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Cornhuskers win two as Devaney watches

By Mike Kluck
Staff Reporter

Nebraska softball coach Ron Wolforth had a personal interest in the Cornhuskers' double-header sweep of Kearney State Friday night.

The Huskers beat Kearney State 2-0 and 6-1 at the Nebraska Softball Complex. Before the twin bill, the stadium's new lights were dedicated and Nebraska Athletic Director Bob Devaney threw out the first pitch.

"I'm just glad we won for Coach Devaney," Wolforth said. "I hate to have him throw out the first ball and then split with Kearney. That's important to me personally."

Wolforth said he was pleased with the performance by both freshmen; pitcher Marie Bowie and shortstop Jane Kremer. Bowie got the victory on the mound in both games, giving up only three hits.

"Every single second I am around her (Bowie) I get more pleased with her," Wolforth said. "She is so much more mentally tough beyond her freshman year. I think to say she is going to be a great pitcher this year is putting too much pressure on her, but her sophomore and junior year, you better watch out for Marie Bowie."

Kremer had a .333 batting average for the two games. Defensively, she had three outs and eight assists.

Nebraska hit well, Wolforth said. The Huskers, who raised their record to 5-1, recorded four hits in the first game and five in the second.

Wolforth said he was disappointed with the play of Nebraska's defense.

"I thought defensively we didn't play very well except for Jane Kremer," Wolforth said. "We didn't throw the ball very well at all."

Likewise, Kearney State coach Dan Simmons said he was unhappy with the Antelopes' defense.

"Nebraska swung the bat well, but defensively we never got on track," Simmons said. "We misplayed a couple of balls and our pitchers had trouble getting in sync."



Butch Ireland/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska's Jill Rishel slides safely under the tag of a Kearney State player Friday during the Cornhuskers' double-header sweep at the Nebraska Softball Complex. Nebraska won by scores of 2-0 and 6-1 to raise its record to 5-1.

Simmons said the Lopers' No. 1 pitcher, Susan Johnson, pulled a muscle in her arm last weekend and said that Friday night was the first time she had thrown all week. Johnson took the loss in the first game.

"Basically, she threw well that first game, but we felt like we could only throw her one game and they threw their pitcher both games," Simmons said.

In the first game's initial inning, senior Jill Rishel singled, stole second base and advanced to third on Johnson's wild pitch. Ruth Chatwin's sacrifice fly to center field scored Rishel.

The Huskers increased their lead in the 6th when designated player Michelle Mason walked and stole second. A double by catcher Katy Wolda scored Mason to give Nebraska the 2-0 victory.

Kearney State didn't advance a runner past second base.

Rishel also helped Nebraska score

first in the second game. With one out in the first, Rishel was hit by a pitch and advanced to second on a passed ball. A double by Chatwin scored Rishel and a single by Deanna Mays scored Chatwin as the Huskers jumped to a 2-0 lead.

In the 2nd, Wolda walked and advanced to second on a wild pitch by Dana Skrobecki. Kristin Davidson's single scored Wolda.

Kearney State got a run back in the 3rd when Chatwin tried to pick Tish McCants off of 1st base and overthrew Mays, enabling McCants to score.

In the 5th, Nebraska's Davidson reached first on a Loper error, stole second and scored on Rishel's double. Kremer then walked and both she and Rishel advanced on a wild pitch. Chatwin's walk loaded the bases. Joy Rishel, Jill's younger sister, followed with a two-run single, completing Nebraska's scoring.

Skrobecki took the loss for Kearney State.

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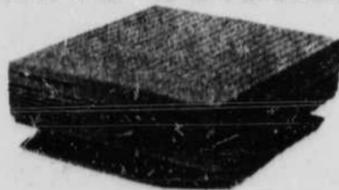
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Coach says loss shows difference between teams

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The Huskers' 15-0 victory against Indiana marked the 18th time that they have shutout an opponent in their 13-year history, with the last one coming against Missouri in the 1985 Big Eight tournament.

Nebraska took a 12-9 lead in the first game before Indiana's Jill Beggs, who made the all-tournament team, served five straight points, moving the Hoosiers to game point, 14-12. Stahr had a kill to end the Indiana string, and, after the Huskers scored three points to take a 15-14 lead, she served the game-winning point.

Pettit said Nebraska's 15-0 win in the second game was not reflective of Indiana's talent.

"We got into a rhythm where everything went right," he said. "It was not a good game for them."

Indiana coach Tom Shoji said the 15-0 loss put a damper on an otherwise fine match for Indiana.

"I was pleased with games one, three and four," Shoji said. "We played Nebraska as well as we could in those games. (In game three) we had to beat them — we couldn't go down in three straight after losing 15-0."

Nebraska jumped to a 13-10 lead in game three before Indiana's Liz Armbrustmacher, who also made the all-tournament team, served five-straight points to give the Hoosiers the win. Indiana took a 14-13 lead in the fourth game, and served for the game, but a kill by Nebraska outside hitter Val Novak kept the Huskers alive.

Pettit then inserted freshman Cris Hall into the match, and Hall responded with a kill to put Nebraska ahead 15-14. Hall then got the match-ending kill after a bad Indiana pass.

Pettit said he did not expect Hall, who had only four attacks in the entire

match, to have two kills to win the match, but he knew she would play well. Hall also had the match-ending kills against Wyoming and Kansas State.

"I've seen enough of her to know she won't choke," Pettit said. "I want to get Cris as much playing time as possible, especially in pressure situations, to get her ready for the Big Eight (conference season)."

Shoji said Nebraska's ability to overcome two game points shows the difference between the program that sixth-ranked Huskers have built and what Indiana is trying to build.

"Nebraska has a good team," Shoji said. "They get better as the score gets tighter. That's the difference between a top 10 team and one like ours that is trying to break into the top 30. We sometimes play better when the score is tight, but Nebraska always does. Nebraska is used to winning those close matches."

Pettit said Indiana has a talented team.

"They've beaten some good teams and they're well-coached," he said.

Shoji said the confidence Indiana gained against Nebraska will help their team in Big Ten play. Pettit said the tournament also will help Nebraska in its preparation for the Big Eight season. Nebraska opens conference play Saturday against Oklahoma in Norman, Okla.

Pettit said Nebraska's victory against Kansas State was not as lopsided as the score indicated. He said playing teams like Oklahoma and Kansas State on the road will not make Nebraska's attempt at a 13th-straight conference title any easier.

"We'll have to be organized and know what we're doing," Pettit said. "Playing Oklahoma and Kansas State on the road will be plenty tough."