

UNL athletes prepare to combine practice, study during a busy final's week

By Jeff Korbelik

Happens every semester. There's no way around taking final exams, and while students are cramming for the year-end tests, Nebraska's men and women basketball players find themselves in a unique situation.

The players must work their studying around practicing or they must work their practicing around studying. Either way, players on each team will be altering their schedules with games coming up during final's week.

The women played a game Wednesday, two days before finals started, and will play another game Dec. 22, a day after finals have ended.

"I don't know what I'm going to do about studying," freshman center Heidi Keyes said. "I'll have to cram between games because my two hardest finals are on the 21st."

Keyes, a criminal justice major, said she has three finals, and has found it difficult studying for her tests.

"Our practice time fluctuates, plus we had two games this week and it has been hard to study," Keyes added. "I come home after practice, tired, and don't want to study."

The study table, a requirement for first-year athletes, has helped Keyes with her studying, she said. Three days a week for two hours the athletes are required to attend the tables. A native of Nederland, Colo., Keyes said she didn't study in high school at all and admitted her study habits are bad.

"The study table helps," she said. "It forces you to study and there are tutors down there."

Junior guard Crystal Coleman, a special education major, has two finals, one Friday and the other Wednesday, and she said she plans on studying a week ahead of taking those finals.

"It's hard to study and practice, it confuses you," Coleman said.

She has set up a schedule and knows when it's time to study and when it's time to rest. When she was a freshman she said it was very hard to adjust to school because basketball was taking up most of her time. But now she is more responsible, she said.

"An education is more important to me now than basketball," Coleman said. "When I first came here I only came here to play basketball, but they are giving me a free education and I'm going to take advantage of it."

The men have two games during finals week, one Saturday and an away game Tuesday. Redshirt sophomore John Matzke and junior Curtis Moore both requested to have their finals changed because of the dates.

The men have a slight advantage with having Sunday and Monday off last Saturday's game, and are without a game during dead week.

"It's mainly to help us to start studying, plus we won't be playing for a while; it's a little present," Matzke said, referring to the days off.

Matzke has three finals and one term paper, but other than moving the test dates he said his studying has worked out well.

"Last week was our busiest with the away game, but I didn't have much to do," Matzke, a general agriculture major, said.

In comparing this year to his two previous years at UNL, Matzke said he has become more disciplined in organizing his time.

Moore said he foresees no problems with the five finals he has.

"It's easy, I study when I don't have practice, and go to the study tables on Tuesday and Thursday," Moore said.

The only problems Moore said he finds are that the classes here are a little harder than in the junior college he attended at Independence, Kan.

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