

Team effort spells success for women's basketball

By Ward Wright Triplett III

The UNL women's basketball team lacks the height and the one or two players that most teams have who can dictate a game's pace by putting in 20 or more points every night. Despite this, Saturday's 76-70 win against St. Louis raised the team's record to a respectable 8-4.

The reason, according to Coach Colleen Matsuhara, is that the team has been able to depend on somebody to come through in every situation, and because of Matsuhara's allowance of playing time, anyone of the ten may be the top players on a given night. It may not develop any stars or national scoring leaders, but it has produced a winning record.

From this group, one who stands out is Janet Smith, the tallest player on the team at 6-2. Smith recently became the leading career rebounder for the young Husker

program, and as a junior, still has a year to go. As a scorer, a 12-point average places her second only to Kathy Hagerstrom, and a 34-point performance against Central Missouri last week on 17 of 20 field goal attempts was the best ever by a Nebraskan.

Team effort important

Still, Smith falls into a pattern as being a part of a team that doesn't dwell on individual performance.

Does being the leading rebounder in Nebraska's history mean anything to her? The answer was a simple "no".

Smith said she never set any personal goals for the season and doesn't intend to. In fact, she even downplays the 34 point game, as she was quick to point out that Hagerstrom added 21 points in that contest.

"Their tallest player was only 6-0, and they went down to 5-10 after that," Smith,

a social science major, said. "We were just able to get inside on them better than other teams we've played, plus Ami Beiringer was hitting from the outside to keep them honest so they weren't able to guard us too close. That's why that happened."

The best thing about UNL basketball this year, according to Smith, is the team's ability to work together.

"It's a great team this year. We all get along real well, everybody likes everybody, it's great. We have a coach that works with us, cares about us, and nobody has any gripes. There's no dissension that I know of on our team, and on a major college team that's just unheard of. It's just a lot of fun to play this year."

Smith's basketball career began as a sophomore at Omaha Burke, when her height caught the attention of Bulldog Coach Karen Petersen, who asked her to try out for the team.

"She just said, hey, you're tall, and it seemed like fun, so I went ahead and played," Smith recalled.

After situating Smith in the starting center position her junior year, Peterson surrounded her with enough good players by the next season so that Smith led the team to an impressive 20-5 record and a state title. A scholarship to UNL followed, and after learning to sit on the bench as a freshman, Smith became known as one of the team's leading players last year.

"Last year we played a slow down control game, now we play a running control," Smith said of the teams' differences. "We're not really any taller, but we have a quick, snappy offense this year, and our defense is getting good in that we're in a lot better condition to do that now."

Well balanced scoring

Like Matsuhara, Smith felt the team's strongest point is that the scoring is so well balanced.

UNO wrestling tourney on NETV this weekend

Taped coverage of wrestling competition from the UNO fieldhouse will be televised on Sports Nebraska over all stations of the Nebraska ETV Network Saturday at 7:30 p.m.

Featuring finals action taped earlier in the day, the coverage includes eight teams from seven area colleges—Chadron State College, Kearney State College, Nebraska Wesleyan, two teams from UNO, Coe

"Last year, teams knew that if they could stop Dianne (DeVigna) they could pretty much shut us down. This time they know that anybody on the floor could score a lot, and it's tough to defend a team like that," Smith said.

"We're a lot better now than we were when we first started. There are only three people who aren't sophomores or freshmen, so it took a little getting used to, but now we know what we're doing, and at the rate we're going, we should be at a peak when the time for regionals come."

The one thing that troubles Smith, as well as several other players, is the lack of attention displayed by students and basketball fans of the Lincoln area.

"Basically, it's a 'who wants to see the women play thing,'" Smith said, "and when crowds are there, they're usually so dead. Once against Northwestern, we had a real exciting game going and the crowd just wouldn't get into it. They were mostly there to see the guys play right after. We even get heckled sometimes by our own fans. It's real disappointing and it just irritates you after a while."

A consistent winning record and a good showing in the upcoming Big Eight tournament this weekend might help bolster attendance a little, Smith said.

"I think we can win the Big Eight this year. I know we'll go to regionals and I think we have a possibility at nationals. If that happens, I'm sure we'll get more people."

While admitting that she is satisfied with her early season accomplishments, but adding that she can always do better, Smith said next season will be her last year of basketball. After graduation she plans to become a history teacher.

"I love the game, but basketball is just a way to an education to me," Smith said. "I know I may upset some people by saying that, but that's the way it is."

College in Iowa; Huron College in South Dakota and Lincoln University in Missouri.

UNO assistant wrestling coach Harry Gaylor will provide the color commentary for the program.

The UNO Invitational is produced by UNO Television for Sports Nebraska. The program is produced and directed by Bill Scollon from UNO Television.

Transfer players start classes

Two future Nebraska football players attended their first day of classes at UNL Monday.

Defensive tackle Kevin Waechter and punter Grant Campbell are junior college transfers enrolled at mid-year.

They will be eligible to play this fall.

Waechter followed his

brother, Henry, a regular UNL defensive tackle from Waldorf, Iowa, Junior College. Campbell transferred from Rex Junior College in Rexburg, Idaho.

Second-year junior college players are allowed to compete the following year, but first-year transfers are required to sit out a year.

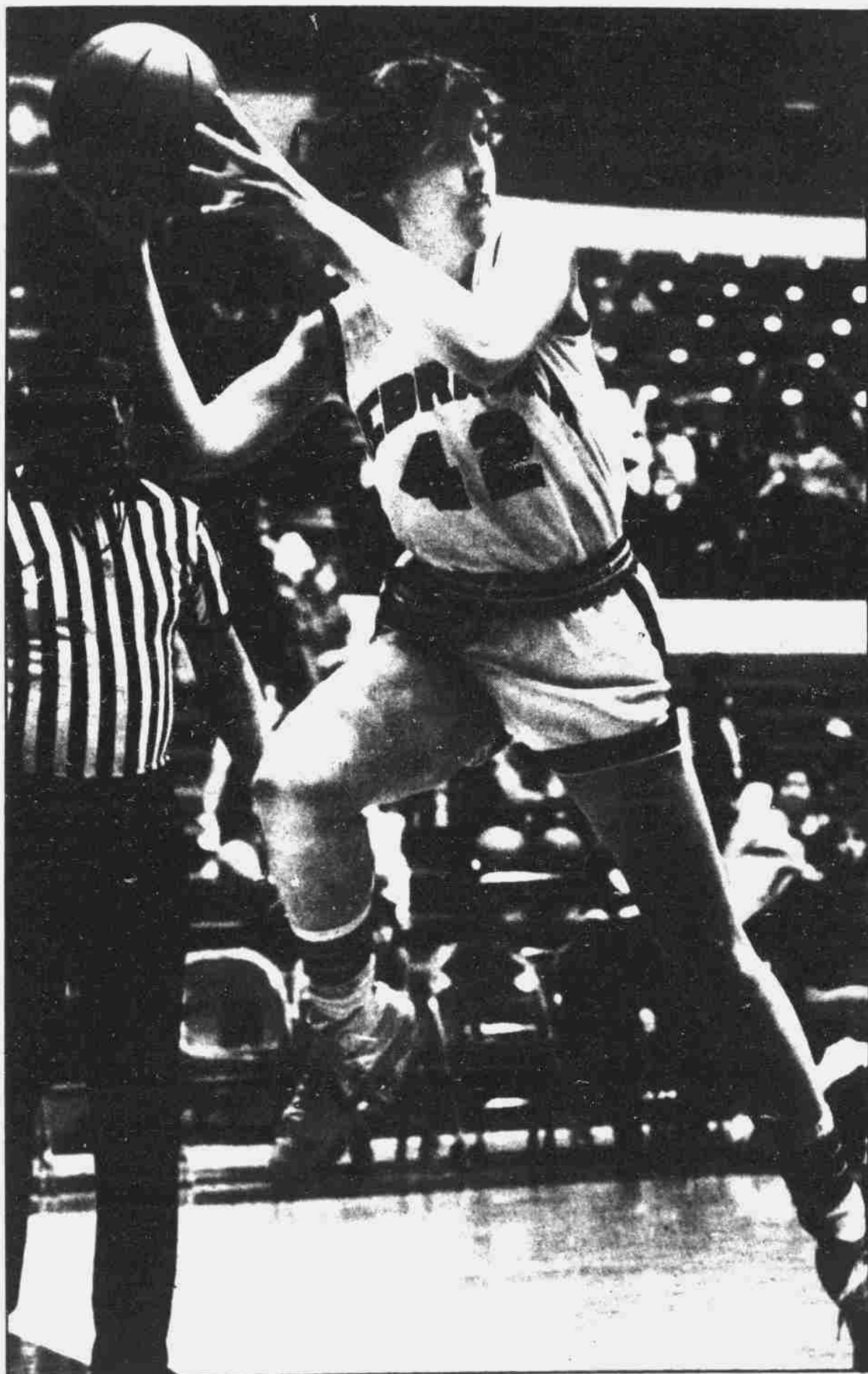


Photo by Mitch Hrdlicka

Janet Smith



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Career Planning and Placement

Spring Semester Orientation

For students who plan to utilize career planning services this semester, two meetings will be held in room 232 of the Nebraska Union on:

January 14 Wednesday 3:30
January 15 Thursday 3:30

Topics to be covered:

- *on campus interviews
- *resume preparation
- *interview preparation
- *general orientation to career planning facilities

You only need to attend one meeting.