

Sports

Resurgent Jayhawks next for Huskers

By Tim Woods

Although a pair of losses last week killed their bid to win the Big Eight Conference regular season championship, the Nebraska Cornhuskers can regain some important momentum tonight when they face Kansas in Lawrence, Kan., Assistant Coach Randy Cipriano said Tuesday.

"The players have been pretty positive this week," Cipriano said. "If we can put a few things together, we'll have as good a chance as anyone once the Big Eight post-season tournament begins."

Nebraska dropped to 7-5 in league play and 16-8 overall last week, losing to Missouri and Oklahoma.

"Certainly, both losses were disappointing," Cipriano said. "But it's no disgrace to lose to excellent teams like Missouri and Oklahoma."

Kansas, which is 3-9 in Big Eight games and 11-14 overall, has recently begun to play more cohesively and

thus will be difficult to defeat, Cipriano said.

"They've got several extremely talented players who have matured and are starting to play more aggressively," he said. "They have the type of club that can beat you anytime, anywhere if you don't keep on top of them."

The Jayhawks, however, are coming off what Kansas Coach Ted Owens called a "horrendous" defeat Saturday in Lawrence against Kansas State.

"I thought we were on a little bit of a roll," Owens said. "We had been taking care of the ball and avoiding turnovers, and some of our players had started coming through with some big performances."

Kansas had played Missouri to a standstill in Columbia for much of the game before losing, 74-69, and had scored upset victories over Oklahoma and at Iowa State, before losing to K-State.

"We just reverted to our early-season form," Owens said. "We started to force shots, had some defensive breakdowns and just didn't play intelligently at all."

Against Nebraska, the Jayhawks must avoid turnovers and keep the Huskers from breaking off to an early lead, Owens said.

"You've got to play high-percentage basketball to beat Nebraska," he said. "I think our players will bounce back."

Senior guard Greg Downing was still hampered Tuesday by a sore ankle after injuring himself Saturday against Missouri, Cipriano said.

If Downing is unable to play, Eric Williams will replace him in the starting lineup, he said.

Nebraska center Dave Hoppen is the 10th-leading scorer in Big Eight play, averaging 16.4 points per game.

For Kansas, guard Carl Henry is the league's seventh-leading scorer, averaging 17.0 points per contest. Other leading KU scorers are forward Kerry Boagni at 13.6 points per game, forward Calvin Thompson at 10.6, and center Kelly Knight at 9.6.

Tipoff is at 7:35 p.m.

Johnson adjusts to ups and downs of substitute role

By Tim Woods

The roller coaster ride continues for Lenard Johnson.

Johnson, Nebraska's 6-6 senior center-forward, has had to deal with a limited amount of playing time this season after being a part-time starter in 1981-82.

"It's been tough," Johnson said Sunday. "But I've learned a lot about myself in dealing with it."

The Kirkwood, Mo., native started at center for the Huskers' first 17 games last season, but had to return to his St. Louis-area home for a funeral in late January 1982.

A blizzard that paralyzed St. Louis forced Johnson to remain home longer than he had expected. And the strong play of Terry Smith, who played center during Johnson's absence, relegated Johnson to a substitute's role for the rest of the season.

"Terry played well at center," Johnson said. "You can't argue about it when you look at how well he played."

Johnson, though, contributed in spots as the Huskers' reserve center during the rest of the season, including a 10-point effort against Oklahoma State in the first round of the Big Eight Conference tournament.

This season, however, Johnson found himself on the outside looking in after two newcomers, forward Stan Cloudy and center Dave Hoppen, won starting positions.

With Smith becoming the backup center, Johnson saw his playing time dwindle, averaging only 11.8 minutes per

game, compared to his average of 15.1 minutes per game in 1981-82.

Doubting whether he was making any tangible contributions to the team, Johnson decided after the Jan. 26 game against Kansas State to leave the Huskers indefinitely.

"I just didn't think I was helping the team," he said. "There's no use being out there unless you're contributing."

Johnson said he had the support of his parents, regardless of whether he came back to the Huskers.

"They knew what I was going through," he said. "They were going to back me up all the way. They said they knew I'd make whatever decision was best for me."

After sitting out the Huskers' Jan. 29 game at Missouri, Johnson returned to the squad.

"I knew it would be hard to stay away for very long," he said. "But the break gave me a chance to look at my priorities."

"Basketball is important, but there are other things to life, too," he said. "It had been dominating my life to the point that I was more worried about playing than anything else."

Now, Johnson is back, waiting for a chance to contribute to the Huskers' stretch drive. He has had his moments, such as the Feb. 19 game against Iowa State, when he and Cloudy held the Cyclones' high-scoring Barry Stevens to nine points in Nebraska's 67-66 victory.

But he knows that his playing time from here on in might be scarce.

"I'm ready to deal with it better, though," he said. "I'll just have to make the best out of whatever situation I play in."



Staff photo by John Zoz

Nebraska's Lenard Johnson blocks the shot of Missouri's guard Prince Bridges. Steve Stipanovich and David Ponce look on. Johnson and his Nebraska teammates will travel to Lawrence tonight to meet the Jayhawks.

Vickie Adkins leads Kansas over Nebraska, 100-84

By Ward W. Triplett III

Freshman Vickie Adkins scored 32 points and collected 13 rebounds while Philicia Allen gathered 18 rebounds as Kansas pulled away from Nebraska to beat the Cornhuskers 100-84 in a Big Eight Conference women's game Tuesday night in Lawrence.

The loss gave Nebraska a 4-9 conference mark, and improved the Jayhawks' record to 9-4. Kansas entered the game tied with Missouri for second place behind Kansas State, who guaranteed themselves the top seeding in the Big Eight Tournament next weekend in Norman, Okla., last weekend.

Nebraska ran the ball well early in the game, scoring six unanswered points to take a 15-8 lead with 15:33 to play in the half. Kansas, while not going on any signifi-

cant scoring spree, kept pace and tied the Huskers at 27-27 with 11:26 to play. Nebraska, with Kathy Hagerstrom's six-for-eight shooting from the field leading the way, exchanged leads with the Jayhawks six times before the half ended with a 51-51 tie.

"Kathy played one of the best offensive halves I've seen her play," Nebraska Coach Colleen Matsuhara said. "She was feeling ill from the flu at half-time, and she didn't play at full strength in the second half."

Kansas scored the first six points of the second half, while holding Nebraska to seven points for the first seven and a half minutes.

With Adkins and Allen, the former 6-1, the latter 6-6, controlling the boards, Kansas gradually pulled away from the Huskers, who shot 32 percent from the field that half.

"We are without a doubt the smallest team in the Big Eight," Matsuhara said. "We have to run. If we get into a half-court game, we're going to lose."

Kansas Coach Marian Washington said that keeping the Huskers in that half-court game was the key to the second-half domination.

"We knew we would have to slow them down and make them play the half-court game," Washington said. "Nebraska runs the floor very well, and you can't relax and let them get into their game."

Debra Powell led Nebraska with 23 points and 13 rebounds, while Crystal Coleman added 19 points and eight rebounds. Hagerstrom finished with 18 for the Huskers, who complete their regular season this Saturday against Oklahoma State.