

NU women net top 3 Big Eight awards

By Kyle Schurman
Staff Reporter

Nebraska added to its women's Big Eight basketball championship by sweeping the conference's top three post-season honors Tuesday.

Cornhusker coach Angela Beck

was named Big Eight Coach of the Year, junior Kim Harris received the Big Eight Newcomer of the Year award and senior Maurice Ivy was named the Big Eight's Most Valuable Player.

Four Huskers were also named to all-Big Eight teams. Ivy was selected to the first-team for the third straight year, senior Amy Stephens earned



Beck

Ivy

Harris

second-team honors and Harris was an honorable mention selection. Earlier this season, senior Stephanie Bolli had been named to the academic all-Big Eight team.

Beck said the entire team, including assistant coaches Theresa Becker and Steve High, deserve a lot of the credit for the awards.

"I definitely turn my coaching

honor over to my staff and players," Beck said. "It's nice that a few people are getting the ink, but it's a team effort."

Beck said Nebraska's success had a lot to do with Ivy's award.

"I figured the player of the year award would go to the player who helped her team win a conference championship," Beck said. "She's worked hard for it. She has contributed a lot to Nebraska's success."

Ivy, who averaged nearly 19 points a game this season, said that winning the most valuable player award was a goal of her's before the season began.

"It was one of my goals since I was so close last year," Ivy said. "I figured I could win it with a pretty good season. My primary goal was to win 20 games and the Big Eight championship because when the team is successful it makes the individual more successful."

Ivy holds Nebraska career records in scoring, field goals made and free throws made. She ranks second in steals, fourth in rebounds and sixth in assists.

Ivy said she did not think about the award during the season, which is helping her to enjoy it more now.

"I didn't wait for it to happen," Ivy said. "When you don't expect things to happen, you appreciate them more."

Harris, who scored 10 points and pulled down seven rebounds per game this season, said she was surprised to win her award.

"There was a lot of tough competition," Harris said. "I didn't expect the honorable mention, either, because my stats are comparable to others at my position. It's an honor to get those two awards. It's an exciting feeling."

Beck said Harris is very deserving of the awards.

"She has really contributed, not only scoring points, but rebounding too," Beck said. "To her credit, we've been giving her the toughest assignments on defense, so that takes something out of her. She's a tenacious player when she puts her mind to it."

Beck said the awards will not detract from Nebraska's preparation for this weekend's Big Eight tournament.

"We're going to congratulate everyone and then move on," Beck said.

Ivy said the team will not be distracted by all the awards because the other players are happy for the people that received them.

"The team is real supportive," Ivy said. "It all came in line and we swept it. You couldn't ask for anything more as a player or coach. All of us are pretty excited and happy about it."

Nebraska's softball team opens spring season today

By Mike Kluck
Staff Reporter

Rebounding is usually associated with basketball, but Nebraska softball coach Ron Wolforth wants to see how the Cornhuskers bounce back after the fall season.

Nebraska opens its spring season Wednesday at Las Cruces, N.M., against Baylor. The Huskers will then participate in the Roadrunner Classic Tournament Thursday through Saturday in Las Cruces.

"The single most important thing is how we respond after the tournament," Wolforth said. "This tournament will help us gain mental stability and confidence as we go on."

Wolforth said No. 2-ranked Nebraska is looking forward to opening its season against Baylor. The Bears will be a good season-opening opponent for the Huskers because they are a "middle-of-the-road" Division I team, he said.

"They aren't a terrific or great team," Wolforth said, "but they are a little above average and have some solid pitching."

Wolforth said the Huskers can't afford to make mistakes if they're going to defeat the 4-0 Bears.

Baylor coach Paula Young said her team is looking forward to playing Nebraska. She said the Bears know they'll be facing an uphill struggle against the Huskers.

"We feel this is a great opportunity for us," Young said. "We have beaten them twice in the past and they have beaten us twice, but we have had some good games. We look at this game as we have nothing to lose and are looking for the upset, but we realize we are the underdog."

Young said the Bears will enter the contest with an advantage because they have played four games. She said the warm climate in Waco, Texas, also allows Baylor to practice outside, a luxury Nebraska normally

doesn't enjoy.

Wolforth said if the Huskers don't play well, he'll stay away from the excuse of not being able to practice outside.

"We have had good practices and preparation, and we have been able to hit every day," he said.

Nebraska will face Baylor at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday and will play the Bears again in the opening round of the Roadrunner Classic Thursday morning.

Wolforth said the Roadrunner Classic will provide Nebraska with strong competition because the tournament's field includes six teams now ranked in the top 20.

California State-Fullerton, Arizona, Arizona State and Fresno State will join Nebraska as the top five ranked teams in the three-day tournament. The other teams that will participate are 18th-ranked Nicholls State of Thibodaux, La., 20th-ranked Hawaii, Oklahoma, New Mexico,

New Mexico State, Utah State, Utah, Baylor, Michigan, Fresno State and Oregon.

"It is a tough tournament and probably the premier tournament in early March," Wolforth said. "It is the first tournament that will deal with rankings and will help us to find out early where we stand."

Arizona softball coach Mike Candrea agreed that the tournament is one of the best in the country. He said the tournament draws its strength from the good representation of teams it gets throughout the country.

Candrea said Arizona will also have an advantage entering the tournament because the Wildcats already have played 20 games this season.

"We have won some games already and our starters now know what their role is," Candrea said. "I feel some schools who haven't played yet are here to see what they got."

Wolforth said the Huskers have a

good chance of going 3-0 in the tournament because they will face New Mexico and Nicholls State after facing Baylor Thursday. He said an undefeated record is important because Nebraska will play Arizona State and Cal State-Fullerton Friday.

Wolforth said he is confident Nebraska will play well against 10-1 Arizona State and 14-1 Cal State-Fullerton.

"We should be ready to go and should be up in the finals on Saturday," Wolforth said. "We had better play up to that billing."

Arizona State softball coach Mary Littlewood said she likes the tournament because it is a good opportunity to face teams that aren't in the same conference.

Littlewood said the Sun Devils expect a good game against Nebraska.

"We know Nebraska is an excellent team because we have played them at least once the past few years," Littlewood said. "We expect them to have another strong team this year."

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