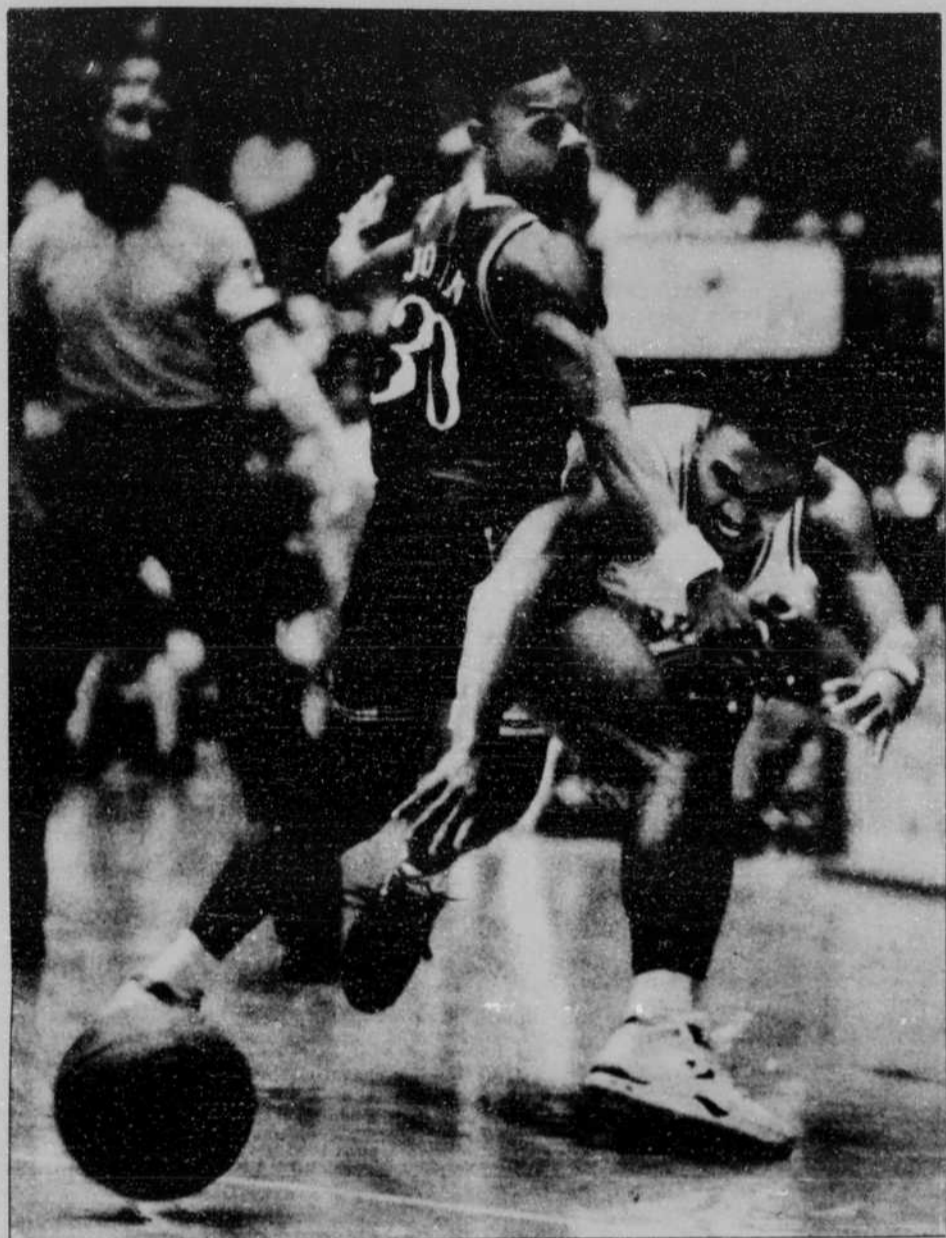


Huskers to face OU in Big Eight tourney

Nee: Experience gives NU edge against slumping OU



By John Adkisson
Staff Reporter

When Nebraska beat Oklahoma three weeks ago in Lincoln, Cornhusker players and fans chanted "Sweep" after their team had wrapped up a 105-93 victory.

For the first time since 1980-81, the Huskers had won both regular-season games against Oklahoma.

But the Sooners are back. Tonight, Nebraska will try to get the broom out again against Oklahoma in the first round of the Big Eight conference tournament in Kansas City, Mo.

With a 24-6 overall record and a 9-5 conference mark, Nebraska enters the tourney as the third seed behind Oklahoma State and Kansas. Oklahoma, 16-13 and 5-9 in the league, is the sixth seed.

Despite having a higher seed and better record than Oklahoma, Nebraska senior center Rich King said the Huskers will not take the 8:35 p.m. game at Kemper Arena lightly.

"We're thinking about them being Oklahoma and having a lot of pride," King said. "They're still the perennial favorite and we're still Nebraska."

Last year, Oklahoma won its fourth Big Eight tournament by beating Colorado in the finals. But this season has been different, with the Sooners losing 10 of their last 12. The Sooners' best and maybe only chance to make the NCAA Tournament is to earn the automatic berth given the Big Eight tournament champion.

Honor goes to Nee

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Danny Nee of Nebraska, whose team was picked last and whose career was thought to be in jeopardy, has been named Associated Press Big Eight coach of the year.

Nee, 45, was thought by many to be in trouble entering his fifth year at a Nebraska program that had failed to make the kind of leap forward administrators had wanted.

At the preseason basketball luncheon with coaches and media representatives last November, Nee asked writers what would become an embarrassing question.

"Why did you guys pick us last?" he said.

It is not exactly a sense of vindication Nee now feels.

"It's a sense of relief," he said. "A feeling of relief that, hey, we stuck with these guys and our program. We believed in ourselves and we accomplished our goals. You have to believe in yourself. You have to maintain that sense of self-confidence."

King said a slumping Oklahoma is frightening.

"They're scary," King said. "They're playing to keep their season going."

See NEE on 8

Nebraska's Keith Moody slips a pass around Adonis Jordan of Kansas. "It's given me a lot more confidence knowing that the crowd is behind me," Moody said. "A lot of times I'm on the bench and hear the crowd calling my name saying, 'Put Moody in!'"

Attitude change spurs success Husker adjusts game

By Nick Hytrek
Staff Reporter

He looks the same and he still wears No. 11 on his uniform, but the Keith Moody playing basketball for Nebraska this year is not the same Keith Moody who played last year.

The 5-foot-11 senior point guard said he knows of more than one reason for his improved play this season, but maybe the most important is a new attitude.

Moody entered the Cornhusker basketball program last season after transferring from Hagerstown Junior College in Maryland.

A lot was expected of him. He was a

point guard, a position on Nebraska's team left open by Eric Johnson's graduation.

"I got a lot of press coming out of junior college and I came here and I was supposed to produce some big things right away," Moody said. "There was pressure to be the point guard. I was looking forward to playing a lot. I started at the beginning of the season and then I didn't. My play was up and down."

As the team struggled through a 10-18 season, and as he became frustrated with his individual game, Moody took fan criticism to heart.

See ATTITUDE on 8

Player shines for unlucky OU

By Robert Richardson
Senior Reporter
and John Adkisson
Staff Reporter

Jeff Webster's breakthrough season has coincided with a backbreaking year for his team.

Webster, a freshman forward, has been one of the few bright spots in an otherwise dismal season for the 16-13 Oklahoma Sooners, who will play Nebraska tonight.

In his first full season at Oklahoma, Webster is averaging 18 points and five rebounds per game. He was named to the All-Big Eight second team and Thursday was named conference newcomer of the year.

But he isn't happy.

"I'm not satisfied with my play," Webster said. "I know there is always someone out there better than myself. Points aren't everything."

After entering Oklahoma as a highly touted instate recruit from Midwest City Carl Albert High School, Webster missed all but three games last year with a foot injury. He received a medical redshirt, and has lived up to all previous expectations this season.

It's not the same story for his team.

After starting the year 14-3, the Sooners have lost 10 of their last 12 games. Included in

that stretch are two losses to league doormat Kansas State, including a 101-98 home loss to the Wildcats last Saturday.

With Oklahoma's losing streak has come speculation that the Sooners may miss the NCAA tournament for the first time in nine years. Winning the Big Eight tournament may be the only way Oklahoma can advance.

For that reason, Webster said the Sooners will be gunning hard for a tournament win.

"Going into the Big Eight (tournament), we have nothing to lose and we have everything to win," he said. "I feel anyone in the Big Eight, we can beat."

The Sooners, seeded sixth, have lost both previous meetings with Nebraska. The Cornhuskers won 111-99 in Norman and 105-93 in Lincoln.

Webster said Nebraska uses a total team effort to win games.

"It's not just one player, the whole team is impressive," Webster said. "You can't just look at one person."

Nonetheless, Webster said, the Huskers can be beaten.

"They know we're no pushover team," Webster said. "We're going to play OU basketball like it should be played, and come out on top."

Men gymnasts to face ASU

By Todd Cooper
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska men's gymnastics team didn't get a look at Arizona State last weekend when the two teams competed in the six-team UCLA Invite.

But freshman Che Bowers said the weekend was an eye-opener. And it will help when the Huskers meet the Sun Devils Sunday at 2 p.m. at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

"It was our biggest meet of the year," Bowers said. "There was a lot going on, a lot of potential distractions, but we performed pretty well."

Nebraska's 281.45 points were enough for second place behind UCLA's 284.15 total. The Huskers' score was their highest of the season and was enough to beat fourth place

Arizona State by 2.95 points.

"We can't let that go to our heads," Bowers said. "They didn't have a really good meet last weekend."

Bowers did. The freshman from Atlanta scored a career-high 56.5 in the all-around at UCLA, good for sixth place. Bowers was in the top three of the all-around after the first day of competition.

"Seeing my score was comparatively close to some great talent boosted my confidence," Bowers said. "And our team got a boost as well when we were only down one-tenth of a point (to UCLA) after the first three events."

Had the Huskers performed better on the parallel bars Sunday, they might have won the meet, Coach Francis Allen said.

"Coach (Jim) Howard figured out that if we would have scored what we normally score on parallel bars, we would have won," Allen said. "We were in control going into the last event but we didn't finish them off."

Even though they didn't win the meet, Allen said his youthful team (five gymnasts are freshmen) continues to impress others.

"UCLA had to be thinking, 'Man, we almost got beat by them and they don't have hardly anyone back from last year,'" Allen said.

Freshmen Sumner Darling, who has a sore back, probably will perform in three events Sunday, Allen said. Josh Saeger, who is recovering from a broken leg, probably will perform where Darling can't.

Swimmers in 2nd

By Vicki Burge
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska men's swimming and diving team will have to get up and fight to claim its 12th straight Big Eight title.

After Thursday, the first day of the three-day competition at the Bob Devaney Sports Center, Kansas leads with 188 points, followed by the Cornhuskers with 184, Iowa State with 117 and Missouri with 59.

"We've got to make a turnaround," Nebraska coach Cal Bentz said. "I know this team has the potential to do it, but they haven't done it yet."

Bentz said with only three other teams competing, the Huskers don't

want to get too far behind.

"It's no secret that I think we can swim a lot faster than what we showed here," Bentz said. "We're better than that and we have to show it."

Bentz said he was pleased with Nebraska's two NCAA qualifying marks. Husker Jan Karlsson had a first-place swim of 20.20 seconds in the 50-yard freestyle, and the 200 freestyle relay team finished first in 1:20.54.

Nebraska also had an automatic diving qualifier on the 1-meter board. Nebraska freshman John Arcaroli took first with 510.45 points and Husker Matt Eastin placed second with 494.90. Kansas and Iowa State divers trailed close behind.