

Sports



Staff photo by Joel Sartore

Nebraska's Dave Hoppen puts the ball up over Missouri's Greg Cavener in Saturday night's game at the Bob Devaney Sports Center. Looking on are Claude Renfro and Steve Stipanovich. The Tigers won the game, 54-51.

Tigers' determination prevails during 54-51 Missouri victory

By Kevin Warneke

Despite chants of "sit down Norm" ringing through the Bob Devaney Sports Center Saturday, Norm Stewart and his Missouri Tigers refused to listen and went on to capture a 54-51 victory at the expense of Nebraska's basketball team.

The sellout crowd of 14,682 greeted the Missouri coach on numerous occasions with the chant and signs that said the same, but their efforts proved no match for the Tigers' determination.

In the hopes of remaining at least tied for second in the Big Eight Conference race, Nebraska matched Missouri basket for basket for nine minutes of the first half.

With 11:01 remaining in the half, Terry Smith took a Stan Cloudy pass and slammed it home to give Nebraska a 14-12 lead.

Nebraska managed a seven-point lead after a Greg Downing layup with 3:50 left in the half, but Missouri roared back to pull within one point, trailing 26-25 at the buzzer.

"We lost our defensive pressure with 10 minutes to go in the half," Nebraska Coach Moe Iba said. "We were very fortunate to get out of the half ahead by one."

Greg Downing led a balanced Nebraska scoring attack in the first half with six points. Five other Nebraskans contributed four points.

The Huskers came out smoking in the second half as they assumed control of the game and built up a nine point lead with 15:07 remaining.

Claude Renfro's jumper from the free-throw line with 9:21 remaining marked the end of Nebraska's dominance. Missouri guard Jon Sundvold sparked a Tiger comeback which saw Nebraska's 48-41 lead evaporate in less than five minutes.

Sundvold's jumper from the left side with 3:37 remaining in the game put Missouri up for good 50-49.

With 2:59 left, Nebraska had the chance to retake the lead, but Dave Hoppen's

layup refused to go in.

"I just powered it up and the ball didn't go in," Hoppen said. "I thought it was in but I don't know what happened."

Renfro's jumper with 10 seconds remaining in the game pulled Nebraska within one, but Sundvold iced the game for the Tigers, converting both ends of a one-and-one to give Missouri the 54-51 victory.

"We played awful well for 30 minutes," Iba said. "But the last 10 minutes we let them get their heads up."

Renfro led a balanced Nebraska scoring attack with 10 points, followed by Hoppen and Cloudy who added nine each.

Sundvold, with 15 second-half points, led the Tiger offense with 19 while being guarded by a perplexed Greg Downing.

Downing's eight-point, three-rebound performance was marred by an injury to his left ankle which forced him to be taken out of the game with seconds remaining in the game.

"It's the same ankle I hurt this summer," he said.

The Nebraska loss, coupled with Oklahoma and Oklahoma State victories, saw the Huskers fall to fourth place in the conference race.

Now sporting a two-game losing streak because of Wednesday's loss to Oklahoma, the Huskers need to win their remaining two games of the conference season, Cloudy said.

"That's what hurts, we've had three games where we've went out and played our asses off and the team's come up empty-handed," Cloudy said. "We've got to pull our leads together and win our next two games."

The only bright spot on Saturday was Iowa State's 78-70 loss to Oklahoma State. That loss secured Nebraska an upper-division spot in the conference standings and the home court advantage in the first round of the conference playoffs.

Tickets for the first round playoff games against an undetermined opponent go on sale today at 9 a.m. at the South Stadium ticket office.

New UNL defense causes confusion in 83-69 loss

By Barry Trevarrow and Ward W. Triplett III

Mary Brueggstrass scored 20 points and pulled down 15 rebounds to lead the Missouri Tigers to a 83-69 victory over the Nebraska women's basketball team Saturday night at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Missouri used superior height to outrebound the Cornhuskers 41-32. The Tigers shot a sizzling 65.5 percent from the field in the first half while streaking to a 48-28 halftime lead.

"We did a real good job of getting the ball inside to our post players," Missouri Coach Joann Rutherford said. "Brueggstrass gave a great effort on the offensive boards. She's a real key to our ballclub."

Missouri jumped to a 10-4 lead when Lorraine Ferret hit a turnaround shot four minutes into the game. Nebras-

ka closed to 10-8 on a Kelli Benson basket, but the Tigers went on a 19-8 spurt during the next eight minutes. Ferret, Sarah Campbell and Melissa McFerrin then helped Missouri open up a 21-point lead with :41 left in the first half. Ferret scored 17 points before the break while Davis and McFerrin had 10 each. Husker Cathy Owen led the Huskers with 10 first-half points and Crystal Coleman had nine.

"We did not play well in the first half," Nebraska Coach Colleen Matsuhara said. "We tried a new defense to mix them up, but some of our own players got confused instead."

Things didn't improve for the Huskers at the outset of the second half. Brueggstrass scored 12 of Missouri's opening 14 points in leading the Tigers to a 62-37 advantage. Nebraska used full-court pressure to rattle Missouri and cut the lead to 12 with 6:01 left in the game.

Coleman, who finished with 15 points, then fouled out while charging in for a layup with 5:26 remaining. Four consecutive fouls by the Huskers enabled Missouri to pull out to a 79-60 lead. The Tigers never looked back as Nebraska could get no closer than 10 points.

"We got behind by too much early," Matsuhara said. "The referees were letting them play. We get into trouble when we run into a power team. We do not have the muscle to play a slow-down game. It's been the story of our season."

Ferret finished with 19 points for Missouri while Joni Davis had 13. Owen led Nebraska with 19 points and Benson added 14.

Nebraska shot 41.3 percent for the game while Missouri canned 58.2 percent of their shots. The loss drops the Huskers to 4-8 in the Big Eight and 13-12 overall. Missouri is now 19-5 and 8-4 in the conference.

Gymnastics meet gives Allen reasons to smile

By Jeff Goodwin

Saturday's gymnastics meet with Southern Illinois had UNL Coach Francis Allen smiling for a number of reasons.

The first was the score. The Huskers rolled to a 279.5 to 273.8 victory over the outmanned Salukis.

The second was the performance of Chris Riegel. The freshman, performing in the all around for the first time since December, captured the all around title with a score of 56.9.

The third was the comeback of Brandon Hull. Hull had not competed in Nebraska's last four meets because of lackluster performances earlier in the year, but Saturday he won the parallel bars with a score of 9.55 and recorded a score of 9.6 in the vault.

Allen was pleased with Hull's performance.

"This was the meet I chose to see who can help us in the Big Eights and NAAs," Allen said. "I found out who I can count on. He's (Hull) definitely someone to contend with on the p-bars."

Allen also praised Reigel for his victory in the all around over Southern Illinois' Brian Babcock.

"That's got to make Chris feel pretty good about the all around," Allen said. "This is going to be good for him. Brian's a well-respected all arounder throughout the country."

About the only disappointment for the Huskers was the performance of Mike Bowers.

Bowers finished last in the all around, recording a score of 53.35. He scored above 9.0 in only two events.

"He's a 57.0 gymnast," Allen said. "I don't know what's the matter with him."

Allen used the meet to experiment with his lineup.

Scott Johnson and Phil Cahoy, who usually compete in the all around, were entered in only two events each.

Cahoy won the pommel horse with a score of 9.8. Johnson won both of his events, recording a score of 9.8 to capture the high bar and a near-perfect 9.9 to win the rings.

Nebraska's next meet will be at home on March 10 against UCLA. Allen is looking forward to it.

"The UCLA meet will undoubtedly be the dual meet of the year," he said. "With Riegel performing like he is and Cahoy and Johnson . . . Boom! We're going to be in there."

Allen said the meet showed the depth of Nebraska's team.

"It's nice to be able to put them (Riegel and Hull) in there and know they can perform."

The UCLA meet will be Nebraska's last home meet of the year.