

Sooners shuck Huskers' NIT hopes, 65-56

by JIM JOHNSTON
Sports Editor

There was a Nebraska victory and sole possession of second place to be had at the Coliseum Tuesday night. But it was the Cornhuskers who were had, 65-56.

The Oklahoma Sooners buried the Huskers worse than any blizzard could do using a zone defense to roll to their seventh Big Eight win against four defeats.

Nebraska, which fought back the last two weeks for a second-place tie, dropped to fourth with a 6-4 record.

Missouri's date with Oklahoma State was postponed again Tuesday and so the Tigers took over second without dribbling a ball. Oklahoma slips into the No. 3 slot.

Nebraska, the nation's No. 4 shooting team from the field, shot a dismal 37 per cent in the second half as the Sooners went from a 44-40 deficit to a

52-44 lead within five minutes.

Trailing 35-29 at the half, the Huskers took the lead for the first time (42-40) on an Al Nissen fielder with 12:42 remaining. Tom Gregory's 20-footer gave the Huskers a four-point cushion before Oklahoma exploded for 12 straight points.

The Sooners' defense immobilized Nebraska. Marvin Stewart, who didn't score in the first half after collecting three quick fouls, just didn't have it.

And neither did anybody else on the Husker team. The guards couldn't hit. The center and forwards couldn't get open inside. For that matter, the Huskers didn't score a field goal inside the treethrow in the second half line except for one Stewart layup.

Cornhusker coach Joe Cipriano blamed the loss to the lack of timing in our offense.

Marvin Stewart felt being overconfident had something to do with it.

"We just got outplayed," said Cipriano. "I'll have to look at the movies to figure out what it was, but there was just no timing in our offense."

Stewart, who couldn't remember another time in his cage history that he didn't score in a half, sat in front of his locker in a quiet dressing room. The game had been over for 20 minutes, but Stewart was still in his basketball uniform.

"I just don't know what happened," said Marv. "We were flat and a little overconfident. We had a good road trip and I think we might have been a little overconfident for this one."

The Huskers fell behind quickly in the game 4-0 before tying things up at 4-4. But Oklahoma's zone and Bobby Jack's shooting quickly gave the half to the Sooners.

"We rarely use a zone," admitted Oklahoma coach John MacLeod, "but when our big men got into foul trouble we had to do something."

Jack, Oklahoma's handy 6-5

forward, netted 17 points in the first half and finished the game with 23 to capture scoring honors. Clifford Ray added 14 while Paul Crowell, who did not start, scored all 13 of his points in the second half.

Chuck Jura finished with 17 to lead the Cornhuskers.

Sooners gain NIT edge

Oklahoma coach John MacLeod called Tuesday's clash with Nebraska "the battle for third."

But he knows it goes a little farther than that. The Sooners now appear to have the inside track on second place in the Big Eight and an invitation to the NIT.

The Sooners (7-4) now hold third place, but have only three games remaining while Missouri and Nebraska each have four.

Missouri and Nebraska have two extremely difficult tasks remaining. The Tigers must travel to Boulder, Colo. and entertain Kansas at home.

The Cornhuskers travel to Columbia, Mo., Saturday for a

must game and close the season at Lawrence, Kan., where the Jayhawks are undefeated for the season.

Oklahoma entertains Iowa State and visits Kansas and Oklahoma State on the road. There's really only one extremely tough one there.

Another big advantage for the Sooners is the overall season record. Oklahoma stands 17-6 on the year while Missouri is 14-7.

The Huskers are 16-6 on the year, but now face an uphill struggle for second in the Big Eight and an NIT invitation.

Nebr.	FG-FGA	FT-FTA	TP
Nissen	4-7	2-3	10
Stewart	3-11	3-6	9
Jura	6-9	5-9	17
Chall.	1-2	0-0	2
Riehl	0-4	0-0	0
Gregory	3-4	0-0	6
Peterson	5-8	0-0	10
Watts	1-4	0-0	2
TOTALS	23-49	10-18	56

Oklahoma	FG-FGA	FT-FTA	TP
Jack	10-16	3-4	23
Ray	5-7	4-6	14
Martin	2-7	1-3	5
Pettes	2-7	1-1	5
Crowell	4-4	5-7	13
Yule	2-3	1-4	5
Gorman	0-1	0-0	0
TOTALS	25-45	15-25	65

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