

sports

Iba: 'Smart game' is needed for win in Norman

By Larry Sparks

Nebraska basketball fans shouldn't overlook Oklahoma in tonight's regionally televised contest, even though the Sooners are 1-5 in the conference, Husker Coach Moe

Iba said at his Monday press luncheon. "Look what they (Oklahoma) did at Oklahoma State," Iba said. The Sooners took the league-leading Cowboys to the wire Saturday in Stillwater before falling 87-85.

Oklahoma, under the direction of first-year coach Billy Tubbs, has struggled through a 6-12 season thus far and is only 4-4 at home.

The Huskers, however, can boast of only one win at OU's Lloyd Noble Center since it opened five years ago. Nebraska suffered a 78-60 loss at Norman last year, but was able to defeat the Sooners twice in Lincoln, 59-58 during the regular season and 75-68 in the first round of the Big Eight post-season tournament.

"We haven't played well in Norman," Iba said. "We're going to have to play a very smart game to win this year."

The Sooners are paced by 6-7 forward Steve Bajema, who is averaging 11.7 points per game, and 6-4 guard Churck Barnett, who has an 18.7 scoring average and scored 34 points in the loss to Oklahoma State. Iba said Mike Naderer would probably draw the assignment of guarding Barnett.

Oklahoma is averaging nearly 75 points a game and Iba said that since they put up so many shots, they are going to hit sometimes.

"They have a sign in the locker room that says 'Shoot if you're hot and if you're not hot, shoot until you get hot,'" Iba joked.

"They are a good team," he said. "They can score a lot of points."

Tonight's game marks the midpoint of

the conference season and Iba said a win could be a big boost for the Huskers.

"If we can win on the road, we would be sitting pretty good for the first half of the season," he said.

He noted that it still is nearly impossible to foresee the conference finish and said the race may go down to the final weekend.

"Kansas State is going to play well, and Colorado is getting ready to make a run," Iba said.

Tip-off for tonight's game is set for 8:10. Kansas City's KBMA will air the game, which can be seen on Cablevision channel two in Lincoln. The Huskers will return to the Bob Devaney Sports Center Saturday for a game with 15-3 Oklahoma State.

eight	
Conference Basketball Standings	
Oklahoma State	5-1
Nebraska	4-2
Kansas	4-2
Missouri	4-2
Kansas State	3-3
Colorado	2-4
Oklahoma	1-5
Iowa State	1-5

Volleyball players benefit from off-season competition

By Tad Stryker

Even with the season over and a fifth consecutive Big Eight championship safely tucked away, Coach Terry Pettit and the UNL volleyball team are not taking life easy.

The nine underclassmen from last fall's team are going through off-season workouts and are participating in a series of tournaments sponsored by the United States Volleyball Association.

Pettit said the tournaments are good for the volleyball program's future because they give the younger players more game experience. He compared the USVBA-sponsored tournaments to off-season track meets held by the Amateur Athletic Union, saying that both help to develop young talent.

The team practices three times a week, with "six or seven" tournaments on weekends from now until regionals in April, Pettit said. Pettit started the program four years ago in his first season as volleyball coach. Working during the spring semester means almost nonstop volleyball, but Pettit said his team is used to it.

"They're practicing all year round, and they get tired of it," he said, "but I'm sure that concert pianists get tired of playing the piano sometimes, too. It's hard work, but it becomes more palatable with success."

Pettit said the team will miss its four graduating senior members, Reba Govier (two-year All Big Eight), Lori Melcher (two-year All Big Eight) and Marla Lichty and Mindy Martens.

"But we have good young people," he added.

Smith cited as example

It's about time.

Despite leading the Huskers for the past 2½ years, Nebraska's 6-7 center Andre Smith was named the Big Eight player of the week for the first time in his career Monday.

Larry sparks

All too often, the selections are made on how big a name a player has and not on how well he played during the week. The votes are cast only by writers in the Kansas City area and therefore almost always favor the three local favorites—Kansas, Kansas State and Missouri.

The winner was obvious this week. Nebraska won on the road against Iowa State last Wednesday and defeated Kansas at home Saturday. Smith was the leading scorer in both games, so we have our player of the week.

While the honor is well deserved, I have to question why the 1980 All-Conference

In fact, the underclassmen won their first tournament of the semester the weekend of Jan. 24 in Lincoln, defeating a field that included a team of former Husker players.

Pettit pointed out that his nine returning players have a cumulative grade point average of 3.4.

"This shows that they're disciplined people," he said. "They can practice long hours and still do well in their studies."

The program's discipline and hard work pay off, Pettit said, and he singled out a junior member of his team as proof.

Shandi Pettine of Fort Collins, Colo. became a regular starter midway through the regular season.

"She's not a naturally gifted athlete," Pettit said, "but she has many different talents which she has worked to develop. Through training she's become a very complete player."

Her intensity and on-court leadership are her strong points, he said.

Pettine credits the Huskers' off-season program for improving her defense and decreasing the pressure during the regular season and tournaments.

"I feel the program has really helped me the three years I've been in it," she said. "My defense has improved; it's something you can practice a lot. I support the open season. It really helps the freshmen and underclassmen develop."

Pettit said that Pettine is "emotionally consistent" during a game, and is a unifying force on the team.

"Our team tends to get tense and drift off in different directions," Pettine said. "We don't talk to one another enough on-court. I think I help bring us together."

center didn't win the award before the latter stages of his final season.

Nebraska, with its patient offense, doesn't win games with scores in the 90's and 100's, but the Huskers do win games. After a surprising second-place league finish last year, Moe Iba's team appears to be a serious challenger again this season, despite being picked to finish fifth or lower by many writers.

"Andre is the hub of our team," Iba said. "Without Andre, we're a very average basketball team."

Smith, although he is currently fourth in the Big Eight scoring stats, lacks the stats that would allow his true potential to show through. UNL's slow style of ball, which has played a vital role in the Huskers' success, keeps his scoring average down and keeps him from getting the recognition he deserves.

The conference office would be wise to let's overall play, not just his scoring average.

change its system so all writers covering Big Eight basketball are allowed to vote, and



Art Housey (54) of Kansas blocks a Jack Moore (14) shot in the Huskers 57-54 upset of the Jayhawks. Darnell Valentine (14) of Kansas looks on. Photo by Mitch Hrdlicka

Conference honors voting system questioned

the voters would be wise to vote on an athlete. Hopefully, the writers, broadcasters and coaches, who are voting for members of the

Pizza Hut All-Star team will realize Smith's importance to the Nebraska team and will include him in the April 4 classic.

sports shorts

The Husker gymnastics team will attempt to bounce back this weekend from its loss to Iowa State. Nebraska will take to the road Sunday for a meet at Oregon.

Nebraska's wrestling team also will be on the road this weekend. UNL will be in a triangular at Fort Collins, Colo. Friday with Colorado State and Wyoming. Saturday, the Huskers will compete at Northern Colorado.

The women's track team will host the Husker Invitational at the Bob

Devaney Sports Center Saturday. The men's team will host the Kansas Jayhawks in a dual on Saturday.

The men's swimming team will host two duals at the Sports Center this weekend. Nebraska will face Northern Iowa Friday and Oklahoma Saturday.

In other action this weekend, the women's gymnastics team will compete at Iowa Friday and at Iowa State Saturday, while the women's basketball team will travel to Missouri on Friday night.