

Youthful Huskers Make Strides in 2008-09

The Nebraska rifle team just missed out on a sixth straight NCAA Championships bid in 2009, but the young Huskers fared well at the GARC Championships and captured 10 individual titles throughout the season. NU finished with a team aggregate average of 4,596 and a 13-9 season record.

The Huskers finished 10th nationally, leaving them just outside the top eight teams that qualify for the NCAA finals. But with no seniors on that squad, the future looks bright for Head Coach Morgan Hicks' squad.

For the second straight season, junior Amanda Jeffries paced the Huskers with a team-best 586.08 air rifle average. In addition to her two air rifle and one smallbore individual titles, the Norman, Okla., native garnered three overall combined titles to lead the Huskers. Her performance garnered her first-team All-America status in air rifle.

Ryann McGough had a breakout sophomore season, leading NU with a 573.46 smallbore average and capturing five individual titles – four in smallbore and one in air rifle. McGough was the overall combined champion against eventual national champion West Virginia as well. At season's end, McGough received honorable mention on the All-America smallbore list.

Christine Costello was the only other Husker to capture a title on the season. The junior won two smallbore titles and was the individual combined champion against N.C. State.

NU began its season with a 4,651-4,563 loss at Nevada, the first of seven NCAA Championship opponents Nebraska would face throughout the season. Jeffries opened with a career-best 593 in air rifle, which tied the second-highest



Amanda Jeffries was a first-team All-American in air rifle in 2008-09.



Ryann McGough was a smallbore honorable-mention All-American in 2008-09.

mark in school history. Freshman Katie Kostal opened with what would turn out to be a season-best 582 air rifle score.

The Huskers bounced back the next weekend with a pair of wins in their first home matches of the season. Nebraska defeated Army, 4,619-4,600, and two days later outmatched Air Force, 4,610-4,584. Jeffries was the air rifle and combined individual champion of the Air Force match, while Costello completed the Husker sweep with the smallbore award, thanks to a career-best 582.

Next, the Huskers made their longest trek of the season to Fairbanks, Alaska, to take on two of the best teams in the nation in Alaska-Fairbanks and Kentucky. Nebraska came up short in both contests, dropping a 4,670-4,606 decision to the Wildcats and then a 4,647-4,595 decision at the hands of the Nanooks.

The Huskers concluded the fall portion of their schedule with a November trip to Murray, Ky., to face Hicks' alma mater, Murray State. Nebraska evened its record to 3-3 after defeating the Racers, 4,602-4,541. McGough captured her first career smallbore title and her first individual title of the season with a score of 580, which was a personal best at the time.

McGough's score only held up until the next match, when she toppled it with a 588 and captured another smallbore title at West Virginia. She also won the overall combined title, but it wasn't enough as the Huskers fell to the Mountaineers, 4,650-4,622. Despite the loss, the total was the highest output of the season for the Huskers.

The following day, the Huskers defeated NC State in a neutral-site match in Morgantown, W.Va., 4,610-4,482. Costello led NU with a smallbore and combined title, while Jeffries and McGough each scored the top air rifle mark of 584.

NU then returned home for three consecutive home meets before the NCAA Qualifier. The Big Red defeated Mississippi, 4,591-4,579 behind Jeffries' overall title and McGough's smallbore medal. Junior Ashley Lane competed well as an individual, scoring a career-best 583 in air rifle.

Nebraska took second place in a three-way meet with Mississippi and NCAA qualifier TCU after shooting 4,577. McGough shined for the Huskers, capturing her fourth individual title in five matches with another smallbore award. Freshman Sheena Mahloch also scored a career-high 579 in air rifle.

The Huskers closed the home portion of their schedule with a 4,568-4,563 loss to Memphis. Jeffries was the overall and smallbore champion, while McGough earned her fifth discipline title of the season with an air rifle award.

At the NCAA Qualifier in Murray, Ky., NU placed second out of five teams, trailing only NCAA qualifier Jacksonville State. Costello finished in the top five in both disciplines and led the Huskers with a combined score of 1,160 while posting a season-best 585 in air rifle. Jeffries, who also shot 585, placed fourth in air rifle for the Huskers.

At the GARC Championships in Oxford, Miss., Nebraska earned a third-place showing with a score of 4,620. Jeffries placed fourth in the individual combined standings at 1,164, and

she was fifth in the final air rifle standings. In addition to her second-team air rifle honors, Jeffries earned All-GARC first-team accolades for her overall top-four finish.

Kostal was perhaps the most surprising performer in the entire field. The No. 4 shooter for the Huskers all season long, Kostal shot her way into the smallbore finals with a score of 582, which tied the school record for best smallbore score ever by a Husker freshman. In the finals, Kostal finished third overall. She ended up seventh in the individual combined standings, good for second-team All-GARC honors, but her smallbore finish earned her a spot on the smallbore first team.

Costello also earned a top-10 finish for the Huskers by coming in ninth in the overall combined standings to earn honorable-mention All-GARC accolades.

In addition to numerous national and conference athletic honors, Nebraska also boasted academic success. Four members of the rifle team were named to the Big 12 Commissioner's Fall and Spring Honor Rolls.

McGough, a psychology major, finished the year with a perfect 4.0 GPA. Mahloch, a pre-pharmacy major, earned a 4.0 GPA in the fall semester.

Jeffries made her sixth straight appearance on the list and Costello qualified for the fifth time in her career.

2008-09 Season Highlights

NU finished with a 13-9 record and just missed qualifying for a sixth consecutive NCAA postseason appearance.

Two Huskers were named All-Americans: junior Amanda Jeffries earned first-team honors in air rifle, while sophomore Ryann McGough earned honorable mention in smallbore.

Three Huskers earned All-GARC honors: Jeffries (All-GARC first team, air rifle second team), Katie Kostal (All-GARC second team, smallbore first team) and Christine Costello (All-GARC and air rifle honorable mention).

Four Huskers were named to the Big 12 Commissioner's Fall and Spring Honor Rolls: Costello, Jeffries, Mahloch and McGough. Mahloch earned a 4.0 GPA in the fall semester, while McGough maintained a 4.0 GPA all year.

Nebraska's Individual Event Titles in 2008-09
Christine Costello (2)
Smallbore: 582 (vs. Air Force, 10/12/08), 577 (vs. NC State, 1/17/09)
Amanda Jeffries (3)
Air Rifle: 588 (vs. Air Force, 10/12/08), 584 (vs. NC State, 1/17/09); Smallbore: 571 (vs. Memphis, 2/7/09)
Ryann McGough (5)
Air Rifle: 581 (vs. Memphis, 2/7/09); Smallbore: 580 (at Murray State, 11/9/08), 588 (at West Virginia, 1/16/09), 576 (vs. Ole Miss, 1/23/09), 578 (vs. TCU with Ole Miss, 1/24/09)

2008-09 Team Results

Date	Opponent	Location	SB	AR	Result	Score
10/5/08	at Nevada	Reno, Nev.	2,240	2,323	Loss	4,563-4,651
10/10/08	vs. Army	NU Rifle Range	2,296	2,323	Win	4,619-4,600
10/12/08	vs. Air Force	NU Rifle Range	2,301	2,309	Win	4,610-4,584
10/25/08	vs. Kentucky	Fairbanks, Alaska	2,291	2,315	Loss	4,606-4,670
10/26/08	at Alaska-Fairbanks	Fairbanks, Alaska	2,275	2,320	Loss	4,595-4,647
11/9/08	at Murray State	Murray, Ky.	2,285	2,317	Win	4,602-4,541
1/16/09	at West Virginia	Morgantown, W. Va.	2,293	2,286	Loss	4,622-4,650
1/17/09	vs. NC State	Morgantown, W. Va.	2,286	2,329	Win	4,610-4,482
1/23/09	vs. Mississippi	NU Rifle Range	2,283	2,308	Win	4,591-4,579
1/24/09	vs. TCU/Mississippi	NU Rifle Range	2,271	2,306	2nd/3	4,577-4,619/4,573
2/7/09	vs. Memphis	NU Rifle Range	2,263	2,300	Loss	4,563-4,568
2/14/09	NCAA Qualifier	Murray, Ky.	2,262	2,322	2nd/5	4,584
2/28/09	GARC Championships	Oxford, Miss.	2,293	2,327	3rd/7	4,620

Final Record: 13-9 (8-5 GARC) Team Averages: Smallbore - 2,280; Air Rifle - 2,318; Total - 4,596

2008-09 Individual Statistics

Christine Costello

Date	Opponent	SB	AR
10/5/08	at Nevada	570	571
10/10/08	vs. Army	579	574
10/12/08	vs. Air Force	582	569
10/25/08	vs. Kentucky (in Alaska)	574	581
10/26/08	at Alaska-Fairbanks	568	581
11/9/08	at Murray State	568	581
1/16/09	at West Virginia	569	581
1/17/09	vs. NC State (in W. Va.)	577	580
1/23/09	vs. Mississippi	567	578
1/24/09	vs. TCU/Mississippi	570	575
2/7/09	vs. Memphis	569	574
2/14/09	NCAA Qualifier	575	585
2/28/09	GARC Championships	572	585
Season Averages		572.31	578.08

Amanda Jeffries

Date	Opponent	SB	AR
10/5/08	at Nevada	541	593
10/10/08	vs. Army	574	590
10/12/08	vs. Air Force	575	588
10/25/08	vs. Kentucky (in Alaska)	575	587
10/26/08	at Alaska-Fairbanks	571	584
11/9/08	at Murray State	575	583
1/16/09	at West Virginia	568	587
1/17/09	vs. NC State (in W. Va.)	567	584
1/23/09	vs. Mississippi	571	584
1/24/09	vs. TCU/Mississippi	570	585
2/7/09	vs. Memphis	571	579
2/14/09	NCAA Qualifier	559	585
2/28/09	GARC Championships	574	590
Season Averages		568.54	586.08

Katie Kostal

Date	Opponent	SB	AR
10/5/08	at Nevada	559	582
10/10/08	vs. Army	567	576
10/12/08	vs. Air Force	575	572
10/25/08	vs. Kentucky (in Alaska)	570	564
10/26/08	at Alaska-Fairbanks	557	576
11/9/08	at Murray State	562	573
1/16/09	at West Virginia	568	577
1/17/09	vs. NC State (in W. Va.)	570	576
1/23/09	vs. Mississippi	569	568
1/24/09	vs. TCU/Mississippi	553	570
2/7/09	vs. Memphis	561	566
2/14/09	NCAA Qualifier	560	569
2/28/09	GARC Championships	582	578
Season Averages		565.62	572.85

Ashley Lane

Date	Opponent	SB	AR
10/5/08	at Nevada	---	---
10/10/08	vs. Army	551	567
10/12/08	vs. Air Force	548	576
10/25/08	vs. Kentucky (in Alaska)	559	548
10/26/08	at Alaska-Fairbanks	558	567
11/9/08	at Murray State	546	570
1/16/09	at West Virginia	528	568
1/17/09	vs. NC State (in W. Va.)	542	554
1/23/09	vs. Mississippi	567	583
1/24/09	vs. TCU/Mississippi	571	578
2/7/09	vs. Memphis	561	568
2/14/09	NCAA Qualifier	570	572
2/28/09	GARC Championships	560	577
Season Averages		555.08	569.00

Sheena Mahloch

Date	Opponent	SB	AR
10/5/08	at Nevada	530	562
10/10/08	vs. Army	555	558
10/12/08	vs. Air Force	565	573
10/25/08	vs. Kentucky (in Alaska)	554	559
10/26/08	at Alaska-Fairbanks	563	560
11/9/08	at Murray State	548	572
1/16/09	at West Virginia	550	571
1/17/09	vs. NC State (in W. Va.)	537	561
1/23/09	vs. Mississippi	546	572
1/24/09	vs. TCU/Mississippi	556	579
2/7/09	vs. Memphis	529	565
2/14/09	NCAA Qualifier	---	576
2/28/09	GARC Championships	---	570
Season Averages		548.45	567.54

Ryann McGough

Date	Opponent	SB	AR
10/5/08	at Nevada	570	577
10/10/08	vs. Army	576	583
10/12/08	vs. Air Force	569	580
10/25/08	vs. Kentucky (in Alaska)	572	583
10/26/08	at Alaska-Fairbanks	579	579
11/9/08	at Murray State	580	580
1/16/09	at West Virginia	588	584
1/17/09	vs. NC State (in W. Va.)	572	584
1/23/09	vs. Mississippi	576	578
1/24/09	vs. TCU/Mississippi	578	576
2/7/09	vs. Memphis	562	581
2/14/09	NCAA Qualifier	568	583
2/28/09	GARC Championships	565	582
Season Averages		573.46	580.77