

sports

'Too many close losses'

Season frustrates Cipriano

By Scott Jones

Reviewing Nebraska's basketball season, critics usually said the Huskers needed more height, more offensive punch or simply more talent.

But coach Joe Cipriano probably would have settled for a dozen more points at the right times. After winning their first four conference games, the Huskers lost seven of their final 10 games, two by one point, at Colorado and Kansas State, and two in overtime at home, against Oklahoma and Kansas.

"It was a very frustrating year for us as far as close games go," Cipriano said. "If we would have won two or three of those close ones that we lost, we would have been right in there for some type of post-season tournament bid."

Huskers fourth

But Kansas, Kansas State and Missouri got the bids instead of the Huskers, who were fourth in the Big 8 at 7-7 and 14-12 overall for the second consecutive year.

In addition to a tournament bid, a few points in the right places might have silenced Cipriano's perennial critics.

After 12 years at Nebraska, with a 165-101 record, Cipriano said he is used to criticism. "If the mailman stopped at every barking dog he'd never get the mail delivered," he said.

Cipriano said he hopes this year's junior college and high school recruits can help stifle any future howling.

The national signing date is April 9, and the Huskers have six scholarships to offer. "We need a strong rebounder," a "mobile forward" and a good guard, Cipriano said.

Strong guards

He said the Huskers' "guard play is going to

be strong" next year, but career scoring leader Jerry Fort and Steve Willis, seniors, will be leaving only freshman Eric Coard for the following year.

"We're looking at quite a few kids in Nebraska but we haven't decided yet," he said. "We're going to wait until we've seen all the kids play (nationally) before we decide."

The new fieldhouse has helped recruiting, Cipriano said, but noted that it is uncertain whether the Huskers are going to begin next year's schedule there.

Cipriano praised Bob Siegel, Coard, Willis and Fort, who broke four records, for their performances this year.

Siegel improved

"Bob Siegel was one of the most improved players," especially defensively and in rebounding, Cipriano said. "I think you're going to see him improve next year on his offense."

Cipriano said crowd favorite Ron Taylor will have to follow Siegel's lead if he expects to play.

"If Ron Taylor expects to play for us next year he's going to have to improve and the only way he can do that is work hard this summer," he said.

Depending on how the other conference schools recruit, Cipriano said Nebraska "will be rated up there pretty high."

He said Missouri and Kansas State should be strong based on returning players. Kansas State's NCAA tournament victory over Pennsylvania last Saturday was "a big win for our conference," Cipriano added.

He said Arizona State, an 83-62 victor over Nebraska, could be the surprise team of the tournament.



Photo by Steve Bomer

Husker basketball coach Joe Cipriano

sports shorts

Entries are due today at 4:30 p.m. for teams participating in men's slow and fast pitch softball, Co-Recreation slow pitch softball and women's slow pitch softball.

Entry fee is \$5 and all play begins April 1.

Also due are entries for women's tennis doubles and Co-Rec paddleball and tennis. For further information contact the Recreation Office, 1740 Vine St., 472-3467.

The NU trap shooting club will hold try-outs Saturday at the Lincoln Gun Club, 4855 N. 48th St., at 1 p.m.

The team is preparing for the Cornhusker trap shoot in Norfolk on April 12. For additional information call Frank Hoppe, 467-1807.

UNL's golf and tennis team will be on the road this weekend, as the golfers travel to Galveston, Tex., for the Galveston Invitational. The netmen journey to Crete to

meet Doane College today, and South Dakota Saturday.

The first game of the UNL baseball team's road trip to Oral Roberts University was postponed Wednesday because of wet grounds.

Husker coach Joe Cipriano announced next season's UNL basketball schedule Wednesday with 12 home games for the new sports complex.

If construction on the complex is completed as planned, Illinois will be the Huskers' first opponent Nov. 28. Also on the schedule will be Washington, which is Cipriano's alma mater.

Cipriano called the schedule, which also includes Vanderbilt, Stanford, Northwestern and South Carolina, as the toughest one since he came to Nebraska.

"The home schedule will be a great way to open the new coliseum," Cipriano said. "The tough pre-season games will certainly prepare our players for the Big 8 season."

Netters start spring season in Big 8 cellar; weekend meet set

High academic grade-point averages and last place finishes in the Big 8 Conference have characterized the Nebraska tennis squad the past few seasons, but third-year coach Jim Porter says things will be different this year.

Porter said the overall grade-point average for his players will drop from the 3.8 of last year's top six players to about 3.6 this season, but that the team has an excellent chance of vacating the conference cellar after three consecutive seasons there.

Porter's optimism was not dashed by a 7-2 loss to Northwest Missouri State two weeks ago.

"I was hoping to start off with a win, but Northwest Missouri has a real good team," he said. "There were some close matches; we could have made it closer."

Scored two

Sophomore John Duncan won his singles match and

freshman Jeff Schmah and junior Rich Cohen won in doubles competition for Nebraska's two points.

The team began practicing outdoors Monday, which is none too early, according to Porter. The squad faces Doane College and South Dakota State in a triangular meet Friday and Saturday at Crete.

"Doane has a fair team but I don't think they're as strong as they have been in the past. South Dakota State has two pretty good players," Porter said.

South Dakota State beat Nebraska 5-4 last season, but the UNL team is much stronger this year, Porter said. "We're hoping to get two victories this weekend," he said.

Doubles competition will be Friday night and singles matches are scheduled for Saturday morning and afternoon.

Some problems

Porter, despite his

optimism, did admit the team has some problems. He cited a lack of tournament experience, not enough outdoor practice and a rough Big 8 schedule as major problems facing his team.

"Outside of the Pacific Coast and some of the better Southern schools, I'd say Big 8 tennis is comparable to any other collegiate tennis in the nation," Porter said.

The team will get their first look at Big 8 play over spring break when they participate in the Oral Roberts Tournament at Tulsa March 27 to 29. Schools from the Big 8, Big 10 and Missouri Valley conferences will compete, Porter said.

Former star 'not just athlete'

By Becky Morgan

Kermit McMurray, UNL's assistant recreation director, has not picked up a basketball since 1968 when he ended a career that included All-American honors as a junior college player.

There were too many other horizons to encounter, McMurray said. "I didn't consider myself just an athlete."

Athletics provided McMurray with what he called the stepping stones to achieve his long range goal of furthering his education.

If all goes well, McMurray will receive his doctoral degree in education and administration from UNL this spring.

Basketball second

"Basketball provided me with a challenge," he said, "but it was always second to my education. Basketball is what gave me the opportunity to get a college education."

McMurray, 6 ft. 4 in., was an All-American and all-conference selection at Crowley Junior College in Kansas where he played center and forward. He also was named the most inspirational player of the year.

He transferred from Crowley to Colorado University (CU) at Boulder. He chose CU because of its academic program.

"I had a bone to pick," he said. "It had been said that I didn't have the ability to do good academic work. I was out to prove something."

McMurray received a full-ride scholarship at CU and played basketball there, starting with the 1965 season. His career ended with his graduation in 1968, with a master of arts degree in recreation.

Knee condition

A knee condition caused by weakened ligaments and calcium deposits prevented McMurray from reaching his full potential.

Ironically, McMurray said, he had his best games against Nebraska.

His decision not to pursue athletics but rather to concentrate on academics was influenced by his high school coach in Kansas City, Mo.

"He helped me put things in the proper perspective," McMurray said.

Influence for better

His doctorate in education and administration, according to McMurray, will mean an opportunity to be at a decision-making level—one that influences people's lives for the better.

McMurray chose Nebraska because of what he called its academic challenge and contributions. He hopes to make several contributions of his own upon receiving his Ph. D.

"I hope to maximize all the talents that I have and be available to anybody who can use my skills," he said.



Kermit McMurray