

Cornhuskers prepare for Sooner pressure

NU men face Oklahoma arsenal tonight

By Jeff Apel
Senior Editor

The Nebraska men's basketball team will face a bunch of clones tonight in Norman, Okla.

Nebraska coach Danny Nee said Oklahoma's roster is loaded with players who duplicate each other in terms of talent. The Cornhuskers will see just how much talent when they face ninth-ranked Oklahoma at 7:35 p.m. in the Lloyd Noble Center.

Nee said he is wary of the Sooners' explosive arsenal.

"You could just change the jerseys of those players," he said. "The names are insignificant. There's no letup."

Nee said Oklahoma will try to take advantage of its explosiveness by employing a trapping full-court press. He said Nebraska will try to counter the press by inserting an extra guard in its lineup.

The Huskers will start guard Keith Moody in place of swingman Ray Richardson, a 6-foot-7 senior who is known more for his shooting ability than his ball handling. Nebraska also will start senior forward Richard van Poelgeest in place of center Rich King, who has been slumping.

Nee said Nebraska must handle Oklahoma's pressure. He said pressure is the key to the Sooners' run-and-gun game.

"They extend their pressure," Nee said, "and give you shots that cause the up-tempo game."

Nee said Nebraska cannot afford to get into an all-out running game against Oklahoma. The Sooners lead the Big Eight and rank second nationally in scoring with an average of 112.9 points per game, and have topped the century mark 11 times this season.

They also are 90-0 when scoring 100 or more points during Coach Billy

Tubbs' 10-year reign in Norman.

Nee said Nebraska has a strategy to try to slow Oklahoma down.

"We're going to pull it in a little and play shot selection," he said. "We want to play that up-tempo (game), but we have to keep it in perspective."

Nee said he is not surprised by Oklahoma's success even though the Sooners operate without a true center. Oklahoma has gunned its way to a 14-2 record overall and a 3-1 mark in the Big Eight while starting 6-6 William "Cheese" Davis at center.

In addition to Davis, the Sooners' starters are guards Smokey McCovery and Skeeter Henry and forwards Jackie Jones and Damon Patterson. Henry leads Oklahoma with an average of 18.4 points per game, while Davis averages 18 points and 9.1 rebounds per contest.

Nee said Oklahoma has found a way to overcome Davis' lack of height.

"They just ignored it," he said. Tubbs said he can't ignore Davis' injury, which has been diagnosed as tendonitis in his left ankle. He said the effects of Davis' injury are obvious.

"He's not running as well now as he was in early December," Tubbs said. "Offensively, he's really picked it up."

"But I'm not sure if he'll make it back this year physically."

Tubbs said he hopes his team stays motivated and makes it back to the NCAA tournament this season. Last year, the Sooners advanced to the third round of the 64-team competition before losing to the University of Virginia.

"I still think we have a lot of things to answer," he said. "Not for anyone else, but for ourselves."

Tubbs said he lacked knowledge about Nebraska as of Monday because he had not gone over the scout-

ing report. When he checks his reports, he will find that Oklahoma will be matched against a 7-10 and 0-4 team which has lost 16-straight road games.

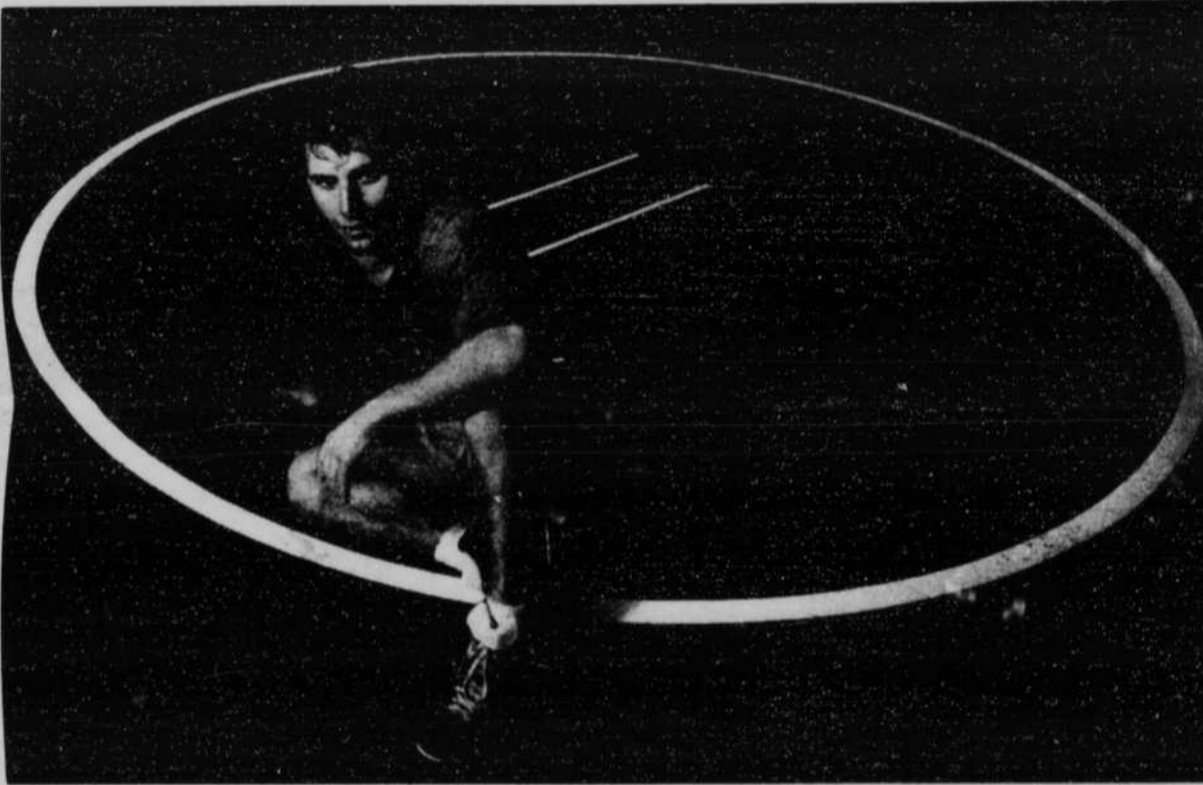
In contrast, the Sooners have won 40-straight home games and 103 of their last 105 contests at the Lloyd Noble Center.

Tubbs said Nebraska has had a rough season. Rough, he said, because the Huskers blew leads enroute to dropping contests to Idaho, Creighton, and then No.1-ranked Kansas.

"They let a couple games get away," Tubbs said.

Tubbs said he expects a tough game from Nebraska.

"They're a physically strong club," Tubbs said. "I can't tell what their confidence level is right now, but I know we'll be ready for their best shot."



David Hansen/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska's Jason Kelber sits alone while thinking about the possibility of being ranked No. 1 in the 126-pound weight class.

NU wrestler: Recognition has been slow, doesn't regret coming to Nebraska

By Chuck Green
Senior Reporter

Nebraska wrestler Jason Kelber has not gained respect easily.

The 126-pound junior has tried everything. Last year, he finished the season with a 33-13 overall record. He earned All-American honors with a sixth-place finish at the NCAA championships.

Two years ago, as a redshirt, Kelber went 11-1 in open tournament competition. As a freshman, he wrestled to a 21-11 overall mark.

This season he has amassed a 25-2 overall record, including a 13-2 dual mark. He has twice defeated top-ranked Kendall Cross of Oklahoma State. But Kelber said it still seems like no one knows his name.

However, they're starting to learn it.

"Before, Nebraska (wrestling) had no name for itself, let alone some freshman or sophomore going up against Kendall Cross," Kelber said.

But a couple of wins make a difference.

Kelber, ranked No. 3 at his weight class by Amateur Wrestling News, beat Cross 5-4 Thursday night at the Cowboy Duals in Stillwater, Okla., "which gained me a little more re-

spect," Kelber said.

But the respect level almost went down -- literally.

Leading 5-2 with 10 seconds left, Cross escaped from Kelber and was awarded a point for the move. Instead of retreating and running out the clock, Kelber shot in to grab Cross' legs and nearly got taken down -- a mistake that could have cost him the match.

Instead, Kelber fought to keep his feet, then pulled out of bounds. The referee awarded Cross another point for Kelber's technical violation.

"It was an awesome match," said Nebraska coach Tim Neumann. "The crowd was going wild at the end."

As the clock ran out, the fans quieted. Cross had been beaten for the third time this season -- and for the second time by Kelber.

The No. 4-ranked Husker team wasn't as lucky. The Huskers dropped a 21-12 decision to the top-ranked Cowboys.

"We were disappointed with the loss, but the morale is still good," Kelber said. "If we would have had two or three things go a little differently, we could have beaten them."

"But we'll get another shot at them."

That shot will come at the Big Eight Championships, which will take

place March 11 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center. Kelber's two wins against Cross will place him as the top seed in the tournament.

It also may place him at No. 1 in the nation in the next set of rankings.

Kelber, who began wrestling in third grade, was a three-time state champion in high school at Albion, Iowa. He posted a 133-3 career record.

Although he has been an Iowa State wrestling fan for most of his life, Kelber said he doesn't regret choosing to attend Nebraska.

"They have a great school, great facilities and a great coaching staff," he said. "I could have gone to Iowa or Iowa State and just fit in, but I decided that I should go somewhere where I could make a difference and help build a program."

"I think we have -- that's saying something in itself."

Despite his overall success this season, Kelber says Nebraska's team ranking is what concerns him the most.

"We have the possibility of having six or seven All-Americans at the end of the season," he said. "We've been bringing in the good talent lately and we've built a pretty good team. "Everybody knows that now."

By John Adkisson
Staff Reporter

When Nebraska forward Carl Hayes talks, rivals in the Big Eight pay attention.

"You're in for a treat to see him," Oklahoma State coach Leonard Hamilton said after Hayes scored 13 points against his Cowboys.

"He's an unbelievable basketball player."

Hayes' peers also are taking notice.

"I can't believe he's only a sophomore," Missouri guard Anthony Peeler said after seeing Hayes tally 20 points against the top-ranked Tigers. "He's a good player."

Hayes said the key to his mid-season rush has been a quiet attitude.

"I decided to just be quiet," he said, "and let my game do the talking."

Hayes' game has talked long and loud lately, as he has averaged 17 points per game during Nebraska's first four Big Eight contests. He tallied a career-high 22 points against Iowa State, and scored 33 against top-five opponents Missouri and Kansas.

Hayes said the best is yet to come.



Hayes

Cornhuskers strive for win in critical NU-OU match

By Paul Domeier
Senior Reporter

The Nebraska women's basketball team has a similar record, but a completely different attitude entering tonight's game against Oklahoma.

Nebraska women's basketball coach Angela Beck said the game is important because the Cornhuskers need to continue their winning ways. Nebraska recorded its first Big Eight victory of the year last Saturday, when it defeated Iowa State 68-60.

The Huskers now will try to improve their overall record to 10-10 and their Big Eight mark to 2-5 when they face Oklahoma at 7 p.m. in the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

The game, the last weekday home game of the year for the Huskers, will be broadcast live on Nebraska Educational Television Network (channel 12). University of Nebraska-Lincoln students who present their student I.D. cards will be admitted free.

"You haven't seen the real Carl Hayes yet," he said.

Hayes said he is just starting to come on because he is still adjusting to his new role as a starter. He cracked Nebraska's starting lineup earlier this season against Wagner College, and has since averaged 15 points and five rebounds per contest.

Hayes said he hasn't been surprised by his performance.

"I knew it was a matter of time before I started scoring well," Hayes said.

Nebraska coach Danny Nee said he is pleased to see Hayes performing so well. Pleased, he said, because the 6-foot-8 forward had to overcome a new role and Proposition 48 en route to becoming a scoring force.

Nee said Hayes' career did not make much progress last year, when he was forced to sit out after failing to meet the academic requirements established by Proposition 48.

"Although he has matured, I don't see where it could really have helped him," Nee said. "It was like a year in jail for him."

Hayes said he spent his first season at Nebraska talking with his old high school teammate, Husker guard Clifford Scales.

"He'd talk to me and keep encouraging me," Hayes said. "If it wasn't

See HAYES on 7

Beck said the Oklahoma game is critical because her team needs to look toward the final five home games of its season.

Beck said she also wants to see her team increase its offensive production again. Nebraska is 9-2 this season when they've scored 65 points or more.

The Huskers have averaged 61.3 points per game in the conference. That figure could mean trouble for Oklahoma, which is giving up 88 points per game this year.

After tonight's game, the Huskers play Colorado at home and Kansas State in Manhattan, Kan.

Beck said she will give more time to sophomores and juniors after their performance against Iowa State. Guard Kim Yancey led the Huskers with a career-high 19 points, and Carol Russell played most of the game at point guard. Both sophomores will enter

See SOONERS on 7