

## Wyoming to play taller Huskers tonight

By Steve Sipple  
Staff Reporter

Wyoming basketball coach Benny Dees said his four-guard lineup will pose at least one problem tonight for the taller Cornhuskers.

"I'll tell you what we'll be able to do," Dees said. "We'll get all their bounce passes."

Dees said that strategy may not be enough for his Cowboys, who face Nebraska in a 7:35 p.m., non-conference game at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

"To be straight with you, it's going to be a struggle," he said. "New Mexico came in with two big guys and they just killed us."

New Mexico cruised to a 106-89 win against the Cowboys in Laramie, Wyo., on Jan. 13. New Mexico's front line, which features 7-foot, 7-foot-1 and 6-foot-7 players, scored 45 points and hauled in 23 rebounds. Dees said the Lobos' took advantage of their height to defeat Wyoming on its home court.

Now Wyoming will face Nebraska, which features a lineup that includes 6-foot-7 guard Beau Reid, who's taller than any Cowboy starter.

"Our tallest starter is 6-6. We're a very small basketball team," Dees said. "I'm really worried about a team with the kind of inside game of Nebraska, or of any team with an inside game."

Nebraska, which is now 11-7 overall and 0-3 in the Big Eight, has shown it can exploit shorter lineups.

The Huskers manhandled a smaller Maryland-Baltimore County lineup Jan. 17 in a 86-65 victory at the Sports Center.

Nebraska's 6-foot-8 senior forward Pete Manning scored 17 points and 7-foot-2 sophomore center Rich King added 10 points, five rebounds and four blocked shots against the Retrievers.

Husker coach Danny Nee said his team's height advantage against Wyoming doesn't translate into an easy victory.

"A team like Wyoming -- a run and gun, aggressive, man-to-man, multiple defense-type team -- can present some problems," Nee said.

"We just have to make sure we play our style of basketball. And, part of our game plan is to work it inside and use our big people."

Included among the Huskers' cast of big people are King, Manning, 6-foot-7 junior forward Ray Richardson and 6-foot-9 junior center Richard van Poelgeest. Manning leads that foursome with an average of nearly 12 points per game. Only van Poelgeest has failed to average double figure scoring totals.

Wyoming will counter the Huskers' attack with a lineup that includes 6-foot-3 Reggie Fox, 5-foot-11 Kenny Smith, 6-foot-4 Robyn Davis, and 6-foot-5 Tim Breaux. At 6 feet 6 inches, Reggie Slater is the Cowboys' tallest starter.

Dees said that when Nebraska passes inside the lane area to its big people, his team will collapse its

guards and try to smother the Huskers. He said his team will employ a man-to-man defense the entire game.

"We'll try to dive the post and get them to pitch it out," he said.

Wyoming will have to improve its field goal shooting percentage to defeat Nebraska, Dees said. Wyoming hit just 36 percent of its shots during an 82-80 loss to Utah on Jan. 21. The Cowboys entered Saturday night's game against Air Force with a 44 percent average from the field.

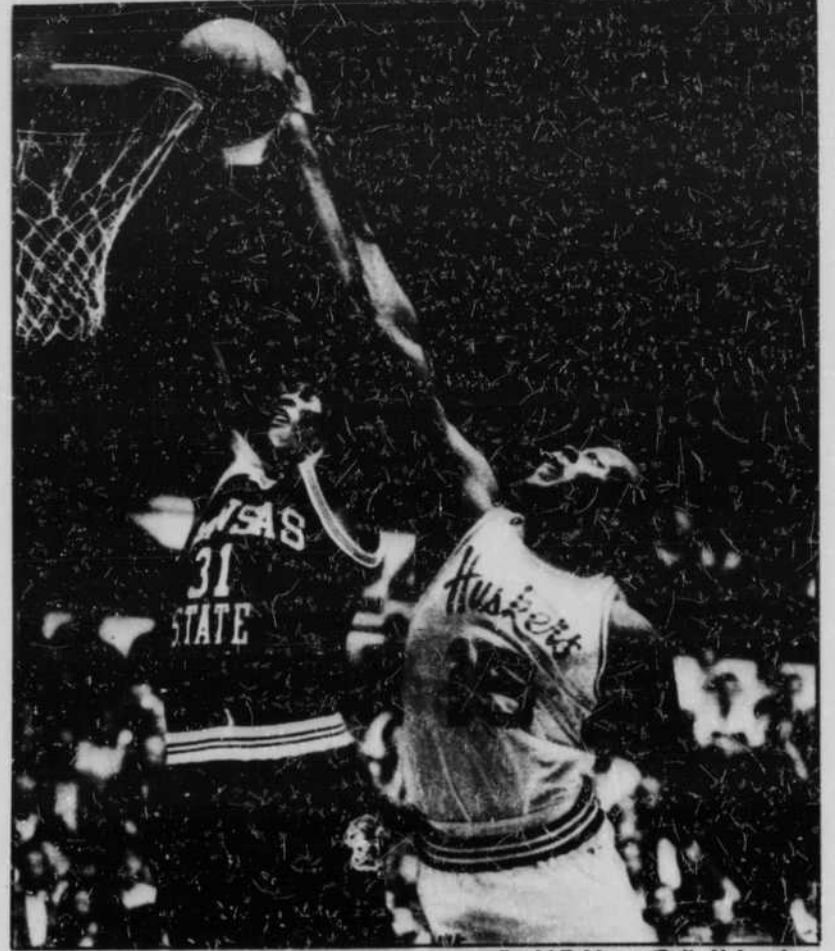
"On nights we shoot, we're a fairly good basketball team, but when we don't make 'em, we're too small to rebound 'em," Dees said.

Adding to Wyoming's height problems has been the grade problems of 6-foot-8 center, Clauzell Williams. Dees handed Williams a three-game suspension for academic problems. Williams will return to the Cowboy lineup for their Jan. 28 game against Hawaii.

Dees said Williams' absence adds to his feeling that tonight's game could have come at a better time. He said because the Cowboys played Air Force Saturday night, they will have only Sunday to prepare for Nebraska.

"We'd rather play them during our preseason, non-conference schedule than in the midst of our conference season," he said. "I'm sure Danny would agree."

Nee did agree -- but not totally. "I don't like it, but we have no choice," he said. "But anytime you play a quality team like Wyoming, it's good."



David Fahleson/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska guard Eric Johnson fouls Kansas State's Reggie Britt during the Cornhuskers 80-68 setback to the Wildcats Saturday night.

## Huskers off to worst Big 8 start in years

By Nick Hodge  
Senior Reporter and  
Mike Andreassen  
Staff Reporter

For the first time in 20 years, the Nebraska men's basketball team has lost its first three conference games.

Nebraska's 80-68 loss to Kansas State Saturday at the Bob Devaney Sports Center lowered the Cornhuskers' record to 0-3 in the Big Eight, their worst conference start since the 1968-69 season when they lost their first four conference games.

Before Saturday's game, Nebraska coach Danny Nee said that it was not critical for the Huskers to beat the Wildcats, but it was "very important."

But after losing before 14,685 fans

-- the largest crowd in four years -- Nee said he was really disappointed. "It was a tough one," Nee said. "We're digging our own grave quickly."

The Huskers fell to 11-7 overall, while Kansas State raised its record to 11-4 and 2-1 in the Big Eight.

Nee said he didn't have any immediate answers to solve his teams unsuccessful conference start.

"We just have to play better than we're playing," Nee said. "There's no consistency. I think the kids try -- they're working hard. We have to have consistency in our game and we just don't have it."

Such inconsistency enabled the Wildcats to overcome a 34-24 Husker lead with 4:03 remaining in the first half and take a 36-34

halftime advantage.

Nee said Kansas State's 10-point run to close out the first half was the turning point in the game.

**'We're digging our own grave quickly.'**  
--Nee

"We just let it slip right out of our hands," Nee said. "We substituted a couple players and hit a dry spell where we missed some easy shots inside and missed a couple layups."

Wildcats coach Lon Kruger said his team's consistency enabled Kansas State to take a lead it would never relinquish.

"I think we just took care of re-

sponsibilities a little better," Kruger said. "We didn't really change anything. The players just did a better job."

Kansas State ran its scoring streak to 13 points when Wildcat forward Mark Dobbins made one of his four three-point baskets to open the second half scoring.

The Huskers battled back to tie the score at 53-53 with 12:24 left in the game on a dunk by center Rich King.

Wildcat guard Steve Henson made back-to-back three-point shots and a jumper to propel Kansas State to a 61-53 lead with 9:44 left.

Nebraska then got no closer than six points as Kansas State pulled away to win the contest.

King and Nebraska guard Eric Johnson led the Huskers with 15 and 17 points respectively.

King and forward Ray Richardson

each grabbed six rebounds to lead Nebraska, while guard Beau Reid contributed seven assists.

Four Wildcats scored in double figures. Henson and forward Fred McCoy scored 18 points, while Dobbins and guard LaKeith Humphrey added 14 each.

The Wildcats' McCoy pulled down a game-high 11 rebounds.

Nebraska had 26 fouls to Kansas State's 13.

The Wildcats made 15 of 18 free throws, while the Huskers made just one of six.

Nee credited Kansas State for executing well and handling the adversity to win road games in the Big Eight.

The Huskers return to action tonight in a non-conference game against Wyoming. Tip-off is set for 7:35 p.m. at the Sports Center.



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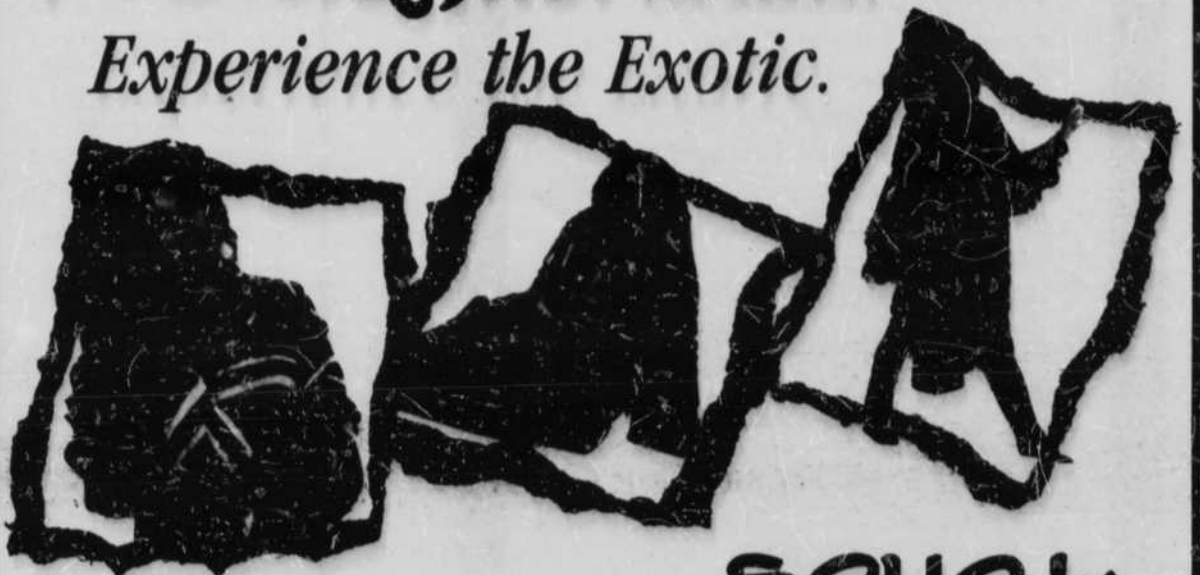
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