

# Sports

## What has happened to Husker basketball?

"What's wrong with those Huskers?" Nebraska fans have often asked that question recently as the Huskers have stumbled to a 4-6 Big Eight record after home losses to Kansas and Iowa State.

It amuses me that the people

### Stu Pospisil

questioning "those Huskers" were the same ones embracing "our Huskers" after Nebraska's success in the National Invitational Tournament last season.

What a difference a year makes for fans' memories.

A year also makes a difference in the chemistry of a basketball team. And Nebraska clearly is not of the same composition as the 1982-83 team.

Claude Renfro, Greg Downing and Terry Smith gave Nebraska strength on the offensive boards, despite each standing 6-foot-6 or less. Too often this season, no Husker is crashing the boards as another 25-footer is launched; in fact, some take off running downcourt before the shot hits the rim.

Let's face it, Nebraska's offense revolves around Dave Hoppen, and Moe Iba will be the first to agree.

But when teams play a collapsing zone defense around the Husker center, as the Cyclones did Saturday, Hoppen can't pass back to his teammates for an open 15-footer.

Nebraska's problem position all season has been power forward, where John Matzke, Ronnie Smith and James Moore seem to be caught in a revolving door. Combine the strengths of those three, and you

have Bill Jackman — who sits on the bench, clad in a three-piece suit, while he redshirts this season.

Undoubtedly, expectations were too high for Nebraska entering the season. The NIT experience plus four returning starters equaled a Big Eight championship in the minds of many fans.

It quickly became apparent that Nebraska did not have the bench it had. Instead of Smith, Kenny Walton and Lenard Johnson, the seats next to Iba are filled with redshirts, juco transfers and freshmen — all lacking game experience.

Yes, in December Nebraska did defeat Creighton and Arkansas, which defeated North Carolina last week. But close victories against Wisconsin, Wyoming and Colorado State lost luster because those teams aren't among the leaders in their conferences.

In the Big Eight, er, the Big Two and Midjocre Six, Nebraska's four wins have been by a total of eight points. The Huskers lost second-half leads to Colorado, Kansas (twice), and Missouri.

Nebraska is an enigma at home, losing four of five in the once-friendly confines of the Devaney Sports Center. The Huskers have a 3-2 road record, however; only Oklahoma's (4-1) is better.

Some have even suggested that Nebraska would be better off by finishing fifth or lower, thus ensuring a first-round road game in the Big Eight Tournament.

There won't be a trip to the NCAA championships for Nebraska this season, not unless the Huskers upset Oklahoma in Kansas City, and a return to the NIT is questionable.

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Craig Andresen/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska's Stan Cloudy reaches for a pass headed out of bounds in Saturday's loss to Iowa State. Cloudy and the rest of the Huskers are part of a logjam in the Big Eight standings for which everyone has an explanation.

## Big Eight basketball: balance or mediocrity?

By Bob Asmussen

An optimist would say there are six teams tied for third place in the Big Eight basketball standings. A pessimist would say there are six teams tied for last in the Big Eight standings.

Kansas State, Missouri,

Colorado, Iowa State, Oklahoma State and Nebraska all have 4-6 records in conference play. Oklahoma leads the conference with a 9-1 record while Kansas is 7-3. What has happened to the conference? Is it mediocrity or is it balance?

Kevin Widlic is in his first year covering Big Eight basketball for the *Denver Post*. He covered the Arizona State Sun Devils and the Pacific 10 Conference last year.

"Each team has one or two good players and that's it," Widlic said. "I think balance is mediocrity. It's a pity that one of them (the six teams tied with 4-6 marks) is going to end up third because none of them deserves it."

"The records match the players," Widlic said. "You've got a bunch of mediocre teams and a bunch of mediocre players. Real good kids that want to play basketball don't want to play in the Big Eight."

Steve Richardson of the *Kansas City Star* echoed Widlic's sentiment. Richardson has covered Big Eight basketball for five seasons.

"My basic thought is that you have two things in play," Richardson said. "Number one, Oklahoma is better than everyone else, and number two, Kansas is a little bit better than everyone else. Some of the tailenders like Colorado have come up."

Richardson said he's surprised by the poor showings of some of the teams.

"Nebraska is definitely not as good as in previous years," Richardson said. "They have just fallen apart. Missouri, Nebraska and Iowa State have all pooped out in the conference."

Charlie Smith of the *Tulsa World* said he doesn't feel the records of the Big Eight teams show mediocrity.

"I frankly think the overall quality of the Big Eight is pretty good," Smith said. "It's kind of spread out in the conference this year. The talent in the league is pretty decent. I can remember the days when a player like Lon Krueger (K-State guard in the 1970s) was the player of the year."

Bob Hentzen of the *Topeka Capitol Journal* has covered Big Eight basketball for 20 years. He said that each team tied with 4-6 records has a particular area in which it is weak.

"I think maybe the big difference is the depth," Hentzen said. "Also, there doesn't seem to be the good guard play in the league that they've had in the past."

Big Eight writers favor Kansas State to finish in the upper division.

"I would pick K-State and Missouri," Hentzen said. "K-State has got a little momentum after getting off to a bad start."

Richardson favors Oklahoma State and Kansas State.

"Kansas State might be able to finish third in the league, as unbelievable as that seems," Richardson said.

Jack Hartman's Kansas State Wildcats have gone from an 0-4 team to a contender for third place in the Big Eight. Hartman said the turnaround of the team has made him happy.

"It's always gratifying to see your team develop and get better," Hartman said. "I'm very proud of the way the team has kept fighting. We've been playing very well."



### (Sportsmanship ratings in parentheses) Women's Basketball Playoffs

Rebels (4.3) 45, Kappa Delta (4.3) 32  
Hooper Poopers (4.3) 44, Jesus is Lord (4.3) 26  
Animals (3.6) 42, Bruins (4.0) 39  
Smith Ten def. Chi Omega by forfeit  
Mixed Nuts (3.3) 32, Good Buds (4.0) 2  
The Team (3.2) 46, NPI Grads (2.7) 42  
Hot Shots II (3.0) 35, Burr Three East (3.0) 22  
Free Agents (4.3) 31, Abel Thirteen (4.0) 0

### Men's Basketball Playoffs Fraternities B/C

Sigma Alpha Epsilon B def. Alpha Gamma Sigma B by forfeit  
Theta Xi C (3.5) 43, Kappa Sigma B (3.0) 39  
Phi Kappa Psi B (3.7) 42, Tau Kappa Epsilon C (4.0) 30  
Farmhouse B #1 (3.2) 50, Theta Chi C (3.0) 32  
Phi Gamma Delta B #1 (3.5) 63, Phi Delta Theta C (3.2) 32  
Sigma Phi Epsilon B #1 (3.0) 50, Delta Tau Delta C (3.2) 32  
Beta Sigma Psi B def. Sigma Alpha Mu C by forfeit  
Sigma Phi Epsilon C #2 (3.5) 54, Sigma Nu B #1 (3.7) 25  
Beta Theta Pi B #2 (3.7) 41, Acacia C (4.0) 39  
Delta Upsilon C (2.0) 52, Chi Phi C (2.0) 33  
Alpha Tau Omega C (3.7) 38, Phi Delta Theta B (3.2) 34  
Sigma Alpha Epsilon B #2 (3.0) 40, Triangle B (3.2) 33  
Farmhouse C (4.0) 50, Sigma Phi Epsilon B #2 (4.0) 31  
Lambda Chi Alpha C (4.3) 46, Sigma Nu C (4.0) 47 OT  
Phi Gamma Delta B #2 (4.0) 42, Chi Phi B (4.0) 42  
Phi Kappa Psi C (3.7) 52, Lambda Chi Alpha B (3.7) 31  
Sigma Chi C def. Theta Chi B by forfeit  
Delta Tau Delta B def. Kappa Sigma C by forfeit  
Sigma Alpha Epsilon C def. Acacia B by forfeit  
Sigma Chi B (4.6) 52, Triangle C (4.0) 22

### Residence Halls B/C

Harper Five B (3.6) 45, Cather Three C (3.6) 43  
Abel Nine C def. Cather Two B by forfeit  
Abel Eight B (4.0) 54, Abel Six B #1 (4.0) 47  
Abel Three B Z (4.3) 57, Abel Six #2 (4.0) 43  
Burr One East B def. Cather Six B by forfeit  
Cather Four C def. Cather Six C by forfeit  
Schrann Six C def. Burr One West B by forfeit  
Schrann Eight B (4.0) 42, Cather Eleven C (4.3) 11

## Rec Scoreboard

### Bowling Gutter Dusters, East Union

Men's high game — Lynn Summers, AGS Commandos 175  
Men's high series — Jerry Steenson, Beer Framers 454  
Women's high game and series — Linda Ross, Beer Framers 172, 443

### 50/50 Mixed, East Union

Men's high game — Dan Pieper, Team #1 212  
Men's high series — Dan Lienemann, Team #3 540  
Women's high game and series — Patty Juelfs, Team #2 198, 548

## Rec Shorts

Today is the final day to register teams for several activities at the Office of Campus Recreation.

Men's, women's and co-rec three-on-three basketball and co-rec wiffleball entries are due at 5 p.m. today at the office. Play begins in each sport Feb. 28.

There is no fee to enter three-on-three basketball, but a \$10 forfeit fee will be charged to wiffleball teams.

A wiffleball manager's meeting will be 6 p.m. Wednesday in room 7, at the Coliseum.

Faculty and staff handball and racquetball doubles entries are due at 5 p.m. today at the office.

A \$2 entry fee per person will be charged for each sport. Schedules will be mailed to the participants on Feb. 27.

Men's, women's and co-rec free throw contests will be Wednesday and Thursday, 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. in 301 Mabel Lee Hall. No advance entries are necessary.

Men's, women's and co-rec basketball golf will also be Wednesday and Thursday from 6:00 to 9:30 p.m. in 301 Mabel Lee.