

# Beck glad Huskers not tourney's favorite

By Tim Hartmann  
Senior Reporter

Although the Nebraska women's basketball team had the best regular-season record in the Big Eight, the Cornhuskers are not the clear-cut favorites to capture the Big Eight's post-season tournament.

But that's just fine with Nebraska coach Angela Beck.

"We've been on top and we've had pressure all year to stay there, and there has been people attacking us," Beck said. "But I don't feel we're the one people think is going to win the Big Eight championship."

Beck said the fact that the conference coaches named Colorado as the favorite to win the Big Eight Tournament will benefit the Huskers. Nebraska will be less pressured, she said.

Nebraska will face Kansas State at 2 p.m. Saturday in the first round of the tournament, which lasts until Monday at the Bicentennial Center in Salina, Kan.

The other first-round games Saturday pit Kansas against Oklahoma at noon, Missouri against Iowa State at 6 p.m. and Colorado against Oklahoma State at 8 p.m.

Sunday's semifinal games will be played at 2 and 4 p.m., and Monday's championship game is at 7 p.m.

Kansas State women's basketball coach Matilda Mossman said that although several teams could win the tournament, Nebraska should have entered it as the favorite.

"I guess you'd have to say Nebraska is the favorite, but Nebraska lost to three teams — Missouri, Oklahoma State and Colorado — and I

think any of those teams could win it," Mossman said.

Missouri women's basketball coach Joann Rutherford said she can't predict a favorite.

She said the parity of the Big Eight will force the winning team to put three good games together.

Rutherford said Missouri has not played well recently. Missouri, second-seeded in the tournament, has a 17-10 record overall and is 9-5 in the Big Eight.

"Towards the end of the season you want to be playing your best," Rutherford said, "and we're not doing that."

**'I think if we play well we can make it to the finals'**

—Goodwin - Colbert

Rutherford said she expects a tough test from Iowa State, Missouri's seventh-seeded opponent. Iowa State enters the tournament with a 13-13 overall record and is 5-9 in the Big Eight.

"They're scary," Rutherford said. "That's a team we beat twice, but they'll be difficult to beat again."

Iowa State women's basketball coach Pam Wettig said Missouri is one of the most talented teams in the conference. She said the Tigers' Tracy Ellis, a first-team All-Big Eight selection, is the best player in the Big

Eight. "Missouri always gives us problems," Wettig said. "We've never played them well, and consequently we've never beat them."

Several coaches said the three-day tournament gives their teams a second season. The winner of the eight-team tournament gets an automatic bid to the NCAA tournament.

Oklahoma State women's basketball coach Dick Halterman said the Cowgirls are more talented than their 7-7 conference record indicates. He said Oklahoma State, sixth-seeded, is the best team in the Big Eight when it shoots the ball well.

Halterman said Oklahoma State would like to make up for a disappointing season by performing well in the tournament. He said the Cowgirls will benefit from playing at a neutral site because they have not played well at opponents' gyms.

Halterman said recent victories against Nebraska in Stillwater, Okla., and Kansas State in Manhattan, Kan., have helped Oklahoma State's confidence.

"The win at Kansas State will probably help the most because we haven't been successful on the road," he said.

Halterman said Colorado is the team to beat in the tournament. The Buffaloes, who enter the tournament as the No. 3 seed, are 18-9 overall and 8-6 in the Big Eight.

"They struggled early, but they've come on of late and that should be a great game," Halterman said.

Oklahoma women's basketball coach Valerie Goodwin-Colbert said she is optimistic that the Sooners will



Ward Williams/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska center Kim Harris dribbles between three Colorado defenders.

play well. She said Oklahoma, fifth-seeded, has the talent to do well if it plays to its ability.

"I think if we play well we can make it to the finals," Goodwin-Colbert said. "If we play average, we probably won't make it past the sec-

ond round." Goodwin-Colbert said she thinks Nebraska is the favorite entering the tournament because of the Huskers' strong showing in the regular season. The Huskers have a 21-5 record overall and are 11-3 in the Big Eight.

# New plan needed to determine state basketball champ

What's good for Indiana is good for everyone else. Even for Nebraska.

During the next two weekends, Lincoln will be engulfed by high school basketball fans from all over

the state. The Nebraska state girls' tournament will be today, Friday and Saturday at various sites around the city, and the boys' tournament will come to town next weekend.

The state tournaments are great times for just about everyone involved, but it could be made even more enjoyable if Nebraska adopted the system Indiana has established to decide its state basketball championships — an open-class system.

Indiana high school basketball doesn't have Class A, B, C or D, or

any other form of dividing the state's high school teams. Because of this, every team in Indiana has an equal chance to win the state championship any season, no matter how big or small the school is.

Basketball has long been thought of as a truly equalizing sport. In other words, any team really can beat any other on any given day.

Anyone who has seen the movie "Hoosiers" can appreciate that fact. The film was based on the true story of tiny Milan High School, which defeated perennial basketball power Muncie Central in the finals of the 1954 Indiana State Championship to capture its first state title.

In Nebraska, six teams are crowned champions each March, one from each of the state's classes. It's a sound, traditionally respected system, but arguments often arise concerning whether a team from one class could beat a team from another.

Among the latest Omaha World-Herald boy's state top-10 basketball

poll is Atkinson West Holt High School — a Class C-1 team. The Huskies, ranked No. 6, are 21-0 this season and have averaged more than 80 points per game.

The primary reason for Atkinson West Holt's success this season is Bruce Chubick, a 6-foot-7 1/2 junior. Chubick has shot about 80 percent from the field and free-throw line this season. Two weeks ago, in back-to-back games, he scored 48 and 46 points. He is averaging just under 35 points per game this season.

But as World-Herald sports writer Larry Porter wrote on Feb. 23 in a feature on Atkinson West Holt's team members, few of Chubick's field goals come from more than 6 feet away from the basket. That's his job as a center, but for someone who is 6-7 1/2, it's far from an earth-shattering accomplishment.

When Chubick isn't scoring, 6-foot-2 junior guard Chris Peacock is. Peacock hit 56 percent of his two-

point field goals this season and 47 percent of his three-point shots.

Both players have attracted much attention from several Division I colleges, and not just Nebraska and Creighton. More than half of the schools in the latest Associated Press men's top-20 poll have contacted Chubick alone.

But with Atkinson West Holt's success come questions and doubts concerning the team's ability. With the state top-10 rating comes a lot of head-shaking. Are the Huskies really the sixth-best team in Nebraska? Could they really hold their own among the Omaha and Lincoln schools, or against Columbus and Norfolk, or any team in the Class B top 10, for that matter?

Maybe, but probably not. At least not consistently. Atkinson West Holt is certainly a great team with two major Division I prospects, but above-average teams and players tend to look better against weaker opponents. It's just like when Nebraska's men's team plays the Czech exhibition team, or the University of Nebraska at Omaha. It looks a little different when the Huskers play Oklahoma or Missouri, doesn't it — at least most of the time.

Atkinson West Holt is, without a doubt, the best team in Class C-1, but what would happen if the Huskies played a few Omaha and Lincoln Class A teams, and sprinkled in Class B powers Seward, Blair, Ord and Lincoln Pius X for good measure? They could kiss their undefeatable status goodbye.

Granted, no team could survive a schedule like that without a loss, but when no Class B teams are rated and Atkinson West Holt is, somebody's perspective is a bit out of whack. The Huskies wouldn't be able to win the Class B state title, let alone the Class A championship. And Chubick probably wouldn't look quite as hot being guarded by a player from Omaha Burke or Westside as he would playing someone from Ravenna.

Of course, all this is speculation and opinions, but maybe someday high school basketball fans in Nebraska will know things like these for sure.

Green is a junior news-editorial and criminal justice major and is a Daily Nebraskan senior reporter.



Chuck Green

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