

sports

Husker victory sends Gophers back to burrows

By Jim Kay and L. Kent Wolgamott

The sign on the Minnesota locker room wall was ominous.

"WANTED," it read. "NEBRASKA CORNHUSKERS. Tuesday, Nov. 28. No. 22 and No. 54. REVENGE AT LINCOLN!"

The Golden Gophers of Minnesota were in town Tuesday to try and avenge a 63-49 loss from a year ago at the hands of Joe Cipriano's UNL basketball team. That was when No. 54, Carl McPipe, and No. 22, Brian Banks, of Nebraska led UNL to victory in Minneapolis.

But a poised and controlled Nebraska team spoiled any hopes of Minnesota revenge last night with a 58-48 win at the Bob Devaney Sports Center before 12,334 fans.

Inspired by the play of injured teammate Carl McPipe, who had 14 points and eight rebounds, and led by the second half play of Brian Banks and Bob Moore, the Huskers capitalized on 21 Minnesota turnovers and stole the ball 12 times in their defensively oriented victory.

"Just him being out there really helped the team," Banks said of McPipe. "He ain't never played with a lot of pain. He had to do it."

"He better had done it or there goes our friendship. I was pretty proud of him. "Carl really intimidated them. He's so big and strong, he really throws people

out of there."

McPipe, whose injured right hand was bleeding after the game, replied to his teammates comments saying:

"For this team, the way they're hustling, if I'd had a broken leg I'd try to get a wheelchair and wheel down the floor."

"It was hurting but there wasn't time to think about it hurting."

"They say it would be a different story, well they know, I'm just glad it wasn't different..."

Cipriano credited the win to the Huskers' defense and patience on offense. He said the team used three different offenses before cracking the Minnesota match up zone late in the first half.

Cipriano also praised the play of Banks, who led the Huskers in scoring with 15 and had five steals.

"Brian Banks is back to normal," Cipriano said. "I'm glad to see him playing extremely well."

"Key steals by Brian made the difference. They really helped us."

Cipriano said he felt defensive pressure would bother the young Minnesota team, but said the Huskers did not "get up and after them in the first half."

However, Cipriano said Minnesota was a good team.

"We caught them at a good time, they're going to be an excellent basketball team. I'm glad we're playing them now not

in January or February."

Gopher coach Jim Dutcher lamented the fact his team could not hold on to the ball better following the game.

"We had enough turnovers for a season," Dutcher said. "Our play was awful. There was no initiative. We just stood around and looked at each other. Bright spots? Who you gonna look at? Nobody stands out."

Dutcher was also quick to credit the Huskers.

"You really have to give them credit," he said. "They're a good defensive team. But their defense didn't bother us. We just turned the ball over without a shot too many times."

Minnesota stayed close until going into a man-to-man defense part way through the second half.

"I wanted some motion on defense," Dutcher said. "So we went to the man-to-man. There was too much standing around on offense so I thought maybe this would help on defense. But there was no leadership out there."

"When Kevin started missing, I knew the game was over."

Kevin McHale was the Gophers' leading scorer with 14 points and also the leading rebounder with 10.

"The ball just didn't drop tonight," McHale said. "It was just one of those evenings because we were taking shots that normally fall."

"They executed well and we didn't pressure them enough on defense. We're still a young team, with two or three freshmen. The turnovers are just a part of our youth."

Senior Bob Moore said his quickness made up the height disadvantage he had playing at forward.

"I just try to beat them to the ball. Carl, Andre Smith and Curt (Hedburg) were doing the real heavy board work, I just wanted to catch a few laying on the ground."

He said his scoring came as part of the flow of the game.

"I just take them as they come," Moore said. "When it was there, I just went ahead and took it."

Cipriano said the defensive effort compensated for Nebraska's poor shooting in the game. The Huskers hit only .413 from the field and .421 from the free throw line.

However, McPipe said his hand bothered him when he shot free throws.

"I was setting the ball in the palm of my hand and I should have been setting it on my fingertips. By the time I figured it out I didn't get any more free throws," said McPipe who missed all four of his free throw attempts.

The Huskers will play another Big Ten school, Purdue, at the Sports Center Saturday night.

Photos By Bob Pearson

