

sports

Husker cagers to meet Wildcats in semifinals

By Paul Martin

The Nebraska Cornhusker basketball team, which has surprised its critics all year, will attempt to do it again Friday night in the semifinals of the Big Eight post-season tournament at the Kemper Arena in Kansas City.

The Huskers will face the Kansas State Wildcats who reached the semifinals after blasting Iowa State, 101-87, at Manhattan Tuesday night.

Although most "experts" picked the Huskers to finish anywhere from fifth to last place in the conference, they finished in a second place tie with KSU.

Although both teams had identical 8-6 conference records, the Wildcats were awarded the tournament's second seeding as a result of splitting their games with conference champion Missouri during the regular season. Nebraska was defeated twice by the Tigers.

Husker center Andre Smith, who was named to both the UPI and AP All Big Eight teams, said he never had any doubts about UNL's potential.

Never quit

"We had some people last year who I knew could play but didn't because of seniority," Smith said. "All the critics looked at was who we had lost from last year. They didn't look at what we had coming back. These guys never quit," he said.

One of "these guys" is 5-9 guard Jack Moore, who ignited the Huskers at the start of the second half in their 75-68 opening round win against Oklahoma.

Moore scored 10 of his game high 21 points in the first eight minutes after intermission, helping the Huskers gain a 16-point lead that the Sooners never overcame.

While the Huskers split with KSU during the regular season, they may be facing a Wildcat team that only slightly resembles the one they split with.

Kansas State, who had averaged 63 points a game in Big Eight play, set a new tournament record for most points scored in a single game in their 101 point explosion against Iowa State. The "offensive point production problem" that Head Coach Jack Hartman described earlier in the year appears to have vanished.

Double figures

Rolando Blackman, the only unanimous selection to both the AP and UPI's All Big Eight teams, scored 22 points against the Cyclones to lead a parade of five Wildcats scoring in the double figures.

Playing Kansas State in Kansas City is no easy task, according to acting UNL Head Coach Moe Iba.

"When you go to K.C. you're playing KSU on their home ground," Iba said. "They are tough down there. They have a good team. We'll have to be ready," he said.

The NU-KSU winner will meet the winner of the Missouri-Kansas game in the Championship game scheduled for 8:10 p.m. Saturday night at the Kemper Arena.

Missouri and Kansas are the only teams the Huskers did not split with during the regular season. The Tigers defeated Nebraska twice while the Huskers did the same to Kansas' Jayhawks.

The tournament's champion is assured of a spot in the NCAA tournament, which begins its regional playoffs on March 6.

Although Iba felt his Huskers showed a lot of character in defeating OU after losing to them by 18 in their regular season final, he said it was important that his team did not

get satisfied.

"We have gotten satisfied with what we have done some times this year," Iba said. "We have got to get them (Husker players) mad."



Photo by Mitch Hrdlicka
Ray Collins (12) shoots over Oklahoma's Aaron Curry (10) in the Huskers 75-68 win over the Sooners last Tuesday night.

LSU crowd could aid gymnasts

By Ron Powell

Although traveling to Baton Rouge, La. Sunday for a dual meet against LSU is not the same as competing in the Bob Devaney Sports Center, UNL men's gymnastics Coach Francis Allen would probably agree it is more friendly than New Haven, Conn., the home of Southern Connecticut State College.

Last Friday night, Southern Connecticut, currently tied for fifth with Oklahoma in the nation's gymnastics rankings, stunned the top-ranked and defending NCAA champion Huskers 279.70-278.30. And Allen said the "very rowdy" crowd of 3,480 was a factor in Southern Connecticut's outstanding performance.

"At one point in the meet, one judge gave one of our performers a 9.2 and another judge gave him a 9.6 and somebody yelled 'shoot the judge' and the crowd went crazy," Allen said. "One of our judges, John Scheer (who

has judged in three NCAA championships and the 1979 World Games) said he was getting a little nervous."

But Baton Rouge should provide a friendlier atmosphere for the Huskers. It will be the team's first visit to LSU since winning the national championship there in 1979.

Allen said there was a crowd of 10,000 at the Mardi Gras Invitational earlier this month at LSU in which Husker all-arounders Jim Hartung and Phil Cahoy finished first and second respectively. He added that he expects a good crowd for Sunday's meet which also will feature a Husker-LSU women's dual.

"The LSU crowd is a pretty good one," Allen said. "The crowds down there love Jim (Hartung) and Phil (Cahoy). They did very well down there in some meets when they were in high school and the crowd really took to them."

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Photo by Mitch Hrdlicka
Husker Jon Jones, a freshman from St. Andrews, Jamaica, leaps to a win in long jump competition in the Husker Invitational.

Coach: consistency needed for Big Eight track victory

By Joni Kramer

Entering the Big Eight meet with a third-place Big Eight ranking in the coaches' poll, the Nebraska men's track team will have to "get on all cylinders" to take the title, according to Coach Frank Sevigne.

Nebraska will be host for the Big Eight men's track meet at the Bob Devaney Sports Center this weekend. Preliminaries begin tonight at 7:30, with field event finals beginning at 1 p.m. Saturday and afternoon and track events starting at 2 p.m.

According to Sevigne, the meet could turn out many different ways, depending on team performances. Kansas is picked as the favorite in the Big Eight coaches' poll, but Sevigne says the meet could go to Kansas State, Oklahoma, Iowa State, Nebraska or Missouri.

"Kansas looks the best on paper," said Sevigne, "but that doesn't always hold up."

The Huskers are led by co-captain Scott Poehling, who is the defending Big Eight champion in the 880-yard run and is to run two events Saturday. He has set Nebraska

indoor records in the 600-, 880- and 1000-yard runs and in the mile, two mile and distance medley teams. However, Sevigne says he's not sure which two events Poehling will run Saturday.

Other top performances should come from Charles Lawrence in the 300-yard dash, Everton DaCosta in the 600-yard dash and Randy Raymond, who's already cleared 16-8 in the pole vault, Sevigne said.

"These individual performances, if at their top level, if combined with consistently good team scoring should give us a good showing at the Big Eight," Sevigne said.

"We have a good mental attitude," Sevigne said. "It's strong and should help us if it's carried through the whole season."

After three meets, the team has a 2-1 record. Its only loss was to Kansas.

The Big Eight meet is the highlight of the team's schedule, and according to Sevigne the Huskers need to maintain consistency to win.

"We'll have to perform at a better than or average level consistently," Sevigne said. "Scoring will have to come from many events, not just one area."