



Buff harriers take role of underdog to Big 12s

Wetmore's men have won every league title

By Ryan Thorburn

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The Colorado men's cross country team is experiencing something new this week as it prepares for Saturday's Big 12 championships in Ames, Iowa.

The feeling of being an underdog.

Mark Wetmore's Buffs are a perfect 12-for-12 in this event since the Big 12's inception, but No. 2 Oklahoma State, which won the last Big Eight title, will be favored to end CU's reign.

"That's come up a couple times," junior Jordan Kyle said of the program's perfect history in the Big 12 championships. "And the fact that Oklahoma State is ranked second in the country right now. I actually think they should be ranked better than that with how well all their guys have been running. ... Oklahoma State is really tough. I think they're beatable though."

The Buffs are coming off a disappointing ninth-place performance at the NCAA Pre-Nationals on Oct. 18.

Kyle, who transferred to Boulder from Indiana, was the bright spot with a seventh-place individual finish in the 'white' race held in Terre Haute, Ind.

"The Pre-Nationals wasn't exactly a great showing for us," Kyle said. "Out of our top five, three of the guys were either sick or it was their first competition in the cross country season."

Kyle, who was 33rd overall in the 2006 NCAA cross country championships while at IU, finished the 8K with a time of 23 minutes, 39.9 seconds.

"I think I was able to finish pretty high without completely expending everything," Kyle said. "We still ran pretty high mileage that week, I think I hit around 95 (miles) for my weekly volume. By no means were we peaked for the race. I think individually that gives me a lot to look forward to going into the Big 12s."

CU has already competed on the course in Ames, finishing second at the Iowa State Invitational on Sept. 18. The Cyclones' Clayton Carper won the event and was followed by a pack of Buffs, including Kyle.

"We kind of know the inner workings of how the course is run and the hills and how it's going to play out," Kyle said. "That's going to play to our advantage. ... "The key for us to have a shot of beating Oklahoma State is for us to have a good day and for them to have an off day."

Spikers go for upset

of No. 1 Nebraska

Two years ago, Alex Buth recorded the clinching point of CU's stunning five-set victory over No. 1 Nebraska, at the Coors Events Center.

It's a memory the senior will visualize in the locker room tonight before the Buffs host the No. 2 Cornhuskers in another Big 12 showdown at 6:30 p.m.

"That was probably the best moment I've had here. I'm going to think about how we felt after that game," Buth said. "Just knowing we can beat them and that they are beatable."

CU thought it could defeat Nebraska two years ago before the match. Buth said it wasn't until after her team rallied to force a fifth set that it truly believed it was going to finish the upset.

"That's when we thought, 'We can do this,'" Buth said.

CU improved to 11-9 overall and 5-6 in Big 12 play after a five-set win at Texas Tech on Saturday. Nebraska is a perfect 20-0 (11-0 in conference), including a sweep of the Buffs on Oct. 4 in Lincoln.

Pi'i Aiu's team has played well at home this season with a 4-1 record against Big 12 foes. The only loss was against No. 3 Texas.

"I don't think we've ever felt this way playing at home before," Buth said. "In the past we haven't thought that home is where we win our matches. But this year that has changed and we really feel like a different team at home."

The Buffs were the only team to defeat the Huskers in 2006. Nebraska went on to win the NCAA title.

Hitting the links

The Buffs return to action for the first time since a third-place finish at the 13-team Texas Tech Invitational in Lubbock Oct. 6-7.

Emily Talley (10th), Christine Kim (11th) and Stephanie Simich (13th) led CU individually.



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