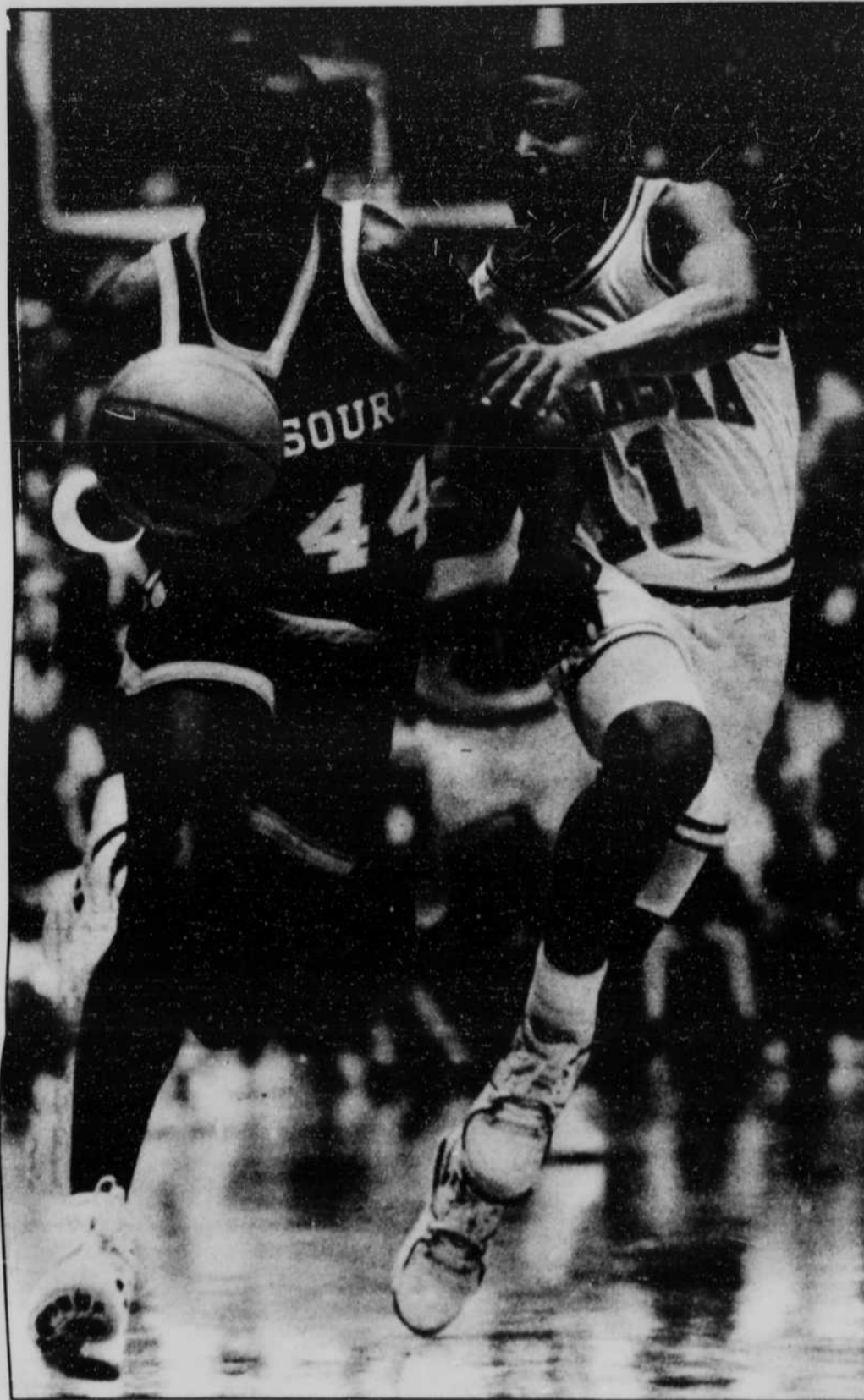


Missouri tops Nebraska, breaks records



David Hansen/Daily Nebraskan

Missouri guard Anthony Peeler drives by Nebraska's Keith Moody.

By Chuck Green
Senior Reporter

The men's basketball game between Nebraska and Missouri Saturday at the Bob Devaney Sports Center was a record-breaking performance.

Unfortunately for the Cornhuskers, none of the records fell in their favor.

The No. 5-ranked Tigers beat Nebraska 111-95, racking up the most points ever scored on the road by a Missouri team.

It also was the most points ever scored against Nebraska at the Sports Center.

The Tigers' 62 second-half points tied the Sports Center record for most points scored by one team in a half, set earlier this season by the Huskers in their 117-79 win against Harvard in the Ameritas Classic.

Missouri's offensive success was due mostly to four starters, who each scored more than 20 points -- another first for Tiger basketball.

Doug Smith led all scorers with 31 points, while Anthony Peeler added 29. Nathan Buntin and Lee Coward both pumped in 21 more for the 15-1 Tigers.

When the game mercifully ended for the Huskers, Nebraska coach Danny Nee was left shaking his head.

"I'm really impressed with the overall execution of Missouri," Nee said. "They never let us or the crowd get into the game. They've done this consistently all year.

"I don't think there's anything that's going to stop Missouri this year. They're for real."

"I'm proud of the way our guys hung in there today," Nee praised. "We didn't give up, and we played tough, just like we did against Kansas (last Monday, which the No. 1-ranked Jayhawks won 98-93)."

Nebraska forward Ray Richardson, who scored 18 points, agreed with his coach.

"Even though we have two losses to start the conference season, I'm happy with the way we played," Richardson said. "That might sound strange, but if anyone would have told us we would have played Kansas and Missouri that tough, we would have had a hard time believing it."

Missouri led by as much as 16 midway through the first half, but the Huskers shaved the Tigers' lead on a 20-6 scoring run in the next 4 1/2 minutes.

Nebraska center Rich King brought the Huskers to within two, 42-40, on a dunk with 1:43 remaining in the first half, but the Tigers took a 49-45 lead to the locker room at halftime.

Richardson said the Huskers "felt comfortable" being down by four points to start the second half.

"Against Kansas, we were ahead at halftime, and we came into the locker room like we had the game won," he said. "Today, we came in facing reality."

But reality set in hard for the Huskers during the second half, as Missouri outscored Nebraska 62-50. The Tigers shot 75 percent from the field and Smith scored 17 of his 31 points in the game's final 20 minutes.

Carl Hayes led Nebraska with 20 points. Guard Clifford Scales added 19, and center Rich King scored 15.

Hayes said Missouri's success against Nebraska should be attributed to their loose style of offense.

"They play a lot of street ball," he said. "Where Kansas was a set-up offense -- they'd pass the ball around a lot and try to set something up -- Missouri would have one or two passes and the ball was going up."

"You can't compare the two teams, because they play totally different styles of ball."

See LOSS on 8

Game eases Tiger coach's pain

By Jeff Apel
Senior Editor

Missouri basketball coach Norm Stewart was ailing but still managed to smile after his team's game against Nebraska Saturday.

Stewart said after the Tigers' 111-95 win against the Cornhuskers at the Bob Devaney Sports Center that his squad's performance eased the stiffness he was feeling from a head cold. He said Missouri also eased his woes by using a balanced scoring attack to record the victory.

The Tigers finished the contest with four players scoring in double figures. Forward Doug Smith led all scorers with 31 points, while guard Anthony Peeler had 29. Forward Nathan Buntin and guard Lee Coward scored 21.

"I thought it was a heck of a win," Stewart said. "We played a whale of a ballgame."

Stewart, who missed part of last season because of colon cancer and bleeding ulcers, said his current illness nearly caused him to miss the contest. He said he did not arrive in

Lincoln until noon Saturday for the game that started just after 1 p.m. He said he wouldn't have made the trip from Columbia, Mo., if he had had a fever Saturday morning.

After arriving, Stewart watched Missouri race out to a 14-point lead with 7:18 remaining in the first half, then looked on as the Tigers clung to their lead in the second half before pulling away in the end.

Peeler said the Tigers were fortunate because no single player carried the team. He said he was not surprised by the Tigers' attack.

"Anybody can score on this team," he said. "You can try and stop one (person), and the other four will score."

Stewart said Smith tallied his game-high 31 points by taking advantage of Nebraska's interior defense. The Huskers countered the 6-foot-10 Smith with 7-2 center Rich King, who fouled out after tallying 15 points.

"We were able to get the ball in at times," Stewart said. "We had some good ball movement."

Cornhuskers often overrated because of weak schedule

A couple weeks ago, the 1990s started. Unfortunately, the Cornhusker football program is still stuck in the '70s.

And it looks like it will stay there well into the decade.



Chuck Green

Nebraska's 41-17 loss to Florida State on New Year's Day in the Sunkist Fiesta Bowl was just the latest rung on a tall ladder of losses to top-20 teams with superior talent and even more superior programs.

It's getting old. Real old. And the ladder will get much higher before it's over.

Since Tom Osborne took over the coaching position at Nebraska in 1973, the Huskers have blown chance after chance at the mythical national title. Why? Within several deep-rooted problems embedded in the Nebraska football program lies the answer.

Osborne and his staff refuse to

revamp an outdated offense that has become as predictable to opponents as it is to the fans. And passing eight or nine more times a game, like the Huskers did much of this season, isn't the answer.

Nebraska's offense is reminiscent of a car that runs fine all summer and fall, but sputters in winter, when good performance is essential.

Before the Orange Bowl this season, Notre Dame coach Lou Holtz told his players that No. 1-ranked Colorado had been "living a lie all season." The same could be said of the Huskers this year, and just about any other season since 1973.

Beating teams like Oregon State, Northern Illinois and Utah does not a national title make. Nebraska played two top-20 teams this season, and lost both games.

Osborne is the winningest active college football coach, sporting an .811 winning percentage. That figures out to about two losses a season -- the average number of ranked teams the Huskers have played in recent years.

Against top-20 teams (ranked when they played Nebraska), Osborne owns a 39-27 record. That's a sparkling

.609 winning percentage against half-way-decent programs.

Against top-10 teams, however, Osborne is 14-24 as Nebraska's coach, including a 7-15 mark through the '80s.

In other words, when picking on someone their own size, the Huskers lose more often than not.

Have you ever wondered why Oklahoma used to beat Nebraska year in and year out through the '70s, and through half of the '80s? The answer is simple: While the Sooners were playing teams like Southern Cal, Texas and Ohio State, the Huskers were pounding out tough wins against Texas Christian, Utah State, Wisconsin and other pansies.

When "the big one" rolled around every November, Osborne and his staff were confident that their offense was ready, and that the Blackshirts were equipped to handle the Sooner halfbacks.

"After all, Kansas and Iowa State couldn't run on us, so why should Oklahoma, right?"

Uh-huh. And mentioning Nebraska's defensive woes, particularly in the secondary, is getting trite. Saying a team

will pass against the Husker defensive backfield is like saying the sun will come up tomorrow.

Defensive coordinator Charlie McBride should be fired. I suggested that in a column two years ago, but no one listened, so why would anyone listen now? "Nuff said."

The simple fact of the matter is that Nebraska's winning percentage over the past 20 years or so has been befooled by playing nobodies before the conference season, then netting the guaranteed five or six wins in the Big Eight each year.

Osborne doesn't want to fix a watch that works. If the fullback trap or the option to the near side of the field works against Northern Illinois, then it will work against Colorado and Florida State, huh, Tom?

That kind of thinking will get nothing but second-place finishes for eternity.

Yes, a 10-2 record is something to be proud of. Just like a B-plus on a final exam. But they get pretty old after a while. If one goes through life being proud of B-pluses and "Best of the Rest" tags, pride dwindles.

At least it should. It's comical. I once saw a bumper

sticker that said: "Welcome to Nebraska. Don't forget to set your clock back 20 years."

Twenty years, indeed. Next year, it will be 21 years, and the year after it will be 22 . . .

If Osborne isn't ready to embrace reality -- and the '90s style of college football -- he should resign.

If Nebraska football fans ever want a national championship, they need to open their eyes and smell the real world. The same can be said for Osborne and the rest of Nebraska's athletic department.

Nebraska's 1991 non-conference schedule, which was determined years ago, originally had the Huskers playing Texas, Arkansas, Washington and Arizona State. But Nebraska officials decided that schedule would be too taxing.

As a result, Texas and Arkansas were dropped from the schedule a few seasons ago in favor of Utah State and Colorado State.

That should beef up Nebraska's offensive statistics. It also will further the myth that the Huskers are one of the nation's finest teams.

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