

The 2003-04 season was a successful one for the Husker rifle squad, as the team finished sixth in the NCAA Championships. It was Nebraska's third trip to the championships in the program's short six-year existence, and its first appearance since 2001.

Head Coach Launi Meili entered her second season with only three returnees, but an impressive incoming class of transfers and freshmen. Meili turned to the fresh faces early and often, and the newcomers delivered.

The Huskers opened the season with a win over Air Force at the NU Rifle Range. The Huskers posted a 6,169-6,044 victory in a strong team effort. Freshman Kristina Fehlings made an early impact for the squad, taking first place in both smallbore and air rifle. Husker shooters earned the top three places in the smallbore event, paced by Fehlings (1,166), sophomore Misty Chanek (1,162) and senior Melissa Downsborough (1,156). Nebraska also pulled the top four spots in air rifle, as Fehlings (394), Downsborough (390), Chanek (386) and freshman Sarah Quinn (381) led the way.

In the second day of competition with the Falcons, the Huskers improved their record to 2-0, defeating Air Force 6,184-6,052. Fehlings (1,171) again led the way in smallbore, closely followed by Downsborough (1,161). After each finished with a 392 in air rifle, Downsborough edged Fehlings in a tiebreaker to pick up the crown.

After a short break in action, Nebraska headed north to take on Kentucky and defending national champion Alaska-Fairbanks in a pair of matches in Fairbanks, Alaska. Unfortunately, the 'Last Frontier' did not treat the Huskers well, as the team suffered its first defeats of the season against the talented competition.

Nebraska fell to Kentucky on the first day of competition 6,183-6,121. Chanek led the way for the Huskers placing third in the smallbore competition (1,161) and tying for second in air rifle (389). Fehlings followed closely behind, placing fourth in smallbore (1,154) and tied for fifth in air rifle (387).

The six-time champion Nanooks handed the Huskers their second defeat of the season, dispatching Nebraska 6,274-6,158. Chanek again led the way for the Huskers, earning a tie for sixth place in the smallbore competition (1,161) and a tie for fifth place in the air rifle (390).

After a nearly month-long layoff, the Huskers traveled to Ohio in late November to participate in the Walsh Invitational at Xavier University in Cincinnati and to battle Ohio State in Columbus.

The team logged its second-highest score of the year, 6,172, to finish fourth out of 14 teams in the highly competitive Walsh Invitational. Chanek again turned in a strong performance for the Huskers, recording a 1,169 in smallbore to finish 11th out of 179 total competitors. Downsborough shot a team-high 390 in air rifle and finished sixth out of 185 competitors. Junior Laura Johnson (1,151), senior Karen Aspden (1,146) and Quinn (1,143) all recorded personal bests for the Huskers.



Sophomore Misty Chanek earned second-team All-America honors in both smallbore and air rifle, finishing 10th individually at the NCAA Championships in smallbore and 11th individually in air rifle.



Freshman Kristina Fehlings earned first-team All-America honors in air rifle and third-team honors in smallbore.

Nebraska returned to its winning ways against Ohio State, defeating the Buckeyes 6,152-6,035 to improve to 3-2 on the year. The Huskers were dominant in air rifle, sweeping the top three spots on strong performances by Fehlings (393), Chanek (389) and Downsborough (385). Nebraska shooters pulled down seven of the top eight spots in the event. The Huskers finished strong in smallbore as well, placing four shooters in the top five.

Looking to continue their success, the Huskers returned home to face UMKC for its final match of 2003. The team extended its winning streak against the Kangaroos, picking up the victory 6,152-5,910. Nebraska shot the second-best smallbore score (4,621) in NU Rifle Range history, fueled by strong performances from Fehlings (1,162), Chanek (1,161), and freshman Stacy Underwood, who recorded a career-best 1,146 in the event. Fehlings also captured the individual title in air rifle.

After the New Year, the Huskers returned to action in Colorado Springs, Colo., facing Alaska-Fairbanks and UTEP in a triangular meet on Jan. 9. It was the second time in the season the Huskers would shoot against the five-time defending national champion Nanooks. The Huskers played up to the competition, recording a season-high team score of 6,219 in defeating the Miners (6,174), but still fell short of the Nanooks (6,203). Chanek turned in another strong performance for the Huskers, recording a personal-best and school-record smallbore score of 1,184. Downsborough led the squad in air rifle, shooting a 390. In air rifle, NU totaled 1,546, two points ahead of Alaska-Fairbanks and 21 points ahead of UTEP (1,525).

Returning to the range the following day, Nebraska recorded its third defeat of Air Force in as many tries, 6,206-6,068. Downsborough was the top individual finisher at the shoot, earning top honors in air rifle (391) and finishing third in smallbore (1,173). The Huskers dominated the smallbore competition, claiming seven of the top eight finishers in defeating the Falcons 4,672-4,581. Underwood (1,169), Quinn (1,149) and Johnson (1,166) all recorded personal-best scores in the event. Nebraska also claimed the top five spots in air rifle, paced by Downsborough, Chanek (385) and Fehlings (385).

Riding the strength of a 5-2 record into their final matches before the NCAA Qualifiers, the Huskers headed up to Palmyra, Pa., to face Army and Navy in a pair of weekend shoots. Unfortunately, the trip was not a successful one for the Huskers, who dropped back-to-back matches, losing 6,131-6,148 to the Black Knights and 6,195-6,207 to the Midshipmen. In facing Navy, the Huskers notched the fourth-highest team score and the third-best smallbore score in school history. The Huskers edged the Midshipmen 4,657-4,654 in smallbore, but came up short in air rifle, falling 1,553-1,538. Against Army, Chanek was the top smallbore competitor, totaling 1,167 points. Chanek's strong showing was not enough to push NU past Army in the event, as the Huskers fell by a narrow margin of 4,610-4,607. The Huskers fell 14 points short of the Black Knights in air rifle, losing 1,524-1,538.

The Huskers returned home Feb. 14, for their NCAA Qualifier shoot against UTEP. It was the Huskers second match with the Miners on the year, and Nebraska again came up victorious, defeating UTEP 6,178-6,115. Chanek fired a career best 392 in air rifle, taking first place in the event. She also earned top honors in smallbore with a 1,169. Nebraska shooters recorded the top three finishes in both events, out-shooting UTEP 4,633-4,596 in smallbore and 1,545-

2003-04 Schedule and Final Results

Date	Opponent/Tournament	Result
Oct. 11	vs. U.S. Air Force Academy	W (6,169-6,044)
Oct. 12	vs. U.S. Air Force Academy	W (6,184-6,052)
Oct. 24	vs. Kentucky	L (6,121-6,138)
Oct. 26	at Alaska-Fairbanks	L (6,158-6,274)
Nov. 22	at Walsh Invitational	Fourth (6,172)
Nov. 23	at Ohio State	W (6,152-6,035)
Dec. 6	vs. UMKC	W (6,152-5,910)
Jan. 9	vs. Alaska-Fairbanks	L (6,219-6,302)
	vs. UTEP	W (6,219-6,174)
Jan. 10	at Air Force	W (6,206-6,068)
Jan. 24	vs. Army	L (6,131-6,148)
Jan. 25	vs. Navy	L (6,195-6,207)
Feb. 14	vs. UTEP (NCAA Qualifiers)	W (6,178-6,115)
March 12-13	at NCAA Championships (Murray, Ky.)	Sixth (6,147)

1,519 in air rifle.

Following the strong performance at the NCAA qualifiers, the Huskers were forced to await the results of the other qualifier shoots before learning if they would earn one of the eight berths in the NCAA Championships. Fortunately, the efforts were enough to earn the Huskers a fourth overall finish in smallbore and a seventh overall finish in air rifle, qualifying the Huskers in both events. Chanek qualified in both guns individually, and Fehlings also qualified individually in air rifle for the March 13-14 shoot in Murray, Ky.

In their third NCAA appearance, and first since 2001, the Huskers looked to turn in a strong showing against the nation's top competition. In the first day of the shoot, both Chanek and Fehlings took aim at individual championships. Unfortunately, neither of the two performed as well as they hoped, as Chanek finished 10th in smallbore (1,164) and 11th in air rifle (389), and Fehlings finished 20th in air rifle (383).

Hoping to build off their experience the first day, Chanek and Fehlings rejoined their teammates for the team championships on the second day of the event. Alaska-Fairbanks held up to their billing as the team to beat in the event, winning their sixth consecutive NCAA Championship by shooting a team aggregate 6,273. The Huskers finished sixth overall, led by Chanek (1,168) in smallbore and Fehlings (390) in air rifle. The team finished fifth in air rifle, and seventh in smallbore.

At the year-end NCAA rifle banquet that night, Fehlings was named a first-team All-American in air rifle. Chanek was named to the second-team in both smallbore and air rifle. Fehlings was also named to the third-team in smallbore, and Downsborough made the third-team in both events.

While the Huskers were disappointed with their overall finish, the team was glad to make nationals and receive experience to build on as they move into the next season. The core of the team will return, as first-team All-American Kristina Fehlings was only a freshman and second-team All-American Misty Chanek was only a sophomore. Nebraska will turn to these two as it looks forward to building on its experience and returning to the NCAA Championships in 2005.



Senior Melissa Downsborough became the fourth four-time letterwinner in Nebraska rifle history and earned third-team All-America honors in both disciplines.

Final 2003-2004 Statistics

Karen Aspden

Match	Air Rifle	Smallbore	Match	Air Rifle	Smallbore
Air Force	385	1,134	Alaska-Fairbanks, UTEP	367	1,136
Air Force	378	1,145	Air Force	378	1,145
Kentucky	382	1,124	Army	376	*
Alaska-Fairbanks	377	1,133	Navy	368	1,134
Walsh Invitational	381	1,146	UTEP (NCAA Qualifiers)	380	1,148
Ohio State	381	1,131			

Misty Chanek

Match	Air Rifle	Smallbore	Match	Air Rifle	Smallbore
Air Force	386	1,162	Alaska-Fairbanks, UTEP	388	1,184
Air Force	390	1,156	Air Force	385	1,177
Kentucky	389	1,161	Army	379	1,167
Alaska-Fairbanks	390	1,161	Navy	384	1,166
Walsh Invitational	386	1,169	UTEP (NCAA Qualifiers)	392	1,169
Ohio State	389	1,164	NCAA Championships	384	1,168
UMKC	386	1,161			

Melissa Downsborough

Match	Air Rifle	Smallbore	Match	Air Rifle	Smallbore
Air Force	390	1,156	Alaska-Fairbanks, UTEP	390	1,173
Air Force	392	1,161	Air Force	391	1,173
Kentucky	381	1,153	Army	380	1,152
Alaska-Fairbanks	388	1,151	Navy	387	1,163
Walsh Invitational	390	1,164	UTEP (NCAA Qualifiers)	386	1,160
Ohio State	385	1,150	NCAA Championships	387	1,134

Kristina Fehlings

Match	Air Rifle	Smallbore	Match	Air Rifle	Smallbore
Air Force	394	1,166	Alaska-Fairbanks, UTEP	385	1,161
Air Force	392	1,171	Air Force	385	1,153
Kentucky	387	1,154	Army	384	1,146
Alaska-Fairbanks	389	1,158	Navy	388	1,165
Walsh Invitational	389	1,157	UTEP (NCAA Qualifiers)	391	1,155
Ohio State	393	1,145	NCAA Championships	390	1,155
UMKC	393	1,162			

Laura Johnson

Match	Air Rifle	Smallbore	Match	Air Rifle	Smallbore
Air Force	377	1,143	Alaska-Fairbanks, UTEP	383	1,148
Air Force	386	1,118	Air Force	382	1,166
Kentucky	378	1,131	Army	384	1,140
Alaska-Fairbanks	385	1,135	Navy	379	1,134
Walsh Invitational	384	1,151	UTEP (NCAA Qualifiers)	388	*
Ohio State	384	1,142	NCAA Championships	384	*
UMKC	379	1,146			

Sarah Quinn

Match	Air Rifle	Smallbore	Match	Air Rifle	Smallbore
Air Force	381	1,134	UMKC	378	1,127
Air Force	377	1,132	Alaska-Fairbanks, UTEP	386	1,143
Kentucky	378	1,136	Air Force	382	1,149
Alaska-Fairbanks	386	1,135	Army	381	1,116
Walsh Invitational	387	1,143	Navy	382	1,128
Ohio State	382	1,107	UTEP (NCAA Qualifiers)	376	*

Stacy Underwood

Match	Air Rifle	Smallbore	Match	Air Rifle	Smallbore
Air Force	382	1,142	Alaska-Fairbanks, UTEP	377	1,155
Air Force	380	1,146	Air Force	362	1,169
Kentucky	376	1,118	Army	377	1,142
Alaska-Fairbanks	385	1,136	Navy	381	1,160
Walsh Invitational	385	1,132	UTEP (NCAA Qualifiers)	*	1,149
Ohio State	381	1,131	NCAA Championships	*	1,145
UMKC	374	1,152			

Season Averages

Match	Air Rifle	Smallbore	Match	Air Rifle	Smallbore
Karen Aspden	377.33	1,137.49	Laura Johnson	382.47	1,141.27
Misty Chanek	387.00	1,166.54	Sarah Quinn	381.33	1,131.82
Melissa Downsborough	387.20	1,157.18	Stacy Underwood	378.36	1,144.39
Kristina Fehlings	389.23	1,157.54			

* denotes that shooter did not participate in that event