

Cornhuskers hope to end losing streak

By Paul Domeier
Senior Reporter

The Nebraska men's basketball team will be looking for its first win in the Big Eight Saturday against Iowa State at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

The game is scheduled for 7:05 p.m.

Nebraska, now 8-10 overall and 0-3 in the Big Eight, lost to top-ranked Missouri and No. 2-ranked Kansas at home earlier this season.

Nebraska coach Danny Nee said the game is an important one.

"I think it's very important we control the home court, something we haven't done in the first two

(conference) games because of the type of opponent," Nee said.

Last season, the Huskers never recovered from an 0-5 conference home start.

"We dug ourselves a hole, and when we started playing a little bit respectable, we ran out of home games," Nee said. "This year, we have to start Saturday."

The home court might help the Huskers score more points, Nee said. Nebraska averages 92.7 points per game at the Sports Center and 69.2 on the road.

"I would like to get some consistency in how we score," Nee said. "Sometimes we get them in transi-

tion. We've got some of our high-scoring games from the three-point shot. Other times, we get them from (Rich) King inside.

"I'd like to zero in and get a couple of ways that we know (will score)."

A group of former Huskers will play before the game Saturday, and Nee could have used some of those alumni in Nebraska's 95-65 loss at Wyoming on Monday.

Because of injuries and illness, the Huskers finished the game with only six available players.

"I don't think it caused us to lose the basketball game," Nee said. "I think the way we played caused us to lose the basketball game."

Guard Clifford Scales missed the entire game with an injured knee. Nee said Scales' effectiveness is at 90 percent, and he should be able to play.

Forward Richard van Poelgeest, who sat out with the flu during the second half of the Wyoming game, also will play. Carl Hayes is at about 80 percent of his potential, Nee said, after spraining his ankle during the game with the Cowboys.

Nebraska suffered its worst defeat of the season at Wyoming. The Huskers trailed 31-4 early in the first half.

"After a loss like that, we have to go on and focus on Iowa State and the Big Eight, and that's what we have

done," Nee said.

The Cyclones, 6-9 and 1-2, pushed Oklahoma before falling 107-96 Wednesday night. Iowa State led by one point at halftime at the game in Norman, Okla.

"I was very impressed with them," Nee said. "Iowa State is way, way better than their record indicates.... Maybe they're just a little bit unlucky."

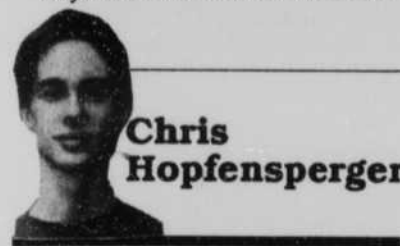
In addition to the loss at Oklahoma, the Cyclones have lost to Michigan, Minnesota, Indiana, Kansas State (by two) and Houston (by

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Recruitment of passing quarterbacks defies NU tradition

This is one of the most important times of year for Nebraska football, as entire seasons hang in the balance of the next few weeks.

Days tick off the clock. The count-



Chris Hopfensperger

down to college football's zero hour -- national letter-of-intent day -- is in full progress.

Traditionally, Nebraska lands some of the best running backs, linebackers, and linemen in the country. These recruits help bolster an already-powerful team and also cause less-fortunate coaches to drool in envy.

There is nothing new about Nebraska recruiting some of the highest-ranked prep quarterbacks in the nation. In fact, both of the Cornhuskers returning at that position -- Mike Grant and Mickey Joseph -- were highly touted coming out of high school.

But this year, it looks as though Coach Tom Osborne has something new in mind.

Nebraska has already received oral commitments from two quarterbacks

who have put up some big numbers in high school. Big numbers, that is, passing wise.

Maybe Osborne has gotten tired of all the criticism. Maybe he has given into all the fat beerhounds who say they could integrate a passing game into Nebraska's offensive scheme. And maybe, after getting soundly trounced by a pair of pass-oriented teams in two-consecutive bowl games, he is trying to keep all the good passing quarterbacks away from everyone else.

Whatever it is, Nebraska has already received commitments from passing quarterbacks Todd Gragnano and Matt Jones.

Gragnano, a 6-foot-1, 185-pound

signal caller from Los Alamitos, Calif., chose Nebraska over UCLA and USC after completing his prep career by throwing for 6,200 career yards, which was enough to rank third in Orange County history.

In his senior season alone, Gragnano completed 137 of 241 passes for 2,443 yards and 20 touchdowns. That's more passing production than all nine Nebraska quarterbacks compiled last season.

Gragnano will be complemented by Matt Jones of Michigan City, Ind. Jones is the ninth-leading passer in Indiana history with nearly 5,300 career yards.

Both quarterbacks have been highly

ranked by national analysts. In fact, national recruiting analyst Max Ernfiner ranked Gragnano the 11th-best "drop back" quarterback in the nation.

Who knows? With the addition of two passing quarterbacks, a couple decent cornerbacks and a new defensive coordinator, maybe Nebraska will give Osborne his first national championship next season.

Then again, that's probably just a passing dream.

Hopfensperger is a freshman news-editorial major and is a Daily Nebraskan sports writer and columnist.

Gymnasts 'too generous' in opener, coach says

By Julie Naughton
Senior Reporter

Nebraska women's gymnastics coach Rick Walton is playing the role of a scrooge.

Walton said he does not want to see any generosity from his team when it squares off against Missouri. He said the Cornhuskers were too generous during their season-opening, 185.50-175.50 victory against Iowa State.

Nebraska will get a chance to redeem itself when it faces the Tigers on Sunday in Columbia, Mo. The meet begins at 2 p.m.

Walton said Nebraska's generosity problems resulted from difficulties on the balance beam. He said the Huskers' team score could have been four points higher if they had avoided beam mistakes.

Six Nebraska gymnasts made mistakes on the beam, as they either fell or wobbled. Iowa State also had problems on the beam, as it had three gymnasts fall off, including one who took three plunges.

Walton said Nebraska will rely on Tami Bair and Jane Clemons against Missouri. Bair won the all-around

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Allen anxious to show off team in weekend meet

By Julie Naughton
Senior Reporter

Nebraska men's gymnastics coach Francis Allen can't wait to show off his team, that is.

Allen said he is looking forward to Nebraska's season-opening meet against Oklahoma and Iowa State on Sunday because it will give the Cornhuskers an opportunity to display their talent.

The meet, which Allen guaranteed would be over by the time the Super Bowl begins, starts at 2 p.m. at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

All University of Nebraska-Lincoln students who present their student I.D. cards will be admitted free.

Allen said the Huskers are ready to start their season.

"We need a meet," he said. "We had a good first part of the season and an excellent Christmas break, but we really need to get going again."

Allen said the meet should get the Huskers in shape for the rest of their competitive season.

"Looking down the road, we need to get up for Ohio State, UCLA and Minnesota, which are coming up soon," Allen said. "It's going to be a good meet. We'll get enough pres-

sure from Oklahoma and Iowa State to make it worthwhile. We'll know we're in a meet."

Nebraska, 3-0, faced Iowa State and Oklahoma during last November's Big Eight Invitational Meet, and claimed the team title with a score of 272.00. Oklahoma finished second with a score of 264.90, while Iowa State was third with 257.10.

Allen said he will look for senior All-Americans Patrick Kirksey, Bob Stelter and Mark Warburton to provide leadership on Sunday.

In addition, Allen plans to use freshman Trent Dimas in the all-around competition. Dimas, the top-rated men's gymnastics recruit in the nation last year, finished fifth in the conference meet's all-around competition with a score of 54.14.

Allen also will use junior Ted Dimas in the all-around competition, freshman Josh Saegert on the vault, senior Earl Carter on the still rings and senior Brad Bryan on all events except the vault and still rings.

Allen said he is optimistic about his team's upcoming meet.

"This is as good a team as we've ever had, and we've had six national championship teams," Allen said. "If we stay unhurt, I think we'll have an excellent season."



Nebraska women's basketball coach Angela Beck expresses her displeasure at a call.

Positive attitude plays new role in Beck's strategy

By Paul Domeier
Senior Reporter

A negative attitude brought negative results, so Nebraska women's basketball coach Angela Beck said she is trying a positive attitude to get positive results when the Cornhuskers play at Iowa State Saturday.

"You can second-guess a million things, but I walked into a practice this morning at 9 a.m. and I told the kids I loved them, and that I cared about them," Beck said Thursday at her weekly press conference. "I'm not going to give up on them and they'd better not give up on me."

The Huskers lost Wednesday night to Kansas State, 67-60. Nebraska was in the game until a 12-point, six-minute run by the Lady Cats sent the Huskers to 0-5 in the conference. This was their sixth straight loss overall.

After a loss to Colorado one week before, Beck put her squad through a 2 1/2 hour boot camp for practice. Thursday was different.

Beck said, "This is how I started up: 'Tell me what your most prevalent thought of last night's game was.' Nine out of the 11 players told me something negative they did."

Earlier in the season, she said, her players watched a tape of turnovers and missed lay-ups. Thursday afternoon they were going to see a tape of good things.

"They feel badly enough," Beck said. "You can lose and they can hate you, you can lose and they care about you, and I'd rather have them care about me right now."

Nebraska, 8-10, was tied with Kansas State at halftime, and Beck said she still believed in her strategy to press the Lady Cats and raise the tempo.

"I thought if I went nine or 10 deep, by the time we got down to the last eight minutes we could put them away," she said. "They'd be

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