

## Losses inspire Huskers for next OSU clash

Incentive should be no problem when the Huskers tangle with Oklahoma State University this Saturday, according to Coach Joe Cipriano, despite the Cowboys' 2-8 Big 8 record and seventh place standing.

He pointed out two recent Husker encounters with OSU should prevent the team from becoming overconfident.

One was a contest earlier this season in Stillwater, which UNL lost, 79-66. The other was the Cowboys' visit to the Coliseum last year, when they captured a 68-55 decision.

The 2:10 p.m. televised game in the Coliseum will be the third meeting of the teams this year. Besides the Stillwater game, the squads met in the preseason Big 8 tournament, where the Huskers won, 69-62.

One of the big differences in the two previous games this season was the offensive output of Husker Jerry Fort. In the first matchup, Fort scored 31 points, his second highest career total. In the second game, he scored an all-time low of only four points.

"We had a poor game (in Stillwater)," Cipriano said. "We did a poor job of handling the basketball."

Fort has had few problems putting the ball through the hoop since then, raising his average to 19.2 points a game, third best in the league. He had 33 points in a record breaking performance against the University of Missouri last Saturday.

The Cowboys feature last year's Big 8 scoring and rebounding leaders. Kevin Fitzgerald scored 21.3 points to lead league scorers, while Andy Hopson

snared 235 rebounds to set a conference record.

Both players led the Cowboys in the earlier win over UNL. Fitzgerald scored 21 points to tie UNL's Tom Novak for game scoring honors. Hopson grabbed 24 rebounds, the most by a Husker opponent this year.

"We've got to block him off the boards," Cipriano said. "He's got good jumping ability and timing."

Other starters for OSU are guards K.C. Kincaide and Ronnie Daniel and forward Lafayette Threatt.

The Huskers now are fourth place in the Big 8 with a 4-5 league mark. Their overall record is 11-10, with a 9-1 mark at home.

Immediately after the varsity game, the Husker junior varsity will play Platte College.



Fred Coker guards Tom Novak during a practice session.

## Cager enjoys playing second fiddle

Fred Coker plays basketball for UNL, but don't expect to see him when the Huskers take on Oklahoma State University Saturday in the Coliseum. To see Coker in action, one should go to the pregame warmups, since most of his time this year has been spent on the bench.

Only when the Huskers have taken a substantial lead or have fallen hopelessly behind does he stand a chance of going on. While most players would be disillusioned about this situation, Coker couldn't be happier.

"I told Coach Cipriano at the beginning of the year I'd be perfectly content playing a secondary role," he said, "and that's the way it turned out."

This is his first year at UNL after two sessions at El Camino, Calif., Junior College. There he made the all-state team both years.

Since he has played only minimally, the 6 ft. 5 in. Coker has found other ways to help the team.

One thing he tries to do is keep the team inspired. "I want to see everybody do good," he said.

He does this by taking on somewhat of a cheerleading role during games, doing his best to keep the morale of the team up by encouraging the players on the court.

After Husker wins, Coker is one of the most vocal at the postgame locker room festivities.

He also said his play during practice, along with the other Husker reserves, has been a contributing factor to the team's relative success this year. When the second string makes the starting five work hard in practice, they play better in games, he explained.

"It's the second team that makes the first team good," he said.

Coker came to UNL for a variety of reasons, among them endorsements by former Husker football players Bill Sloey and Zaven Yarian, who also attended El Camino.

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He has enjoyed his stay so far, with the exception of the December cold spell, which forced the Redondo Beach native inside.

"I couldn't stand it," he said. "I felt like a bear in hibernation."

This winter also marked the first time Coker has come into contact with snow. He had seen snow from a distance in the California mountains, but he always refrained from closer inspection because "I was always paranoid of getting sick."

The experience he has gained this year should help him in his drive for a starting spot next season, he said. Starting status should be the goal of every player, he added.

"Any player that doesn't have that kind of attitude shouldn't be playing."

If all Husker cagers accept the Fred Coker approach, next year's prospects could be very promising. As Coker said, "We're going to surprise a lot of people."

## 'Sheep' led to slaughter Saturday?

By Steve Taylor

Saturday afternoon another hopeful will attempt to end the Husker track team's long winning streak at the Stadium track.

It will be UNL's last home indoor meet of the year. The team trying to snap UNL's 25-meet home winning streak will be Colorado State University, a member of the Western Athletic Conference. Husker Coach Frank Sevigne called the Rams a balanced team with a strong middle distance crew.

Since the Huskers' main strength also is the middle distance men, there might be some fierce individual battles when the two teams meet. The starting time of the meet has been changed to 4 p.m. to avoid a conflict with the UNL-Oklahoma State University basketball game.

Sevigne, the Husker track general for 18 years, was honored this week as last year's District 5 Coach of the Year. Sevigne said modestly that the award was nothing to be overjoyed about, that it was probably given to him because of UNL's Big 8 indoor win last year.

If winning the Big 8 indoor is the deciding factor for the coaching honor, Sevigne's chances of winning again are pretty healthy this year. Against Brigham Young University (BYU) last Saturday, the Huskers certainly looked the part of Big 8 champions, as they toppled the Cougars, 70-61. Sevigne says some UNL football players were instrumental in the victory.

"Our four football players contributed eight points for us, and those eight points were the difference of the meet," Sevigne said.

Another pleasing development to Sevigne was Bob Unger's upset of BYU ace Paul Cummings in the mile.

"While Cummings as one of the better college milers in the country, that win was quite a feather in Bob's hat," the coach said.

Unger says of the home meets: "They're almost boring sometimes. The only close meet besides BYU since I've been here was against Indiana last year. We usually beat our opponents pretty bad."

Unger runs about 10 miles a day. He said it takes his heart about two or three hours to settle down after practice. But he said it's worth while in the long run.

## sports shorts

The UNL women's basketball team takes a 6-4 record to Fremont's Midland College for the state college basketball tournament today through Sunday. Twelve teams are involved in the single elimination competition.

Nebraska's first game is at 12:45 p.m. Saturday against the winner of the Friday contest between Creighton University and Chadron State College. The state champion advances to the Region 6 tournament in Brookings, S.D.

Husker gymnasts close out their dual schedule Saturday when they take on Oklahoma University and New Mexico University in Norman, Okla. The team's record now stands at 3-1.

The UNL women's swimming team travels to Oklahoma State University for a Saturday meet. The team raised its record to 5-2 with a 78-16 victory over Creighton

University Wednesday. Phyllis Thagard, Debbie Petersen, Kathy Anderson, Ella Austin, Cheryl Cress, Mary Amstrup, Jann Martindale and Ruth Spencer all won.

The Nebraska state high school wrestling championships begin today and continue through Saturday at Pershing Auditorium.

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