

Huskers just shy in 2nd round of NIT

By Nick Hodge
Senior Reporter

It was the same song but a different verse for Nebraska men's basketball coach Danny Nee.

Prior to the Cornhuskers' second-round Ohio National Invitational Tournament game at Ohio State Monday night, Nee said his team had to play to its potential to win, something that hasn't happened all season.

The Huskers came up shy again, Nee said, as Ohio State defeated Nebraska 85-74 at St. John Arena in Columbus, Ohio.

"The big thing is that I feel that we never reached our potential," Nee said on his post-game radio broadcast. "It's my job to do that. The kids played hard, but I know we can play

better."

The loss ended Nebraska's season with a 17-16 record. Meanwhile, the Buckeyes, now 19-15, advanced to the NIT's third round.

Nee said he knew the Huskers had to play better than they did the first time Nebraska and Ohio State played. The Huskers committed a season-high 30 turnovers in the Buckeyes' 103-76 victory against Nebraska Dec. 14 in St. John Arena.

"They're just a tough basketball team, especially in this place," Nee said. "But I'm angry. I'm frustrated because we have to play better than we did."

Nee said preparation for next season begins today.

"I thought we were in the game," Nee said. "I thought we had a shot, but we need to

get better all the way around."

After getting off to a ragged start, the Huskers settled down and played with the Buckeyes throughout the first half. However, Nebraska had trouble getting untracked in the second half, while Ohio State opened up a 16-point lead that would propel them to the win.

Nee said Ohio State's performance in the early minutes of the second half led to the demise of the Huskers.

"I thought in the first half that we established ourselves inside," Nee said. "In the second half, Ohio State turned it up a notch. We'd exhaust ourselves to get back to within eight, nine, 10 points, then they would spurt again."

After trailing the Buckeyes 8-4 early in the game, Nebraska forwards Beau Reid and

Dapreis Owens hit back-to-back baskets to give the Huskers their only lead of the game at 11-8 with 14:54 remaining in the first half.

But the Buckeyes answered Nebraska's challenge by outscoring the Huskers 20-9 during the next seven minutes to take a 28-20 lead after a shot by Ohio State center Grady Mateen.

Nebraska stormed back behind the play of senior captain Eric Johnson. The Husker point guard, who led all scorers with 23 points, canned two three-point shots to tie the game at 37-37 with 1:18 remaining in the first half.

However, Ohio State was able to connect on two three-pointers of its own in the closing seconds of the first half to take a 43-37 lead into the lockerroom.

See NIT on 10

Two Cornhusker kickers compete for starting position

By Steve Sipple
Staff Reporter

Nebraska senior place-kicker Chris Drennan says he'll enter spring football practice trying to win back his top spot on the depth chart.

However, junior Gregg Barrios will have something to say about that.



Drennan Barrios

"I feel I'm the underdog," said Drennan, who was Nebraska's top kicker in 1987. "You know what they say in sports -- your only as good as your last game. As far as last season, it wasn't very good for me. Gregg had

a good season and people will remember that.

"I think I got to come in and beat him out."

Drennan, a 5-foot-9, 180-pound player from Cypress, Calif., was plagued last season by a torn thigh muscle suffered a week before the start of fall practice. Because of the injury, Drennan surrendered most of his kicking duties to Barrios.

And Barrios, a 5-8, 180-pound product of Omaha Creighton Prep, responded by hitting 6 of 9 field goals, including all four attempts from 30-39 yards. He also hit all 24 of his extra point tries.

Barrios hit three big field goals in Nebraska's season-opening 23-14 win against Texas A&M in the Kick-off Classic at East Rutherford, N.J. Included in that game was a Kickoff Classic-record 48-yard field goal.

Meanwhile, Drennan connected on 3 of 4 field goals and 28 of 30 extra

points.

Barrios said he doesn't feel like the favorite in the Cornhuskers' kicking battle, which may be as interesting as the battle for the starting quarterback job. That job was left vacant after the graduation of Steve Taylor.

Spring practice begins April 3.

"The only advantage I have is that I ended last season at No. 1," Barrios said. "Drennan the underdog? I don't know about that. We're really even. We'll both be clawing and scratching."

Drennan said he's ready to begin the battle. He said his thigh muscle is stronger than ever, even though it still looks ugly.

"There's a hole where the muscle ripped away," he said. "But I've built it up to where it's stronger than ever. I'm more healthy now than before I hurt it."

Drennan was nearly flawless before the injury. In 1987, he hit all 53

extra points, breaking the Nebraska record for PAT's without a miss.

He capped the regular season by booting a career-best 50-yard field goal in Nebraska's 24-7 win against Colorado in Boulder, Colo.

Drennan said that getting back to that level will be the main challenge this spring. If he does that, beating out Barrios will take care of itself, he said.

"Mainly, there's a certain standard I have," Drennan said. "I try to perform up to my own expectations, regardless of where other people are behind me."

Or in this case where people are ahead of him. Drennan said the constant battle to be the No. 1 Nebraska kicker can be taxing mentally. The competition may not always help, he said.

"I think it's like that for most positions," Drennan said. "Take two

quarterbacks. I can remember times in the (National Football League) and other places where coaches say it will make them work harder. But I think it can detract from both players. A quarterback may think if he throws an interception, he'll be out the next play.

"You start wondering, 'How perfect do things have to go for me?'"

Barrios said there are advantages and disadvantages to his competition with Drennan.

"If it was me all alone, I might be too relaxed," Barrios said. "Yet, there's an advantage to that -- you know everybody's looking to you. It's always you. If I was the only one, I'd be more confident. But then again, you can get overconfident."

With the competition, there's pressure on 20-yard field goals against lesser-talented Big Eight teams with Nebraska leading by 50 points, Barrios said.

NU senior getting national recognition for beating best college tennis players

By Paul Domeier
Staff Reporter

Although the accomplishments of the Nebraska men's tennis team have gone virtually unnoticed, Steven Jung's performance has drawn rave reviews.

Jung has soared to the highest ranking in the program's history.

Jung, whose success began when he won the prestigious Milwaukee Tennis Classic in January, is ranked 22nd in the latest Volvo singles tennis ratings with a 17-1 record. He and his twin brother, Stuart, are ranked 25th in doubles.

Jung earned his rating despite the exclusion of Nebraska from the team poll. The Huskers were left out of the rankings, even though they defeated 9th-ranked Texas and 19th-ranked West Virginia.

Jung said he credits his success to playing well, avoiding injuries and playing with confidence.

"Right now," he said, "I feel I can beat anybody in the college game."

Jung said he played well last fall but didn't beat many ranked players. The Milwaukee Tournament was the turning point, he said.

Jung competed in several tournaments around Christmas to stay primed, he said, then left with the team for the tournament, where he was seeded 8th.

Jung won his first two matches, then beat 7th-ranked John Sullivan of Clemson, 43rd-ranked Steve Bryan of Texas and 63rd-ranked Paul Mancini of West Virginia to advance to the tournament's final round. There he defeated Steve Longley of South Carolina 6-4, 7-6 to win the tournament.

He said there were about 2,700 spectators for the finals, the biggest

crowd he has ever played in front of.

"It was almost a professional atmosphere," Jung said. "I was happy just to play well before that crowd."

Jung's lone loss this year occurred when he dropped a 3-6, 6-3, 2-6 decision to Marcos Garzo of Florida State at the Nevada Bob's Team Tennis tournament in Las Vegas, Nev.

Jung's accomplishments include leading the Huskers to a tie for 3rd at the Corpus Christi Invite earlier this season in Corpus Christi, Texas. In the final match of the tournament, he defeated John Sullivan of Clemson, the 4th-ranked player in the country, 6-4, 6-2.

Afterwards, players and coaches at the tournament voted him the most valuable performer, an accomplishment Jung said he cherished.

"That was the best award I've ever received," Jung said.

Jung said the high level of competition he has faced has helped him improve.

"You always play up to your level of competition," he said. "When I first came here, we didn't play that many good teams. This semester I have already played 10 ranked players."

Jung said his success surprised him even though he had the potential to play well. He said numerous ankle sprains and a broken wrist suffered during his sophomore year held him back.

The next action for Jung will be on Tuesday through Sunday, when Nebraska travels to Irvine, Calif., to compete in the Marriott Classic. The tournament's field includes 4th-ranked California Irvine, 9th-ranked Texas Christian, 17th-ranked Arkansas, 22nd-ranked Mississippi, 24th-ranked Long Beach State and 25th-

ranked Minnesota.

"We just need to do well at Irvine and then carry that momentum into the Big Eight," he said. "We are looking to win the Big Eight title and nothing less."

If the Huskers win the conference, the senior-dominated team will go to the NCAA Championships for the first time.

Jung has qualified for the NCAA individual championships in the past two seasons, but has lost in the first round both years.

He doesn't need to act as team captain, he said, because his teammates have "been through the wars."

"I just try to act as a catalyst," Jung said.

He said he tries to set the tone for the team by winning his match.

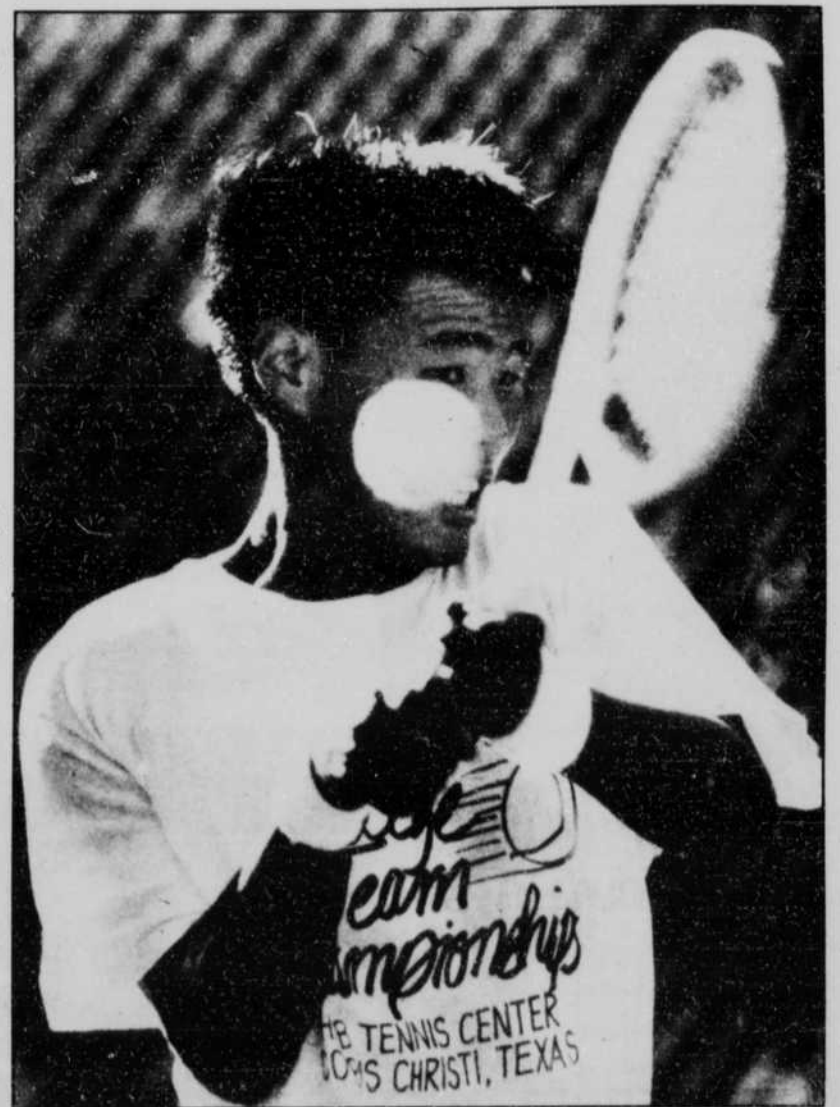
"It's a good feeling when people start playing well around you," Jung said.

Jung said he never has regretted coming to Lincoln from Hacienda Heights, Calif.

"If I would have stayed there, I would have always played in good weather," he said. "But there is the other side, since I got to play high up and improve against high-level competition."

Jung said Nebraska and Indiana offered him scholarships when he came out of high school as the 69th-ranked senior in the country. He picked Nebraska, he said, because he liked the people and the atmosphere in Lincoln. He also chose Nebraska, he said, because he loves to travel, and "we're probably the most-travelled team in the country."

He said he loves the atmosphere and team aspect of college tennis.



Butch Ireland/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska's Steven Jung

Jung said he started playing tennis, baseball and soccer when he was 9. Three years later he dropped soccer and baseball to concentrate on tennis.

He said he focused on tennis because "in California you have to stay competitive, plus my parents got tired of driving me around to all those sports."

Jung said that after he graduates in May with a degree in finance, he will play on several professional circuits.

He said he will play professionally at least until January on Hawaii and Europe circuits. He said he will make any other decisions after that.

"Tennis is a major part of my life, but it is still a game," Jung said. "My parents always tried to teach me that."

He said if he doesn't continue in the professional circuits after January, he will try to get a job in the investment field.