

Wheels

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we can get it off the ground," he said. "If the administration feels like it is a solid organization, they could move it up to varsity level."

Stutheit said wheelchair basketball had a few different rules from regular basketball.

Wheelchair players, he said, got five seconds in the free throw lane instead of three. Wheelchair players have 15 seconds instead of 10 to get the ball across half court. Also, wheelchair players can get two pushes for one dribble of the ball before a traveling violation is called.

Stutheit said the game had an equalizing rule.

Teams, he said, must have five players on the floor equal to a maximum of 12 points. Points, he said, were given based on balance and mobility of each player. The most

able-bodied players, he said, were given three points. Both Stutheit and Kingery are two-pointers.

"The number has nothing to do with ability," Stutheit said. "It makes teams more equal and allows smaller teams to be competitive."

Although Stutheit will probably have graduated by the time the sport could move up to the varsity level, he said he would still like to be one of the people responsible for getting it started.

Kingery said he wasn't sure if he would be at UNL to see the beginning of his goal, either.

"I have a chance to go to a school in Minnesota as a scholarship athlete next year," he said. "I'll have to see how far we get with the team here before making any decisions."

Stutheit said the team could bring more wheelchair users to UNL.

"If we can get this program going," he said, "we'll draw more wheelchair users here who may not go to college otherwise."

Tradition

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Nebraska's success and the strengthening of the Big Eight Conference overall have helped the Huskers gain exposure, he said.

Nee said the Big Eight's appearance on ESPN's "Big Monday" — the cable network's self-entitled basketball showcase — brought national attention to basketball in the Midwest. Nebraska appeared on "Big Monday" twice this season.

“Since we've come here, we've been trying to build this winning tradition. Getting to the NCAA two years in a row is helping solidify the tradition.”

— Nee, NU men's basketball coach

Despite the success of the past two years, Nebraska must reach for new heights, Nee said.

"The next step is trying to get a winning game in the NCAA Tournament and advancing," he said.

"Another step is being in contention the last week of the season, getting to the finals of the Big Eight Tournament like we did a year ago or winning the conference."

Nee said it wouldn't be easy to reach that next plateau.

"That next step is a giant, giant step," he said.

Instead, Nee said, Nebraska must be content to gain a little at a time.

"I think you take it in small half-steps," he said. "I don't think you just move to that level."

"A lot of things have to happen, but we're certainly pointed in that direction."



William Lauer/DN

Nebraska coaches Danny Nee (bottom), Gary Barga (left), Jeff Smith (middle) and David Lutz give instructions during the Cornhuskers' 107-85 loss to Oklahoma in the first round of the Big Eight Tournament last Friday. The Huskers will face Connecticut Thursday in the first round of the NCAA Tournament at Cincinnati.

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