee successor — he'll be good.

And don't worry about the money situation, which seems to purport that no coach can make more than Solich.

Solich ought to be part of the million-dollar club, but even if he isn't, his deal will be restructured some, most likely. And Byrne doesn't have to offer a \$900,000 package (close to what Iowa State's Larry Eustachy earns per year) to get a winning program.

The high salary seemed a stretch for ISU a few years ago for a guy out of Utah State, but not so much now that ISU has a legitimate shot at the Final Four. But the Cyclones are in a different boat than the Huskers, who have a cash cow already in football.

Put simply, roundball will never eclipse the pigskin beast in this state. Whatever coach who comes to Lincoln has to understand that and possibly take a little less money because of it.

And if Byrne goes for young pups, as it looks like he will, he has to understand they might jump for greener pastures someday. Take potential (though long shot) candidate Buzz Peterson of Appalachian State. Here's a guy who might have a shot at the North Carolina job six, seven years from now. And he's going to leave if he gets that kind of opening.

There are others, of course, and Tulsa's Bill Self is assuredly at the top of the list, with his trapping defensive scheme and emphasis on open-floor play. Detroit's Percy Watson, Butler's Barry Collier,

Miami's Leonard Hamilton, Colorado State's Ritchie McKay and North Carolina State's Herb Sendek, among others, also might be the future coach.

Byrne may not get Self, who could wait another year and reap the monetary benefits, but he'll get somebody worth his salt.

Will he be a smarter coach than Nee?

Maybe not.

Probably not.

Nee will have had more experience, more mileage on the basketball brain, than any person Byrne could bring in.

But Nee could no longer manage the program adequately, for whatever reason. Since the 1996 NIT Championship, Nee has had 10 scholarship players either transfer or quit, including Troy Piatkowski and Joe Holmes, before their eligibility was up. Piatkowski simply decided not to take advantage of an extra year granted to him.

And a recruit was never quite a recruit until he found the fax machine or made the grades. Nee still could coach, but he was a horrible general manager, so to speak. He oversold most of the talent he did have and let other talented players walk away.

So change comes now, and few are better at bridging the gap between old and new than Byrne. As a good salesman, Byrne will sell someone on the idea of Nebraska and its facilities, support and potential for greatness. What NU needs is what Nee could not provide: consistency, not necessarily in winning, but in the chance to develop young players over four years, not just one or two.

No matter who the replacement, if he or she can provide that kind of system in four years, then Byrne has notched another mark as one of the shrewdest employers around.

Samuel McKewon is a junior political science major and a Daily Nebraskan senior editor.

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