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# Doormats rise up Stronger Big 8 helps Nebraska

Things have changed. That was the theme of the Colorado football team two years ago as it won the Big Eight title and came within a game of the national championship.

Buffalo fans were making the statement that the Big Eight was not just made up of Nebraska, Oklahoma and six also-rans anymore. A third team had broken into the Big Red dominance.

And judging from what happened in Memorial Stadium on Saturday, things are changing again.

Kansas State, Kansas and Missouri have all showed that they are capable of making it into the upper level of the Big Eight standings.

Kansas State made a loud statement that they are not the doormat of the conference anymore.

That was evidenced by some of the statements made by Kansas State players after the 38-31 loss to Nebraska.

No longer do Wildcat players appear crushed by losing games like Saturday's. On the contrary, it seemed to reinforce the confidence they have in themselves.

"We haven't won the big game, but it's going to happen," quarterback Paul Watson said. "If we keep our guys going well, we're going to win the big game. Our season isn't over yet."

Linebacker Chris Patterson said opponents should no longer look at Kansas State as an easy win.

"To me, long gone are those days of, 'Well, we're playing Kansas State this week, so let's take the day off.'"

These are statements from players who have had to endure blowout after blowout at the hands of Nebraska and other Big Eight teams.

Over the past three years, the seniors on this season's Kansas State team have been beaten by a combined score of 476-96 by Nebraska, Oklahoma and Colorado. That's an average of almost 53-10.

Now these same players are talking about competing for the Big Eight title.

"We have a chance to be contenders in the Big Eight," Watson said. "I think we can win in the Big Eight. We showed that last year and now we gave one Big Eight powerhouse a scare."

"We're going to give it our best shot."



**Nick Hytrek**

That final statement by Watson sums it up the best.

In the past, "our best shot" would have meant that the Wildcats would hope to still be in the game at halftime. Now they believe they can beat anyone on their schedule.

They proved it Saturday. By talking to Wildcat players, it was obvious they are tired of seeing every near-win as "making a statement."

Kansas State Coach Bill Snyder was overheard in the locker room telling his players that "there is no such thing as a moral victory."

Snyder was telling his players that they shouldn't be satisfied with coming close to pulling off the upset. They should expect to.

And there is nothing at all wrong with that. Or with the fact that Kansas State has improved to the point where opposing teams will have to use their starters in the fourth quarter.

I heard some Nebraska fans grumbling after the game that they longed for the old days.

"The days when we could count on beating Kansas State 70-3," one said. I wanted to ask why.

Hasn't the common complaint of Nebraska fans the past few years been

that the national media won't stop criticizing Nebraska's weak schedule?

With perennial Big Eight doormats Kansas State and Kansas finally turning their programs around and winning some games, how can Nebraska's schedule be viewed as weak?

I see the emergence of Kansas State, Kansas and Missouri as nothing but a positive for many reasons.

First of all, with all of these teams being improved, it makes the Big Eight as a whole look better. Non-conference foes can no longer look to the Big Eight to get an easy game in on their schedule.

Kansas has beaten Tulsa, which beat Top-25 Texas A&M.

Kansas State easily has won games it was supposed to win, instead of finding a way to lose them, which usually happened in the past.

Missouri upset Illinois and tied Indiana.

Having stronger teams in the conference can only help Nebraska.

With stronger teams, the Cornhuskers will have to play harder every week and will have some experience in playing in the close game. These types of games will prepare Nebraska for the big Oklahoma game and the bowl game. Maybe we won't have to witness those fourth-quarter flops anymore.

Wouldn't it be great to see a close game in Memorial Stadium every week?

Obviously, some fans think not, but wins over any team which is a ratings contender can help Nebraska's sagging national image.

And one can't help but be happy for Kansas State and Kansas fans who have had to endure season after season of frustration.

It could be a matter of time before they frustrate Nebraska.

And who's to say that's all bad?

Hytrek is a senior news-editorial major and the Daily Nebraskan sports editor.

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## Football injuries affect 4 players

From Staff Reports

Nebraska Coach Tom Osborne said starting left offensive guard Erik Wiegert was held from practice Monday because of a jammed neck he suffered in Saturday's game against Kansas State.

Osborne said he doesn't know how bad the injury is, or how long Wiegert will be held from practice.

William Washington, tight end, attended practice, "but didn't do much," Osborne said. Washington reinjured his hamstring against the Wildcats and is still sore.

Pat Engelbert, defensive middle guard, did not practice because of a sore ankle, but is expected back soon, Osborne said.

Mickey Joseph, quarterback, strained his knee in practice, but he is all right, Osborne said.

## Cross country women take 4th place at meet

From Staff Reports

Fran ten Bensel placed second to lead the Nebraska women's cross country team to a fourth-place finish at the Mini Nationals at State College, Pa., this weekend.

Ten Bensel finished 11 seconds behind Cornell's Pam Hunt with a time of 17 minutes 10 seconds.

Lisa Graham also was among the top 10 finishers, finishing eighth in 17:40.

"I was extremely happy with our performance," Coach Jay Dirksen said. "We definitely im-

proved in this last week."

The No. 21 Cornhuskers finished behind fifth-ranked North Carolina State, No. 20 Cornell and host Penn State.

"It was very encouraging to run with some of the best teams in the country and hold our own," Dirksen said. "We aren't in the caliber of an N.C. State just yet, but we weren't that far out of second."

Other finishers for Nebraska were Theresa Stelling (20th), Michelle Schaefer (25th), Stephanie Quandt (35th), Sylvia Veit (40th) and Katie Fletcher (59th).

## Lewis

Continued from Page 7

Lewis made up for the miscue later when he rambled 25 yards to the Kansas State 1-yard line to set up Derek Brown's leap for a score. The touchdown put Nebraska up for good as the Husker defense held Kansas State on a late fourth-quarter rally.

"I was just hoping that the defense would stick it out," Lewis said. "Otherwise, I was going to have a bad weekend."

But Lewis found relief in 79 yards on six carries, a career high for the junior.

"I'll have to give it to the whole offensive line; they did a great job," he said. "I don't want to leave anyone out, but Erik Wiegert was just like a semi-truck going through there on

my first run."

Lewis tiptoed the sideline for 38 yards to set up Nebraska's first score. And he did it in front of familiar people.

Lewis' family was up from Scott City, Kan., to watch the game. But absent was his brother Rick, a linebacker at Kansas State from 1984-1987.

"I'd never hear the end of it from my brother if we lost," Lewis said. "I knew it was going to go into the fourth quarter, I just didn't think it would go that far."

Lewis said his fumble and the tightness of the game will be "big" in his brother's eyes.

"I'm still going to take some heat from my brother for having such a close game," Lewis said. "But hey, they were a great team. I'm going to sit back and take this win."

## ESPN to show Husker-Buffalo game

The Nebraska-Colorado football game Nov. 2 in Boulder, Colo., will be televised by ESPN, the cable station announced Sunday.

Kickoff time has been moved from 1 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. CST.

Following Colorado's 34-17 win

over Oklahoma and Nebraska's 38-31 win over Kansas State on Saturday, the Nebraska-Colorado game gained importance in deciding the Big Eight champion. Barring an upset, both teams will be 3-0 and tied for first in the conference when they meet.

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