

NU overcomes to emerge in NIT, faces Arkansas State

By Jeff Apel
Senior Editor

A strong tradition overcame a shaky record when the National Invitational Tournament announced Sunday that Nebraska will face Arkansas State Thursday at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Chris Feller, the tournament's public relations director, said the NIT selected Nebraska because it looked past the Cornhuskers' record and focused on its strong post-season tradition. Nebraska, which will enter the

contest with a 16-15 record, has compiled a 10-7 mark in previous NIT competition.

Fallon said Nebraska was also aided by the presence of Husker coach Danny Nee. She said Nee left a favorable impression when his first Nebraska team advanced to the tournament's semifinal round two seasons ago. The Huskers finished third in the 1988 NIT by defeating Marquette, Arkansas and Washington prior to losing to LaSalle.

"Nebraska has got a great NIT tradition," Fallon said. "We're real

happy to have them back."

Fallon said the NIT did not have any second thoughts about Nebraska even though it finished its season by losing its last two games by 55 points. The Huskers closed out their regular season by dropping a 103-76 decision to Oklahoma, then suffered a 98-70 setback to Missouri in the opening round of the Big Eight Tournament Friday in Kansas City, Mo.

"There was other teams with showier records," Fallon said, "but when you look at the competition Nebraska plays, there's really no

comparison."

Nebraska guard Clifford Scales said he was relieved when he learned about the bid. He said he had been anxiously awaiting the announcement because he did not want to close the season with the Missouri loss.

Scales said the Missouri setback dampened his hopes for a birth in the 32-team competition.

"I thought we had a 90 percent chance going into the Missouri game, but after that I wasn't sure," he said. "I really didn't know what they would decide."

Scales said the Huskers need to put their Big Eight woes behind them if they are going to be successful against Arkansas State. Nebraska compiled a 4-10 mark in conference competition this season.

"All of that is out the window now," Scales said. "Like I said -- it's a new season."

Arkansas State coach Nelson Catalina said the Indians are also approaching the game as a chance for redemption. He said Arkansas State,

See NIT on 6

Missouri tosses big loss to Nebraska's basketball team

By Nick Hodge
Senior Reporter

The absence of an early, close score hurt the Nebraska men's basketball team during its 98-70 loss to Missouri Friday in the first round of the Big Eight Tournament.

Prior to the start of the contest at Kemper Arena in Kansas City, Mo., Nebraska's coaches said the Huskers needed to stay with the Tigers in the first half to win. That prediction proved to be true, as Missouri dashed any hopes of a Nebraska victory by breaking the contest open early by

defeating the Huskers.

Nebraska assistant coach Gary Barga said the Huskers had their chances early, but didn't capitalize on them.

"We came out, we got some good shots," Barga said on the post-game radio broadcast. "We had some really good shots inside early. We missed probably three or four within four feet of the basket. We had a couple of turnovers and they jumped out 10 with 12 minutes to go in the first half at 17-7. From there, it got worse."

With the score tied 7-7, the 10th-

ranked Tigers scored 12-straight points to open a 19-7 lead. The scoring charge was led by Missouri center Gary Leonard, who finished with 17 points and seven rebounds.

Barga said Nebraska's lack of execution contributed to Missouri's scoring streak.

"At the same time, we missed some easy shots," Barga said. "Some shots we worked hard to get inside posting up. We just didn't get in the basket."

Barga said Leonard's performance was significant.

"Gary Leonard had a great

game," Barga said. "It seems like he always does well against us. They were tough on the offensive boards. We just didn't play as well as we had to."

Barga said the Tigers were the tournament's No. 2 seed for a reason.

"They played very well," Barga said. "They probably played even better than they played in the first two times we played them."

Barga said the Huskers would of had to play their best game of the season to win.

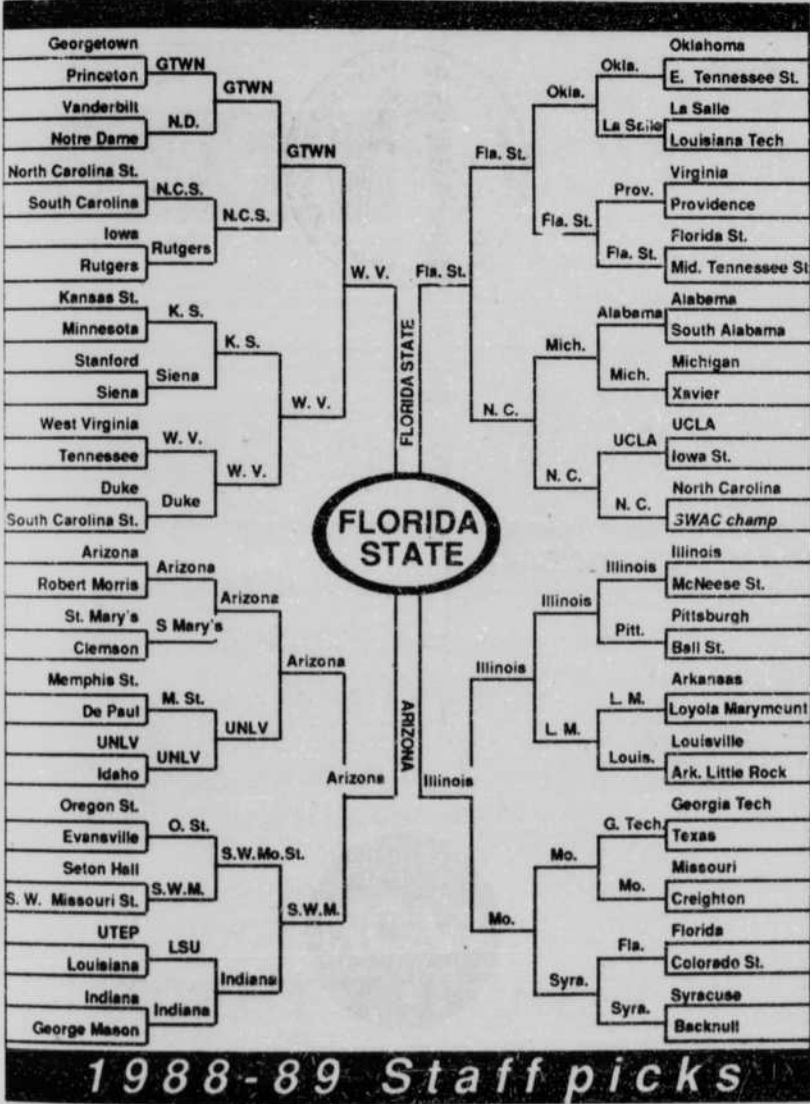
"Overall, Missouri is just a very fine club," Barga said. "They just

beat us. I mean they just really beat us well."

Missouri guard Byron Irvin, who did not start the contest because of a pulled groin muscle, came off the bench to score eight unanswered points that propelled the Tigers to a 30-12 lead with 8:01 remaining in the first half.

Nebraska managed to pull within 12 points when Husker guard Eric Johnson scored eight points to cut the Tiger lead to 38-26 with 3:47 left in the first half, but trailed 47-31 at

See LOSS on 6



Pairings competitive

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) - Georgetown, Arizona, Oklahoma and Big Ten runnerup Illinois were made No. 1 seeds Sunday in an NCAA basketball tournament draw that reflected competitive balance and fewer home-area advantages.

Big Ten champion Indiana, which lost two of its last three games and dropped a pair of decisions to Illinois, lost out on a chance to play the first two rounds of the 64-team tournament at the Hoosier Dome in Indianapolis and was banished to the Western regional as the second seed.

Cedrick Dempsey, chairman of the nine-man selection committee, said Indiana fell back because the first responsibility was "to nationally seed them on the basis of competition all year." He added that Illinois' late surge, which was prompted when guard Kendall Gill recovered from a broken foot, plus two wins over the Hoosiers, were also a factor.

In addition to Illinois, Georgetown was made the top seed in the East, Oklahoma in the Southeast and Arizona in the West.

The seeds were determined while some conference championship games were still being played and did not reflect Oklahoma's 98-86 loss to Missouri Sunday in the Big Eight final.

The Atlantic Coast Conference had the most entries with a record-

See NCAA on 6

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