

# Sports



Craig Andresen/Daily Nebraskan

Dave Hoppen puts up a jump hook against Creighton's Benoit Benjamin. Hoppen out-scored Benjamin 25-23.

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## NIT

NATIONAL INVITATION TOURNAMENT



Craig Andresen/Daily Nebraskan

Eric Williams brings the ball up the court against the Bluejays defense.



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Nebraska's cheerleaders made the long trip to Omaha to do pyramids for Husker fans.

# Hoppen's heroics humble Bluejays

By Stu Pospisil

Nebraska's traveling road show pulled off another miracle Thursday night defeating Creighton, 56-54, in the first round of the National Invitation Tournament, before 9,158 fans at Omaha's Civic Auditorium.

With the win, the Huskers advance to second-round NIT play Monday night against Xavier (Ohio) at Cincinnati's Riverfront Coliseum in a 7:05 CST game.

Nebraska would have been heading home if it hadn't been for Dave Hoppen scoring an unusual three-point play with 10 seconds remaining.

Hoppen had pulled the Huskers into a 54-all tie with a second effort layup with 12 seconds left. He converted the game-winning free throw after Creighton center Benoit Benjamin was called for a technical foul.

"Ben was a little frustrated and he threw the ball on the court," Hoppen said. "I made the signal for the tech. I wanted to help out the official any way

I could."

Nebraska Coach Moe Iba said he was pleased with the victory, which came with some difficulty.

"We got disorganized with three minutes left in the first half," Iba said, "and we had to go with a makeshift lineup in the second half."

Nebraska used a three-guard lineup after Stan Cloudy suffered a strained knee with 10:42 left in the first half. The Huskers had only three starters in the lineup for the final 2:47 after David Ponce fouled out.

Benjamin's two free throws gave Creighton a 52-50 lead on Ponce's foul, then Eric Williams' baseline jumper brought Nebraska into a tie.

Benjamin, with 2:01 left, scored over Hoppen. After a Nebraska miss, Gary Swain was fouled by Nebraska's Brian Carr. The Creighton freshman guard missed the front end of the one-and-one, but Nebraska turned the ball back over.

Hoppen's heroics were set up after Gregory Brandon missed a close-range

shot and Ronnie Smith got the rebound.

Nebraska retained possession following Benjamin's technical and Curtis Moore provided the final margin by making one of two free throws with three seconds left after an intentional foul by Kenny Evans.

Nebraska took a 24-18 lead in the first half, but Creighton outscored the Huskers 13-4 in the final eight minutes, holding the Huskers scoreless for the final 4:36. The Bluejays seized a 31-28 halftime lead.

Nebraska then took a three-point lead twice early in the second half. Creighton outscored the Huskers eight to four in a seven-minute span.

Nebraska regained a three-point lead on two Ponce free throws after a Reed technical and a basket by Hoppen, who scored a game-high 25 points, on the ensuing possession.

"They (the NIT) sent us up here to get beat," Iba said. "Our kids didn't think that."



Craig Andresen/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska's Stan Cloudy (45) and Dave Hoppen (42) wait for a rebound underneath the Husker basket.

## Technical fouls help Huskers win

By Bob Asmussen

The Creighton Bluejays basketball season ended at 17-14 Thursday night due to technical difficulties.

Two critical technicals, one on coach Willis Reed and one on center Benoit Benjamin, certainly resulted in Nebraska's advancement to the second round of the National Invitation Tournament. The Huskers will play Xavier (Ohio), Monday night in Cincinnati at Riverfront Coliseum.

With Creighton up 45-44 with 6:42 left in the game, Nebraska's Eric Williams hit the ball away from Creighton's Vernon Moore and out of bounds. When the officials gave the ball to Nebraska, Reed protested that the ball had been batted out by Williams. When Reed came out on the court, the officials gave him a technical. David Ponce's conversion of the free throws and a resulting Dave Hoppen basket gave Nebraska a three point lead.

"We lost four points because the officials missed the call," a disappointed Reed said.

"He (Moore) was penetrating," Williams said. "I came over to help out and I just reached out and hit it off him." Coach Reed was kind of far up the court and all of a sudden he was out on the floor."

Following the technical on Reed, Creighton was able to get the lead back, 52-50 on two free throws by Benjamin.

With 12 seconds left and Nebraska down by two, Hoppen got the ball in the lane and scored. Benjamin, feeling Hoppen had traveled, slammed the ball to the court and a technical foul was called. Hoppen sank the free throw for a 55-54 lead with ten seconds left.

"I have never seen that call called before," Reed said. "That was a call that unless someone did something very bad they should not have made. If he'd (Benjamin) slammed the ball and it would have gone all the way to the ceiling, maybe then he should have made the call."

Xavier reached the second round with a 50-57 overtime victory at Ohio State. The Musketeers are 21-9 on the year.