

Freshman starter lacks experience, NU's Beck says

By Mark Derowitsch
Senior Reporter

Nebraska women's basketball coach Angela Beck said the Cornhuskers are just a point away from reaching the upper half of the Big Eight conference.

The trouble is, the point the Huskers are missing is a guard.

"If I'd look at one thing that's hurt us, it is our point guard situation," Beck said during her weekly press conference Monday. "I'm not demeaning my point by any means. We have a pretty talented point guard in Kim Yancey. She's a pretty talented little lady, but she's not as experienced."

Beck said Yancey, a 5-foot-6 freshman from Holden, Mo., lacks the experience to be a good point guard.

The point guard's importance in basketball is underrated, Beck said. She said in order to win any kind of championship, a team has to have a reliable point guard.

"I think a point guard is really, really essential to a successful basketball team," Beck said. "And right now, I don't think we're getting what we need out of our point guard on our basketball team."

Yancey has averaged 3.4 points in 19 games this season, and has dished out 38 assists. In Big Eight games, she's averaging 5.6 points per contest.

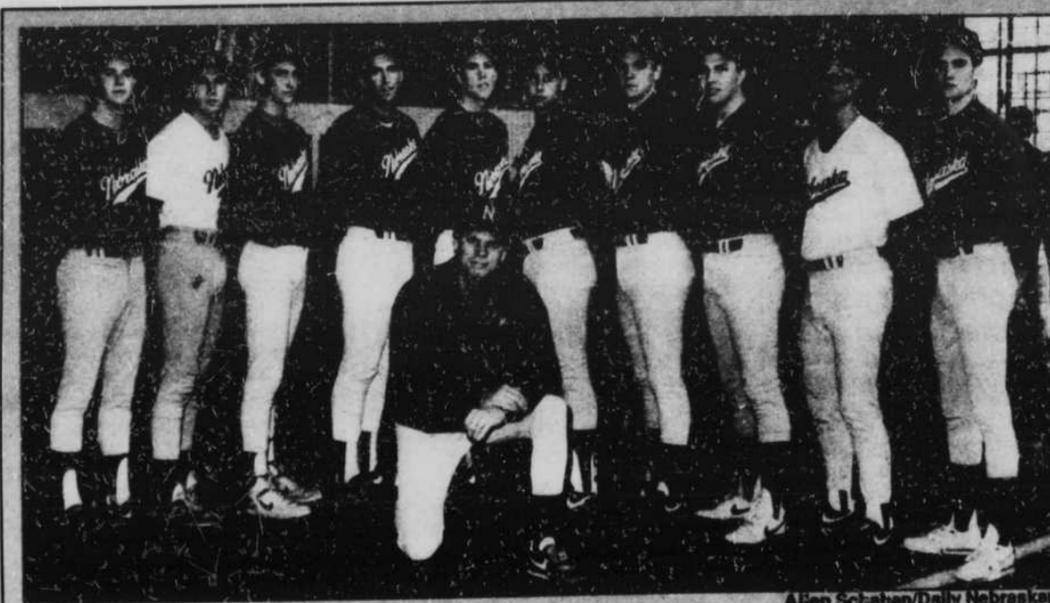
As a senior in high school, Yancey earned all-state honors by averaging 21 points per game. For her efforts, she was an honorable mention All-America pick by Street and Smith and USA Today.

Beck said Yancey is a good offensive player.

"I think she creates some things and helps us offensively," Beck said. "But she hurts us because we have no composure out there. I put all of my blame on my point."

Beck said a point guard at Nebraska must run a team well, and take responsibility if she doesn't.

"I'm a point-guard oriented coach," Beck said. "I put a lot of emphasis on my point guard. And if they're not highly talented, they better be intelligent. The problem right now is we haven't had the quality in that position that we need."



Nebraska baseball coach John Sanders kneels in front of the Cornhusker pitching staff. The staff includes (from left): Pat Leinen, Tim Smith, Jason Abramavicius, Doug Tegtmeler, Mike Zajesk, McGraw Milhaven, Aaron Bilyeu, Todd Mosser, Dale Kistaitis and Jerry Madison.

'Young arms' will help pitching staff

By Jerry Guenther
Staff Reporter

With a number of young arms returning, Nebraska baseball coach John Sanders said he is confident pitching will be one of the strengths of this year's Cornhusker team.

Sanders said because of instability on the entire pitching staff last year, many of the younger pitchers on this year's staff picked up valuable experience by being thrust into action last season.

"We have some younger people who pitched last year who were inconsistent," Sanders said, "but having gone through that, they have learned what it takes to be consistent."

Nebraska pitching coach Tom Pratt agreed.

"This year we have some young pitchers who we introduced to the league last year -- at times too fast," Pratt said. "But they know what it takes to win and they have the talent more so this year."

"What they lack in maturity, they'll make up for with their overall raw talents and abilities."

Without any senior pitchers on this year's staff, Pratt said, he will be looking for leadership from a number of players.

"We've got a couple of leaders," Pratt said, "but I don't think there is any one particular leader."

Pratt said one member of the staff he will count on for guidance is left-hander Pat Leinen.

"He's been around," Pratt said. "If you wanted to declare a leader, he's probably the one who is going to be looked at around the Big Eight."

During the off season, Leinen said, he has been working on developing a split-finger fastball.

"Coach Pratt and I both felt that a fourth pitch could really help me out," Leinen said.

Pratt said the other pitchers expected to contribute heavily are Doug Tegtmeler, Mike Zajesk, Dale Kistaitis and Tim Smith, a transfer from Vanderbilt. The rest of this year's pitching staff is McGraw Milhaven, Jason Abramavicius, Aaron Bilyeu, Jerry Madison, Todd Mosser and Joe Purvine.

With the loss of last year's two top catchers in Tim Pettengill and Eric Helfand, Pratt said, the pitchers have been working hard on adjusting to the new catchers.

"Our main objective last fall was to introduce our new catchers to the pitchers and the rest of the team," Pratt said. "As of right now, I think all our catchers are comfortable with all of our pitchers."

"We work very closely with our pitcher and catcher relationships because that is an important matter."

Another aspect the Nebraska pitchers have been working more on is staying ahead in the count, Pratt said.

In the past, Pratt said, Nebraska pitchers attempted to be "too fine."

"As coaches we've taken a little bit different attitude towards our pitchers this year," Pratt said. "We're letting some of their natural abilities take over. When you have good talent, you have to let the talent take over instead of dominating them too much as a coach."

NU coach says Nebraska didn't panic on Saturday

By Steve Sipple
Staff Reporter

Nebraska men's basketball coach Danny Nee liked what he didn't see from his team during Saturday's 74-70 win against Kansas.

Kansas erased a 16-point halftime deficit and pulled to a 66-66 tie with 1:46 remaining at the Bob Devaney Sports Center. But Nee said Nebraska didn't panic as the Jayhawks made their charge.

"I think that in the second half (our players) had confidence in themselves," Nee said Monday at his weekly press luncheon. "At no time did I sense a panic or a losing-it type of thing."

Nebraska used three free throws by Eric Johnson, a three-point play by Clifford Scales and two free throws by Ray Richardson to post the victory. The Huskers raised their record to 13-9 overall and 1-5 in the Big Eight.

Kansas, which is in the midst of a three-game losing streak, fell to 16-6 and 3-4.

Nee said Nebraska might have had an easier time with the Jayhawks if it converted its layups and free throws. Nebraska missed the front end of four, second-half one-and-one free throw opportunities and hit 17 of 26 free throws (65 percent) in the second period.

Nebraska has hit 67.2 percent of its free throws on the year.

"If Nebraska had taken care of the ball and made its free throws, it wouldn't have been a competitive game," Nee said. "We had a chance to be in control."

Nee said the Huskers need to take advantage of free throw opportunities and layups.

"I think a lot of those things are correctable," he said. "Of course, Kansas looks at the game and says 'We'll make those shots in Lawrence.' And they're right."

Kansas will get a rematch against the Huskers March 1 at Lawrence, Kan.

Kansas' second-half surge didn't take Nee by surprise. He said he had a Jayhawk comeback in mind when he called timeout with 3:34 left in the

See NEE on 7

Walton: Inconsistent judging caused loss

By Mike O'Malley
Staff Reporter

Nebraska women's gymnastics coach Rick Walton blasted the judging after seeing the Cornhuskers lose a narrow decision to UCLA.

Walton said Nebraska's 189.8-187.15 loss Friday night at John Wooden Arena in Los Angeles, Calif., was the result of inconsistent judging. He said the Huskers were leading UCLA by three tenths of a point entering the dual-meet's final event, but judging cost Nebraska the victory.

"We did well," Walton said. "We were winning the meet up until the last event. Then we received a couple of scores that didn't make

sense.

"(The judges) changed drastically in the last rotation. There were a couple of routines we performed that were better than the scores would indicate, but that's part of competing on the road."

Nebraska's Michele Bryant agreed.

"I don't think they outclassed us in any one event," Bryant said. "They looked good, but we hung with them. I thought we looked just as good as they did."

Walton said he was pleased with the performances of Bryant and Jeaneane Smith. Bryant and Smith tied UCLA's Kim Hamblen for 1st place in the vaulting competition

with a score of 9.7

Walton said the most pleasing aspect about Bryant and Smith's performance was that UCLA is considered the best vaulting team in the country. The Huskers finished two-tenths of a point behind UCLA in the team vaulting competition.

Walton said the 11th-ranked Huskers matched up evenly with the 3rd-ranked Bruins.

"They are a very good floor team but I didn't see them any deeper in any of the other events than we were," he said. "We did a nice job in vaulting and on the floor."

In addition to the performances by Bryant and Smith, Nebraska also received strong efforts from Crystal Savage, Angie Burdette and

Lisa McCrady. Savage and Bryant finished 2nd and 3rd in the parallel bars, while Burdette and McCrady equaled that feat in the balance beam. Burdette also earned a 3rd-place finish in the floor exercise en route to finishing 4th in the all-around with a 37.45 score.

Nebraska's next meet is at 7 p.m. Sunday, when the Huskers face Missouri and Oklahoma in a triangular meet at the Bob Devaney Sports Center. University of Nebraska-Lincoln students with ID cards will be admitted free.

Burdette said Nebraska is already anticipating its rematch against UCLA on Feb. 26.

"We can not wait until we face them again," Burdette said.

Neumann says he was 'out-coached' in Northern Iowa

By Steve Sipple
Staff Reporter

Northern Iowa showed more desire than Nebraska in its 28-15 wrestling dual win Friday, Cornhusker coach Tim Neumann said.

"For the first time all year, we didn't wrestle like we wanted it worse than the other team," Neumann said. "They were more aggressive and better mentally prepared than we were."

Tenth-ranked Nebraska, which had its five-dual win string snapped, saw its season record drop to 8-5-2. Unranked Northern Iowa is 10-5 after Friday's match, which was held at West Gym in Cedar Falls, Iowa.

Neumann said he was out-coached by the Panthers' Don Briggs. He said Briggs did a

better job mentally preparing his team for the match.

"They were really geared up for the dual," Neumann said. "It was a big meet for them."

'For the first time all year, we didn't wrestle like we wanted it worse than the other team.'

--Neumann

Nebraska's wrestlers have to realize that unranked teams will wrestle particularly hard against them, Neumann said.

"We don't understand that since we're rated in the top 10 wrestling poll, the teams that aren't rated will be looking to make a name for themselves against us -- like we used to do," he said.

Nebraska led Friday's match 15-14 before losing the final three matches. Shane Snyder, a regular 158-pounder, was defeated a 177 pounds, Tommy Robbins was defeated at 190 and Sonny Manley was pinned at heavyweight, giving Northern Iowa its fifth-straight win against Nebraska.

At heavyweight, Northern Iowa's Joel Greenlee, ranked No. 2 in the nation, won his 34th straight dual match. Greenlee, a senior, has never lost a match during a dual, recording a 55-0-3 mark.

But the turning point of the match came at

its outset, Neumann said. Nebraska lost the dual's first two matches, which threw the Panthers' crowd of 1,500 into a frenzy, he said.

Mark Schwab defeated Jim Sanchez 21-6 at 118 and Duaine Martin beat Jason Kelber 21-15 at 126.

Neumann said he expected wins from Sanchez and Kelber.

"We were down 8-0 when I thought we'd be up 6-0. That was the turning point," he said. "It wasn't a good dual for us."

Neumann said Briggs is doing a good job with Northern Iowa's program, especially with in-state recruiting.

"The thing they got over us is they're in a good state," Neumann said. "They can recruit in-state kids. Yet, we just aren't doing the job."