

Huskers to face Bulldog defense

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won't be concentrating on her scoring but will be working on giving the Huskers a more balanced attack. Stephens said Beck expected the Bulldogs to run either a 2-3 zone defense or a man-to-man defense. Montana used a 2-3 zone defense in its victory against Nebraska.

"One thing we're trying to work on is getting everybody to have a better game," Stephens said. "We are looking to have more balance in our scoring. This game will be important for us to see how we respond to the whole situation in general and how we're able to bounce back."

Beck said the Huskers will have to shut down Drake forward Julie Fitzpatrick. Fitzpatrick, a 6-1 senior

from Davenport, Iowa, has averaged 20.3 points per game this season. On Saturday against the Orangewomen, she contributed 25 points.

Beck said Fitzpatrick is a good shooter and helps to compliment the Bulldogs' diversified offense.

"They are a sound basketball team and are very good. I think they were picked to finish in the upper division of the Gateway Conference this year."

Drake has three players who have averaged double-figure point production. Besides Fitzpatrick, sophomore Jan Jensen averages 15.3 points per game and junior Jenni Fitzgerald averages 10.3 points per contest.

Yow said Drake's record is misleading because the Bulldogs have lost two games by less than five

points. Michigan State defeated the Bulldogs 62-60 Friday.

"We lost two games on the road and in the last game we had a chance to win near the end," Yow said. "We are playing great ball right now."

Stephens said Drake's record hasn't misled Nebraska. She said the Huskers have been concentrating on Drake even though they leave Thursday morning to compete in the Long Beach Dial Classic in Long Beach, Calif.

"Drake is going to be an improved team from last year," Stephens said. "They have a lot of experience returning. We need to get one under our belt before we leave. We know Long Beach will be a tough opponent, but we are concentrating on Drake right now."

Women's basketball tonight 7:30 p.m.

Nebraska (3-1)
coach--Angela Beck

- G--35 Amy Stephens, Sr., 5-8
- G--10 Amy Bullock, Sr., 5-6
- C--54 Kim Harris, Sr., 6-1
- F--13 Ann Halsne, Sr., 6-1
- F--32 Sabrina Brooks, Sr., 5-8

Drake (1-2)
coach--Susan Yow

- G--20 Missy Slockett, Sr., 5-7
- G--21 Jenni Fitzgerald, Jr., 5-6
- C--43 Caroline Orr, Sr., 6-2
- F--13 Jan Jensen, So., 5-10
- F--22 Julie Fitzpatrick, Sr., 6-1

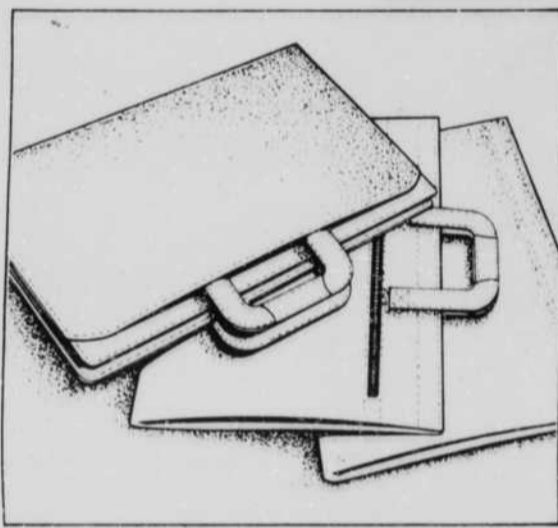
Drake is led by Fitzpatrick, who has averaged 20.3 points this season. In Fitzpatrick's last outing, she scored 25 points against Syracuse in Michigan State's FELPAU Holiday Classic. Drake lost that game, 75-72.

Nebraska has been led by Stephens' 20.5 points per game. Harris is averaging 11.5 points a game.

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Bird enshrined by Terre Haute hotel

TERRE HAUTE, Ind. (AP) - Larry Bird, a rare sight in southern Indiana this time of year, was dressed a little better and driving a better car, but people still recognized him "as one of the guys."

So says Max Gibson, a Terre Haute businessman and a partner with Bird in the Boston Connection hotel where Bird had been recuperating from foot surgery.

Bird, however, is no longer the typical Hoosier.

The Boston Connection is a 109-room shrine where everything from matchbook covers to soap wrappers carries pictures of the NBA superstar.

Hotel patrons can eat in The Boston Garden restaurant, surrounded by Bird's trophies, magazine covers and family photographs of him growing up in French Lick, 65 miles south. Diners can shoot a few hoops from the actual center jump section of Springs Valley High School,

where Bird's career began.

Place mats contain outlines of his hands, urging people to "compare your hands to Larry's ... the best in the NBA."

Nearby, guests can order drinks and watch Celtics games on one of three televisions in the Bird's Nest lounge, which contains more memorabilia.

For the Christmas season, a color portrait of Bird in a Santa Claus suit has been set up in the lobby.

Occasionally, during the past week, the 6-foot-9 Bird wandered into the hotel dining room to chat with guests and sign autographs.

But mostly he kept to himself, relaxing in his private suite, playing golf and renewing old acquaintances.

"He's got privacy here," said Glen Ankney, a business partner and the hotel's general manager. "He comes here to relax."

Friends and business associates had hoped to keep him in Terre Haute for his birthday. He turns 32 Wednesday. But Bird, who underwent surgery in Boston for bone spurs last month, flew back there Tuesday and was scheduled to have the casts on his feet changed Wednesday.

Columnist says goodbye to true Husker football fan

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He also appreciated the performance of Nebraska quarterback Steve Taylor during his freshman and sophomore seasons. I can only smile when I think of how much he would have appreciated Taylor's outstanding performances as a junior and senior.

The pride and respect that he had for Nebraska throughout his lifetime carried into his personal and working life. He instilled that same pride and respect in his two sons and daughter, and eventually into his seven grandsons and one granddaughter.

He supported all Husker athletic programs, but predominantly concentrated on football. He subscribed to Huskers Illustrated magazine. He also took pride in the Cornhusker Marching Band.

He enjoyed football and other sporting events for what they were -- enjoyment and entertainment. He didn't use them as a source of gambling. He simply loved Husker football because he took pride in Nebraska.

He didn't care if the Huskers won by the point-spread set by the gamblers in Las Vegas. He was happy to win, whether that be by one point or 50. He knew that every university across the nation would love to have a winning tradition like Nebraska, so he thrived on the wins.

He sat through a number of Husker losses during his lifetime, including nine-straight losing seasons from 1941 to 1949. That's why he reveled in the Devaney-Osborne era of Nebraska football.

He didn't think Nebraska players and coaches were immortal, but he did respect them for what they were -- athletes and competitors just trying to do their best.

Prior to every Oklahoma-Nebraska showdown, he wasn't ignorant in thinking that the Huskers always had the better team and best

athletes. However, he always wanted and actually believed Nebraska would win -- he never gave up on the Huskers.

He demonstrated his pride in Nebraska by being a member of the Extra Point Club and Husker Power Club. He also provided small donations to the band. I'm not saying that financial contributions are a necessity to be a "real" and "true" Husker fan, but it's just another example of his loyalty to Nebraska.

This man was a great person and is an inspiration to me. We never had a whole lot of deep and emotional conversations, but what he said to me was special. It was special because he meant everything he said.

He never read anything I had published in the Daily Nebraskan because he died the summer before I became a sportswriter with the newspaper. Because of this and because I still have the utmost respect and admiration for him, I decided to make my first column a tribute to him.

Red and white carnations decorated his casket at his funeral to honor his loyalty as a "real" and "true" Husker fan. His support of the Huskers through both the good and bad times -- mostly good -- is something most people could only dream about.

The first game the Huskers played the season after his death was an emotional one for me. As I stood among the Memorial Stadium crowd of 76,000-plus and gazed up to where he would have been sitting had he still been alive, I forced myself to choke back tears. The Huskers went on to rout Utah State 56-12.

Since I never had the opportunity to say a proper "goodbye," I'll do so now.

"Thanks for everything and goodbye, Grandpa."

Hodge is a junior news-editorial major and is a Daily Nebraskan sportswriter.

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