

Iba: Team improving, final lineup uncertain

By Kevin Warneke

With three weeks of practice behind them the Huskers, as a whole, have shown great amounts of improvement, Nebraska Basketball Coach Moe Iba said.

"The intensity level is not where it should be," he said. "But as a whole, they're picking up the offense and defense pretty well."

While he has been happy with some aspects of practice, Iba said, other aspects have been less than pleasing.

"I'm happy with the way the players are working," Iba said, "and the effort they've made to pick up the offense."

But defensively, Iba said, the Huskers are lacking, especially in the rebounding department.

"We should be a better rebounding team than last year," Iba said. "But at this point, we're not."

Two bright spots have been the play of newcomers Brian Carr and Keith Neubert. A shoulder injury to Titus Dock, a 6-5 freshman, has been the only major setback, Iba said.

"Carr's done very well in adjusting, and Neubert's showing some signs of playing well," Iba said. Dock dislocated a shoulder, and his status for the season is uncertain, Iba said.

Redshirt freshman James Moore, John Matzke and Mike Martz can all expect to see some playing time, Iba said.

"They're playing better than they were playing a year ago," he said. "But it takes time to get back into the swing."

Iba said Matzke, a 6-6 graduate of Lincoln High is now the top prospect to replace last year's third leading scorer Claude Renfro at the strong forward position.

"It's a situation where he's done very well in practice," Iba said. "We're still trying to make decisions on where to play people."

"John's very mobile. We need to find him a position to play."

High leaping ability isn't outstanding, his shot isn't perfect and his rebounding skills aren't superb, but Matzke said he has one attribute that could help him secure the starting position.

"Hustle makes up for a lot of things," Matzke said.

A 6-6 strong forward might be considered short at most colleges, Matzke said, but at Nebraska it's "pretty average."

"Besides with my shoes on, I'm 6-7," he said.

Even with more attention placed on his performance, Matzke said, he still doesn't feel more pressure.

"The fact that there's not many people on the team means that everyone is being watched to a certain degree," Matzke said.

But should the season opener arrive and find Matzke not in the starting lineup, he said, the world won't end.

His status on the team, Matzke said, isn't a major concern.

"Where I play is one of those things that will take care of itself," Matzke said. "It's still pretty early — very early. I'll leave the coaching to Coach Iba and play where he tells me to play."

The Huskers open their season at home Nov. 16 with an exhibition game against Brandon University. Iba said the outcome of the game will not be included in Nebraska's record.

On Nov. 22, the annual red-white scrimmage will be in Grand Island.

"These games will give us a chance to look at the players," Iba said.

Spikers . . .

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"We'd probably wind up second behind Nebraska, and we wouldn't have to play them until the finals. Even if we go 2-1, that would be good."

Nebraska whipped the Sooners in three straight sets at Norman Oct. 22, but Husker coach Terry Pettit said he thinks Oklahoma has a good team.

"Physically, they match up with us pretty well," Pettit said. "They have good height along the front line, and they have a strong outside hitter in Marcy Crabtree. They're very strong at the net, and to do well, we need to hit the ball of their blocks or over their

blocks."

Sooner coach Miles Pabst said he knows the Sooners have a tough road trip ahead.

"We know Missouri and Nebraska will be tough," he said. "Nebraska beat us soundly before. We did a number of things wrong, but we've been working them out."

Copp said she thinks a good start might help the Sooners in their match against Nebraska.

"It might be a lot different match if we would come out and win the first game," she said. "It might really pump us up. Then again, it might make Nebraska mad and fire them up."

Swimmers . . .

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Huber said the team was fortunate to get some freshmen this year. They are Heidi Hecker, Stephanie Clennan and Dianne Marotto. They join junior Kathy Lundy, and Marcia Heaton, a sophomore, who redshirted last year. Lundy placed in the top 12 at the Big Eight meet last year and Heaton comes back after ankle injuries last year and a neck injury this summer.

"It's possible to look at everybody on the team and say they've improved," Huber said.

This improvement seems to be the result of hard work. Huber said a foundation of mechanical strength, flexibility and conditioning has been laid in the past seven weeks. He said the divers continue to work on weights and on the trampoline as well as the

diving boards.

Huppert said one of his goals is continual improvement. The team has taken second place in the Big Eight championship and for the past two years, he said, and Kansas has outscored everybody by leaps and bounds.

"Ask us in February if the conference title is one of our goals," he said. "I'm pleased with how people are challenging themselves, but until you get that first meet under your belt, you don't know how you're going to perform."

That opportunity to perform strikes today when the women divers face Colorado State. Huppert said a dual meet against them last year wasn't decided until the 11th event.

"They're a better program than last year," Huppert said. "If our team isn't mentally and physically prepared, it could be a long day for us."

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