



COLLEGE GYMNASTICS ASSOCIATION BIG TEN CONFERENCE

CGA WEEKLY REPORT

Jan. 24, 2010
By Jerry Wright



UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

The University of Michigan avenged last year's loss to Penn State with an easy win on Sunday (Jan. 24), 355.650 to 344.750, at home in Cliff Keen Arena. U-M was led by juniors Thomas Kelley and Chris Cameron,



KELLEY

who combined for three individual event titles and the all-around. The Big Ten Network was on hand for the event, which is scheduled to air next Saturday (Jan 30) at noon.

The Wolverines started strongly on the floor exercise, posting a 59.300 total score. Freshman Rohan Sebastian in his first competitive performance in Cliff Keen, recorded a 14.500 along with Cameron's 15.400 winning score. Cameron's trademark Thomas flair sequence amazed the audience of nearly 700 inside Cliff Keen. With its performance on the floor, Michigan jumped out to a nearly three-point lead and never looked back.

In the second rotation, U-M placed three athletes, Cameron and seniors David Chan and Mel Anton Santander, in the top five on the pommel horse, stretching its lead to nearly five points. Michigan's 59.000 total was a nearly two-point improvement from the team's total at last week's Windy City Invitational. Santander was nearly flawless, recording a career best (14.950), and earned the year's first Newt Loken Outstanding Performance Award.

On the rings, the Wolverines put the memory of the miscues from last week aside, sticking the same dismounts that cost them a chance at the Windy City title. Kelley led the way, nailing the front double pike dismount that he missed last weekend to take first place on the rings with a career-best 15.200.

The Wolverines continued to coast on vault. Michigan again placed three athletes in the top five, posting a 62.550 total behind Chan's signature double front vault (15.800), senior

Kent Caldwell, who added a full twist to his effort from the team's season opener (15.750), and a nearly stuck effort from Sebastian (15.700).

In rotation five, Cameron and Santander turned in matching scores of 14.55 to lead Michigan to another season high on the parallel bars with a total of 57.300, extending U-M's lead to nearly 10 points going into the final rotation.

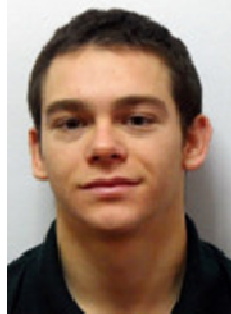
The final rotation moved Michigan to the high bar, the only event on which U-M did not set a season high. Kelley soared on three release moves to lead a Michigan sweep of the event, scoring a 14.700, followed closely behind the career-best effort (14.65) of junior Ben Baldus-Strauss, Santander rounded out the top three.

PENN STATE UNIVERSITY

The youthful Penn State hung tough for much of its Sunday afternoon dual meet with a deep and experience No. 3 Michigan squad but ultimately fell to the Big Ten preseason favorite Wolverines, 355.650-344.750, at Cliff Keen Arena in Ann Arbor, Mich.

The Nittany Lions equaled or surpassed season-high scores in the parallel bars (57.050) and the still rings (58.650) but were hampered by struggles in one of its top events, the floor exercise (56.950), and by a subpar performance in the high bar (54.100). Individually, three of Penn State's young competitors made statements with event wins.

Freshman Felix Aronovich continued his impressive start to his collegiate career winning the pommel horse with a season and team high score of 15.100. Aronovich, who has captured a pommel horse title each time he has competed in the event in 2010, defeated Michigan



ARONOVICH

All-Americans David Chan and Chris Cameron to secure the victory. He also placed second in the parallel bars (tie) (14.550) and fifth in the still rings (14.600), establishing season best marks in both events.

Defending Big Ten Co-Freshman of the Week Nick Grant shined under the spotlight of his first conference dual meet, tying All-American David Chan for the vault title with a score of 15.800.

Redshirt freshman Philip Harris, in his first competitive season, captured his second parallel bars crown of the year, posting a season and team high score of 14.700.

Other standout performances were contributed by senior Nick Virbitsky and sophomore Miguel Pineda. Virbitsky and Pineda secured second place finishes in the floor exercise and still rings, respectively. Freshman Tony Beck competing in the high bar for the first time in his collegiate career, tied for fourth with a score of 14.300.

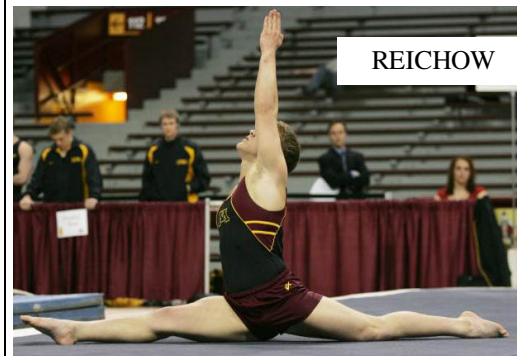
NOTES: Seven of the 12 gymnasts that were in the line-up for Penn State were freshman or in their first competitive season...21 of Penn State's 33 routines were performed by a freshman or a redshirt freshman...Seven freshman or redshirt freshman set 12 personal bests for their career/season: Aronovich (3), Raque (2), Beck (2), Chelberg (2), Dow (1), Grant (1), P. Harris (1).

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

The University of Minnesota was happy to be back home Saturday (Jan. 23) afternoon and they showed it.

The Golden Gophers struggled in last week's season-opener at the Windy City Invitational in Chicago. But in Saturday afternoon's first home meet of the season, Minnesota bounced back big time. The Gophers improved over last week's total in five of the six events, posting a final score of 343.250. Their final tally was more than five full points better than last week's total of 337.650.

"We had a huge improvement over last week, so I'm pretty pleased with that," head coach Mike Burns said. "Our hit percentage went way up by a lot. There was a good sense of fighting out there with a lot of routines. That's what we need to do, improve on a weekly basis."



REICHOW

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Minnesota easily out-distanced its opponents in Saturday's competition - Arizona State and Washington. ASU came in second with a tally of 316.650, while Washington tallied a 293.650.

The Gophers were led by Adam Reichow and Aaron Fortunato. Reichow put up scores of 15.100 on the floor exercise and 15.500 on the vault. Reichow was presented with the Dr. Louis J. Cooke Outstanding Performance Award following the meet. Fortunato won two events, taking the pommel horse with a score of 13.950 and horizontal bar with a tally of 15.050. He also won the all-around with a total score of 85.000.

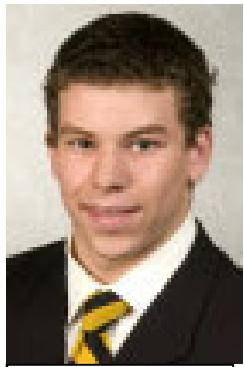
However, it wasn't all rosy. The Gophers slipped a bit from last week's score on the still rings and still aren't as consistent as they would like to be on the pommel horse.

Minnesota won each event. In addition to the wins by Fortunato and Reichow, Travis Heaver took the top spot on the still rings, Adam LaFleur was the top scorer on the vault and Ross Cameratta took the parallel bars.

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

The University of Iowa lost to the Oklahoma Sooners Saturday (Jan. 23) at a packed UI Fieldhouse, with a final score of 349.500 - 340.950 .

There were several improvements for the Hawkeyes, but the biggest story of the meet was freshman Matt McGrath. McGrath finished as the team-leader in floor exercise (15.00), rings (14.70), vault (15.55) and was second-best on parallel bars (13.9).



McGRATH

Senior Jonathan Buese tied for second on high bar (14.60) and sophomore Jacob Swafford placed third, to lead the Hawkeyes, in pommel horse (13.60) in his first meet of the season.

"On the whole, the team did a great job today," Head Coach Tom Dunn said. "Some mistakes were made, as you would expect early in the season. But the team always rallied, just like they did last week, to keep each event score respectable. We also had another big crowd, that brought a lot of noise and energy--which was great!"