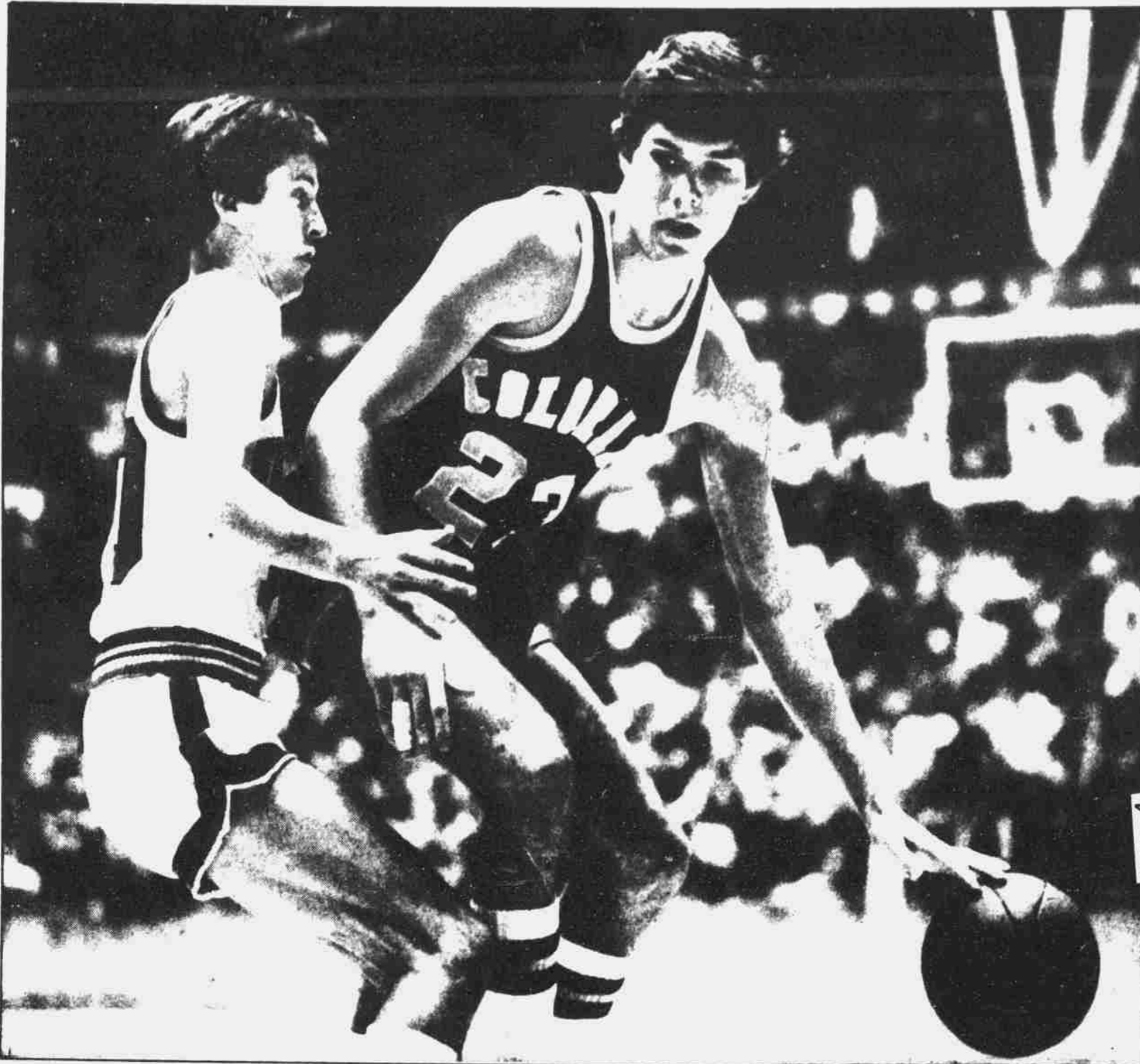


Iba labels Missouri 'best talent in conference'

By Charles Vaughn



Nebraska's Mike Naderer (10) applies defensive pressure to Colorado's Jacques Tuz (23) in the Buffaloes' 62-59 win against the Huskers in Lincoln.

Photo by Mark Billingsley

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Saturday night's Missouri-Nebraska basketball game will feature a matchup of two teams attempting to rebound from disappointing losses Wednesday night. Colorado defeated the Huskers in Lincoln 62-59, and the Tigers lost to Kansas at Lawrence, 63-55. Tip-off for Saturday's game is set for 7:35 p.m.

After viewing the films of Missouri's loss at Kansas, Husker Coach Moe Iba indicated he was impressed with the Tigers.

"They have the best talent in the conference and should have won that game," Iba said.

Iba indicated he was worried about Missouri's strong inside game, which features 6-11 center Steve Stipanovich, 6-8 forward Curtis Berry and 6-5 forward-guard Ricky Frazier. That kind of size, Iba said, makes Missouri a strong inside team.

"They will be difficult to match up with," Iba said. "They are also a strong shooting team. They really don't have a weakness except that they are looking for a second guard."

Iba's strategy Saturday night will be to avoid the low-percentage shot as much as possible.

"The main thing is that you're limited to one shot because of their great rebounding strength. To win we have to get high-percentage shots and play awfully good defense. They will use a man-to-man defense to try to force us to shoot the 18- and 20-footers," he said.

Nebraska is 7-8 overall and 1-2 in the conference, while Missouri is 13-5 and 2-1. The Huskers have won three of the last four encounters with the Tigers since moving into the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Correction

The starting time for tonight's women's basketball game with Central Missouri was incorrectly listed as 7:30 p.m. in Thursday's Daily Nebraskan. Tip-off is scheduled for 7 p.m. at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Clutch plays, teams save ballgame in a clinch

Question: Which of these plays was most important in Husker football history?

- 1) John O'Leary's 40-yard touchdown run off the famed "Bummeroosky" fake-punt play against Missouri in 1975;
- 2) Jerry Tagge's celebrated quarterback sneak against Louisiana State in the 1971 Orange Bowl, the play where Tagge stretched the ball over the goal line to give Nebraska the winning touchdown and its first national championship;
- 3) A diving 11-yard catch by Johnny Rodgers late in the 1971 Oklahoma game.

Answer: No. three by about a mile. Why? Because Rodgers made the catch in a clutch situation. It gave the Huskers a first down on a crucial third-and-nine play, keeping alive the touchdown drive that beat the Sooners in what has been dubbed the "Game of the Century."

Tad Stryker

The media have sometimes used the phrase "clutch play" to describe plays such as No. 1 and No. 2. A clutch play is made when failure to do so would certainly cost the ballgame. I say that No. 1 and No. 2 were big plays, but not clutch plays.

Sure, the Bummeroosky excited the fans and television announcers, but without it, Nebraska would have won 23-7.

Sure, Tagge's sneak is remembered fondly by most of us, and for good reason. But if Tagge had been stopped inches short, the Huskers would have had another chance.

One-shot deal

Rodgers' catch was a one-shot deal. If he had not grabbed the ball right off the artificial surface at Owen Field, the Huskers would have had to punt. (They didn't know about the Bummeroosky then.)

The clutch play doesn't have to be a particularly unusual play. It just has to occur at the right time. By necessity, it must take place in a close game. Sometimes, a little luck is involved, such as on fumble recoveries. In this year's Oklahoma-Nebraska game, Oklahoma guard Louis Oubre kept alive the Sooners' winning touchdown drive by beating a bunch of Huskers to the bobbled ball at midfield. Forgotten plays such as this one sometimes are as important as the more memorable ones, like J.C. Watts' third-down pass to Steve Rhodes at the three-yard line minutes later.

Making the clutch play is as tough for most players as

slicing iron or catching soap bubbles undamaged, but a few seem to have the knack. These individuals usually are at their best in the most important games.

This past baseball season illustrates two kind of clutch players. Kansas City's George Brett is a consistent top-notch player who performs even better under pressure, while Philadelphia's Tug McGraw seems just to coast until near the end of the schedule. Then he suddenly pitches superbly when the Phillies need it most. Brett hit .390 on the season, and also he beat the Yankees in the final American League playoff game with a two-out, three-run homer in the seventh inning. McGraw had a so-so regular season, but got a handful of big strikeouts to win the playoff and World Series games for the Phils.

A Brett-type

In the NFL, Dallas receiver Drew Pearson is a Brett-like clutch performer, while former Pittsburgh running back Rocky Bleier fits more into the McGraw mold.

There are even teams I would not hesitate to label clutch teams. Let's get the home-state bias out of the way

first—the 1970-71 Cornhusker football teams were clutch teams. Safety Jim Anderson said they had the killer instinct.

USC usually does well in the big games. They pulled out a couple of Rose Bowls in the final minute during the 1970s. This year's best team in clutch situations was Oklahoma.

The best clutch teams in the NFL during the 1970s probably were Pittsburgh, Oakland and Dallas.

Random Shots: Look for the Raiders' young linebacking corps to slow down Wilbert Montgomery and the Eagles' running attack. The Raiders will win Super Bowl XV because of their playoff experience, which should make them more relaxed; and besides, I want to see Pete Rozelle handing that trophy to Al Davis.

The student section was packed, as usual, at the Nebraska-Colorado game Wednesday, but farther up in the stands, a rather sparse crowd assembled, many of whom left before the game was over. Oh well, they made less than 10 percent of the noise. Maybe someday there will be a little more enthusiasm in the upper reaches.

Coach: Mizzou thinking revenge

By Joni Kramer

Revenge will be on the minds of Central Missouri's players when they meet the Nebraska women's basketball team tonight at 7:00 in the Bob Devaney Sports Center, Nebraska Coach Colleen Matsuhara said.

"We beat them January 7 on their home court with a score of 83 to 73, but the game was a lot closer than the score indicates. The game went down to the end," Matsuhara said.

Because Central Missouri is in Nebraska's division, Matsuhara said this will be a big game for her team, and probably a close one.

"They've got a good team, and we'll have to go to the boards a lot," she said.

Keying on two of Central Missouri's players is a major strategy for the game, she said.

"We've got to put the clamps on Karla Redo, their quick sophomore guard, who had 24 points against us last time.

"Central Missouri's tallest player, senior Janet Johnson, fouled out in the last game, January 7th, but having her in the game the entire time could make a big

difference on their rebounding. We'll have to be ready to keep her off the boards," she added.

Matsuhara said she expects good performances from Kathy Hagerstrom and from Janet Smith, who scored 34 points and had 16 rebounds in Nebraska's last game.

"We haven't had real hard practices these last few days because of two games this week; however, our workouts have been going pretty well. We've been drilling a lot on defensive pressure and renewing our running game," Matsuhara said.

In addition to some good practices, the team is in good shape, both physically and mentally, she said.

"Right now our team is not suffering any injuries or health problems. We're the healthiest we've been all year. We built a lot of character at the Big Eight tournament with some close games."

Nebraska's season record is 10-6, and its division record is 2-0.

"Our record is good, and with a couple of extra breaks, it might have been better. We lost two games by a total of three points, so our performances have been good," Matsuhara said. "Our goal is to get to Minnesota and the regionals in March, and beating Central Missouri will only help us do that."