

Sports

By Rob White
Senior Reporter

On the road for vengeance at Missouri

After avenging two earlier blowout losses with home victories last week, the Nebraska men's basketball team will hit the road for three games — including tonight's matchup with Missouri in Columbia.

The wins over Iowa State and Kansas State improved the Cornhuskers' Big Eight conference record to 5-5 and moved them into fifth place. Nebraska has gone 4-1 since its 87-71 loss to Missouri Jan. 28.

"I think it was a pretty good week for Nebraska basketball," Nebraska coach Danny Nee said at his weekly press luncheon Monday. "We turned around a 32-point loss to Kansas State and a 19-point loss to Iowa State and that will help put us in a position to control our own destiny as we go into the last two weeks of the season and hope to get into a post-season tournament."

Nee attributed the Huskers' improvement

to playing at home.

"It's been a combination of things, really," he said. "But I think the abnormal amount of home games has helped, and it's grown into a positive thing for us."

The Tigers, 17-9 overall and 7-3 in the Big Eight, will challenge the resurgent Huskers.

"I think they're pretty good," Nee said. "They lost a couple that I think they could've won — they had Kansas beat and had bad luck and they had Iowa State beat and had bad luck — otherwise they could be in first place very easily."

Missouri is No. 3.

Nee said playing on the road will be tough for the Huskers.

"It's significantly more difficult to win on the road because the margin of error is so small," he said. "You really need a complete game, a consistent game — that's the key."

One error the Huskers will need to correct from the first matchup between the two teams is a 3 for 17 performance at the free-

throw line. The Tigers, meanwhile, hit on 37 of 45 attempts.

Missouri is led by 6-6 forward guard Derrick Chievous, who scored 26 points in the first game.

After leading at halftime 37-35, Missouri pulled away from the Huskers in the second half.

"There were numerous times we could have been able to take control of the game," Nee said. "We missed two layups early in the first half and if we would have made those we would have been up two, and maybe the fans could've gotten into the game."

Nee said the Huskers will have to be their best when the two teams square off again tonight.

"With the success we had in the non-conference games with the smaller lineup, we had every reason to believe that we would be successful with it in the conference," he said. "But the physicalness of the Big Eight has forced us to move in another direction."

Women's basketball team gets . . .

Second shot at Tigers

By Mark Derowitsch
Staff Reporter

Although the Nebraska women's basketball team defeated Missouri earlier this season, Cornhusker coach Angela Beck is worried about today's game with the Tigers.

Nebraska beat Missouri 88-78 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center, but playing at home has been different than on the road this year for the Huskers.

Nebraska is 7-4 in the Big Eight Conference, and all four losses came on the road. Nebraska's only road win in the conference was at Ames, Iowa, where Nebraska defeated Iowa State 88-70. But the Cyclones are winless at home and have only one conference victory.

"Obviously, we are concerned about playing on the road," Beck said. "When we're away from home, we always have a hard time, and Missouri is always tough at home."

Another factor against Nebraska is Renee Kelly, a 6-1 senior who is averaging 26.4 points and 10.1 rebounds a game. Last season, Kelly was the Big Eight Player of the Year and led the conference in scoring and rebounding.

During the first meeting between the two schools, Nebraska held Kelly to nine points in the first half and 23 for the game. Beck said Nebraska will try to contain Kelly with a combination of zone defenses, including a tight zone that was effective in the first game.

'We definitely have momentum. If we win two out of our last three games, I feel that we can tie for the conference championship, unless somebody wins all three of their games.'

— Beck

"That was very effective last time, but we will use different shifts so the guards won't be able to read the passing lanes," Beck said.

"We have been flat on defense a lot

this year, but our defense has to secure the victory," she said. "Any team can stop our fast break sometimes, but when we play tough defense and create a lot of steals, we play best."

Led by Maurice Ivy, who is averaging 22.8 points a game, and Amy Stephens, who is averaging 19 points a game, Nebraska has found itself in a position at least to tie for the Big Eight championship.

The Huskers are in a three-way tie for the lead with Missouri and Kansas State, which the Huskers defeated 77-57 Saturday in Lincoln. Another victory could lift the Huskers to the top, Beck said.

"We definitely have momentum," Beck said. "If we win two out of our last three games, I feel that we can tie for the conference championship, unless somebody wins all three of their games."

"If we beat Missouri over there, it will secure a lot of things," she said. "There is no way Oklahoma can come here and beat us. This group has secured more Big Eight wins in the history of the program. But we're going to think about Missouri. We can't be deflated if we lost because we have two more games left to play."

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