

Huskers to host comparable Sooner team

Nee up for third 20-win season

By Jeff Singer
Senior Reporter

Last year, Oklahoma twice prevented the Nebraska men's basketball team from winning 20 games.

This year the Sooners are once again the Cornhuskers' hurdle before reaching that same plateau in their regular-season finale.

The two teams, which have identical 19-9 and 7-6 conference records, will battle each other for win No. 20 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center on Sunday at 12:30 p.m.

The game is a sellout and will be televised live by ABC.

Oklahoma owns a four-game winning streak over Nebraska, including a 102-89 win in Norman, Okla., in January. The Sooners beat the Huskers in last year's final game of the regular season and then again less than a week later in the first round of the Big Eight Tournament.

Nebraska coach Danny Nee said he wanted to put an end to the Huskers' woes against the Sooners and reach 20 victories for the third time in his tenure at Nebraska.

"Sunday's a big game because we want 20 wins," Nee said.

Nee said that after the Huskers' 94-83 loss at Kansas on Wednesday, a victory against Oklahoma was necessary for a good placement at next week's Big Eight tourney.

"We want to fight for a higher ranking to get a better seed," he said. "We don't want to put two losses in a row going into the tournament."

Several Nebraska players said positioning themselves for the Big Eight Tournament would be Nebraska's main focus Sunday.

"I think for the Big Eight Tournament, it's going to give us a better seed if we can beat Oklahoma," said guard Eric Piatkowski, who is the Huskers' leading scorer.

Nebraska forward Bruce Chubick said a win over the Sooners would help the Huskers' pursuit of a third-straight trip to the NCAA Tournament.

"It's important for us for the Big Eight Tournament and it's important for an NCAA bid," Chubick said. "I don't know if we're a lock now. I'd

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Robin Trimarchi/DN

Nebraska senior center Derrick Chandler goes up for a shot against Colorado. Chandler will play in his final home game of the year Sunday when the Huskers host Oklahoma at 12:30 p.m.

NU depth to be problem for OU

By Susie Arth
Senior Reporter

Somewhere, somehow, something has to give.

When the Oklahoma men's basketball team travels to Bob Devaney Sports Center Sunday, it will be a matchup of two identical teams — at least on paper.

Both teams have posted 19-9 records overall, both teams are 7-6 in the Big Eight, both teams will be playing their final regular season game and both teams are vying for a bid in the NCAA Tournament.

Sooner coach Billy Tubbs said he expected the game to be an outstanding matchup.

"Any time these two teams get together, it's going to be a good game," he said. "The team that wins will get a quality win and the team that loses will get a quality loss."

Regardless of the outcome, Tubbs said he expected both squads to make it into the NCAA Tournament.

"I don't think a loss eliminates either team from the NCAA Tournament," he said. "Both teams deserve it."

"I think we're two of the finest teams around."

Tubbs, who is 6-6 in the Bob Devaney Sports Center, said he looked forward to playing in Lincoln.

"I've had pretty good success in Lincoln," he said. "It's a challenge to play there, they have great crowds, so it gets your team ready to play."

Tubbs said the Cornhuskers' depth would pose a problem, and there are eight or nine Huskers he was concerned with.

"They don't have a weak position," he said. "(Eric) Piatkowski is an outstanding player, and I think we held (Derrick) Chandler to 20 rebounds in a game last year.

"Nebraska is a well-balanced, outstanding team."

The Sooners, he said, would like to come home with a win so they could build momentum for the Big Eight Tournament in Kansas City, Mo., March 12-14.

"Every game is a tuncup for the Big Eight and postseason tourna-

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Pepin says last meets important for Huskers

By Tony West
Staff Reporter

The Cornhusker track and field teams are down to their last chances.

After the women's team took first in the Big Eight Indoor Championships last weekend and the men placed second, Nebraska will try to qualify even more athletes for next weekend's NCAA Indoor Championships in Indianapolis.

The Husker Last Chance Meet, which is specifically designed to qualify athletes nationally, will begin at 11:30 a.m. Saturday at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Nebraska will also send a contingent of athletes to the Cyclone Last Chance Meet in Ames, Iowa, today.

Husker coach Gary Pepin said he hoped his teams' performances last weekend would carry over.

"The women had a fine meet and competed well," he said. "The men also competed well but just didn't do everything they had to do to win."

Pepin said Nebraska would send the men's mile and two-mile relay teams and the women's mile relay team to Iowa State. The men's relay teams won the Big Eight Championship on the same track last weekend.

"We aren't taking that many over," Pepin said. "Our relays have a good chance."

Only four Nebraska athletes — Kevin Coleman in the shot put, Robert Thomas in the long jump and triple jump, Riley Washington in the 55-meter dash and Paulette Mitchell in the shot put — have qualified for the NCAA Championships.

Another 12 Huskers, including sprinter Shanelle Porter in three different events, have already posted provisional qualifying marks.

Pepin said the Huskers should be able to capitalize on their last chances this weekend.

"We have a bunch of people who are close," Pepin said. "These are very important meets."

NU women prepared to encounter Big Eight tournament, Beck says

Players mentally, physically ready

By Beau Finley
Staff Reporter

Nebraska is looking for a little of the same and a little something different when they play this weekend in the Big Eight Women's Basketball Tournament.

The Cornhuskers will travel to Salina, Kan., to compete for an automatic bid into the NCAA Tournament. Nebraska starts play Saturday with a 6:30 p.m. quarterfinal game against Iowa State at the Bicentennial Center.

The Huskers finished the regular season in second place in the Big Eight and ranked No. 21 nationally.

Coach Angela Beck said the NU team, which has not been to the NCAA Tournament in five years, is in an excellent frame of mind for the tournament.

"(Practice) has been solid despite the distractions," Beck said. "We've had good focus . . . I'm very pleased with the intensity and our defense."

Defense has been a strong point for

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Scott Maurer/DN

the Huskers this year. Nebraska has held opponents to 43 percent shooting from the field and 66 points per game on the season.

A key to the defensive effort for the

Huskers has been the play of Meggan Yedsena, who leads the team in steals.

Yedsena said the team practices had been easier this week, but that the Huskers were still concentrating on their strengths.

"The practices have been scmi-hard," Yedsena said. "We're focusing a lot on defense."

In the past, the tournament has not been kind to Nebraska. The Huskers have won only two games in six previous trips to the Big Eight Tournament and were beaten last year by Colorado in the semifinals.

Nebraska has never won the tournament and has never been to a tournament final.

But Beck said the Huskers, who have not been beaten on a neutral court this season, are prepared for the test.

"We are ready," Beck said. "We could play tomorrow. We have a real positive attitude."

Nebraska has every reason to be positive against the Cyclones in the first round. The Huskers defeated Iowa State 89-40 last Saturday in Lincoln.

Beck said she expected a much

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