

Three victories propel Jayhawks to No. 1 ranking

By Jeff Griesch
Staff Reporter

Kansas became the nation's top-ranked team on Monday following three Jayhawk wins and losses by Kentucky, Duke, and Michigan.

Kansas, 14-1 and 2-0, defeated Oklahoma 96-85, Oral Roberts 140-72, and Louisville 98-77 to take the top spot.

Jayhawks coach Roy Williams said he told his players that they had earned the No. 1 ranking, but they needed to stay focused.

"We've played very well the last two times out, but none of our goals at the beginning of the season was to play 15 games and cancel the rest of the season," Williams said on the Big Eight coaches' teleconference.

Williams credited his backcourt duo of Rex Walters and Adonis Jordan with the Jayhawks' ascension to the top of the polls.

"Rex and Adonis have both been great," Williams said. "They are both talented young men who are playing very well and they are also playing very hard."

Walters struggled through an early season shooting slump but finally broke out of it, hitting 20 of 30 field goals, including 9 of 14 three pointers, for a total of 58 points in the three Kansas wins. For his efforts, Walters earned Big Eight Player of the Week honors.

"I wish I could tell you that I did something great to help Rex out of his slump," Williams said. "I did help him with some technical things, but it was just a case of him getting in the gym, working his tail off shooting jump shots and he finally just worked it out."

Nebraska began the conference season with two losses, but Coach Danny Nee is remaining positive about the play of the Cornhuskers.

Nee said the Huskers showed improvement despite losing at Oklahoma 102-89 on Thursday and Oklahoma State 78-73 on Saturday. The Huskers fell to 11-5 and 0-2 in the conference.

Jaron Boone, Andre Woolridge, Erick Strickland, Tom Best, Terrance Badgett, and Amos Gregory got their first taste of playing in

Weekend schedule takes toll on team playing, Beck says

By Derek Samson
Staff Reporter

Neither the new Friday-Sunday schedule nor assigned travel partners for Big Eight women's basketball teams have made a good first impression on Nebraska coach Angela Beck.

The new system of scheduling, adopted by the conference this summer, was designed to give the sport more exposure.

But Beck said she isn't so sure. "After two weeks now and having a 2-2 conference mark, this Friday-Sunday thing is taking its toll," Beck said at her weekly press

Despite changes, "Nee-braska" lacks leadership

Things have changed around here. Winter used to be a relatively quiet time, with most sports fans either spending their time dreaming about the next year's football team or supporting Nebraska's nationally renowned gymnastics team.

Sure, there were some who went to the Bob Devaney Sports Center to watch the basketball team play, but there was little passion and little enthusiasm.

Our home court didn't get called "Dead Dog Alley" for nothing.

We had our share of good players in the good old days — Bernard Day, Dave Hoppen and Bill Jackman — but the spark was just never there.

But like I said, things have changed around here.

I first noticed it when I saw bumper stickers that misspelled our state's name. "Nee-braska" was the new

name, and it brought a new style of play to Nebraska basketball.

Danny Nee brought his Brooklyn heritage to the state and changed the Huskers' style of play to fit his background. "Nee-braska" turned into the home of a fast-paced basketball team, one that could run with the best of them.

Perhaps the idea came from Nee's former Power Memorial High School teammate Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, who was an integral part of the Lakers and their "showtime" running game, or perhaps it was modeled after the Husker football team's running game.

Nee came to Nebraska and immediately recruited and landed some of the country's top athletes, and brought excitement to the Sports Center.

It all started two years ago, with players like Tony Farmer, Rich King and Beau Reid. The team finished

Big Eight Men's Standings

	Conf	All
Kansas	2-0	14-1
Kansas State	2-0	10-2
Missouri	2-0	10-3
Oklahoma	1-1	12-3
Oklahoma State	1-2	9-3
Iowa State	1-2	9-5
Nebraska	0-2	11-5
Colorado	0-2	7-6



Scott Maurer/DN

the Big Eight, and Nee thinks that playing on the road early will help the Huskers later in the season.

"Our young kids found out what it was like to play on the road in the Big Eight for the first time," Nee said.

The brightest spot for the Huskers on the road trip was the play of Erick Strickland. The 6-foot-3 freshman from Bellevue scored 19 points against the Sooners and added 12 points and 5 assists against the Cowboys.

According to Nee, Strickland's offense is improving and his defense is providing a spark to the Huskers.

"I have never seen a player come in as a freshman and be so dominant on the defensive end," Nee said. "He gives us a defensive identity, and he does a lot of little things for us."

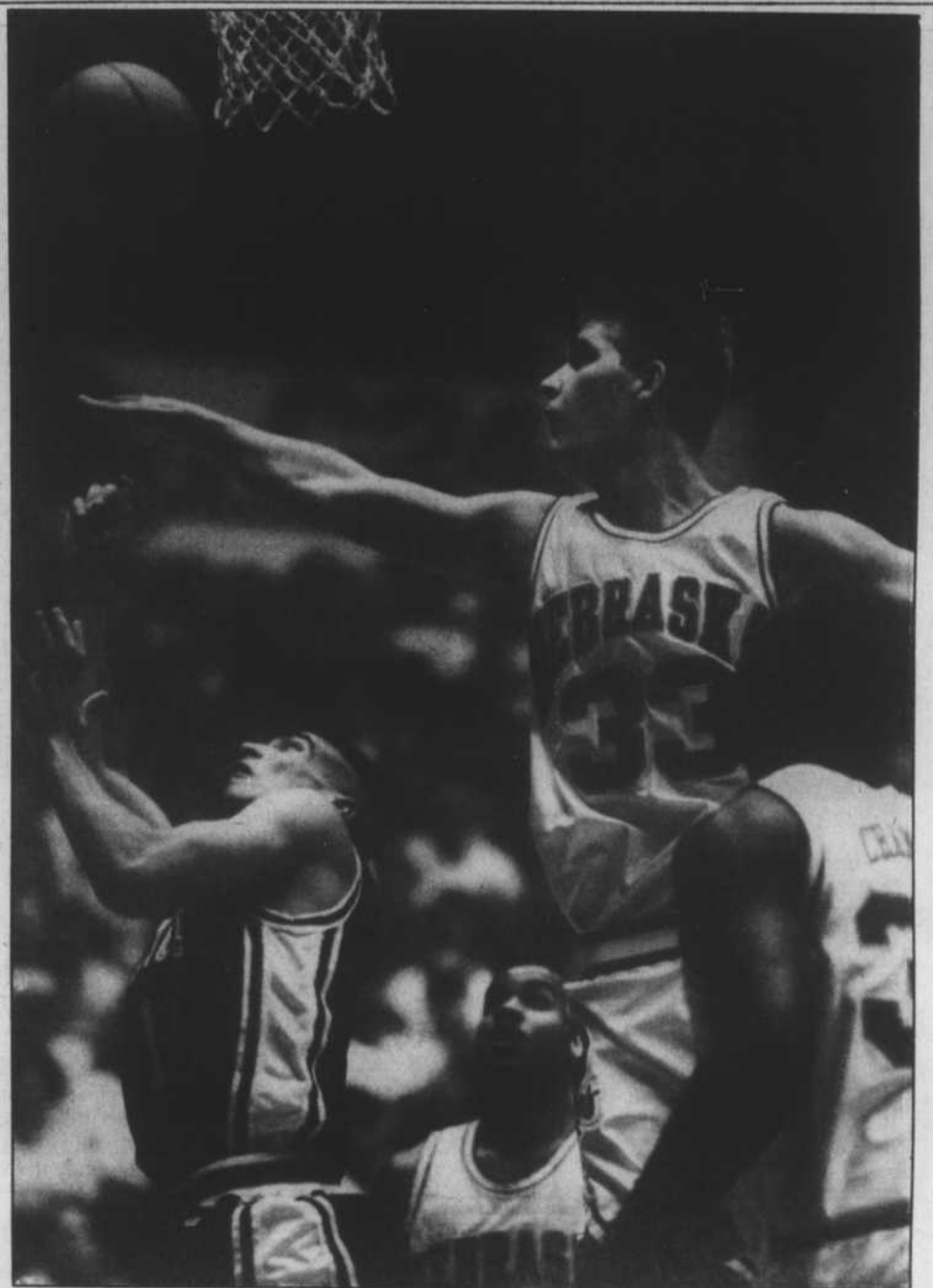
Iowa State . . . is now down to six players. Nobody is really preparing for them.

—Beck, NU women's coach

conference Monday. "Today is really their only day off and they have school."

"This weekend thing is murder because we

See BECK on 8



Travis Heying/DN

Nebraska forward Tom Best blocks a shot in a game earlier this season against Creighton. The Cornhuskers, 0-2 in Big Eight play, will resume play in a non-league game Wednesday against Sacramento State.

Nee says Nebraska fans shouldn't fret over losses

Husker coach pleased with effort on the road

By Jeff Singer
Senior Reporter

Nebraska men's basketball coach Danny Nee is urging Cornhusker fans not to hit the panic button just yet.

The Huskers opened their Big Eight season last week with a pair of losses — a 102-89 setback to Oklahoma on Thursday and a 78-73 loss to Oklahoma State two days later in Stillwater, Okla.

Nebraska is tied with Colorado at the bottom of the conference standings, with the entire Big Eight looking up to No. 1 Kansas, which stands at 3-0 in league play.

But Nee said it was not yet time for the

Huskers to give up their hopes of a conference trophy and hand it over to the Jayhawks.

"I do think there's a lot of basketball left and it does balance out with the home and away games, so in time we'll handle it," Nee said. "That will work itself out if we take care of business where we're supposed to."

Nee isn't sure if playing at the Oklahoma schools was where his team was supposed to start registering Big Eight wins.

"If we looked back in the spring and thought of two games we were going to play in Oklahoma — if we were going to win them or if we could play .500 basketball — we would've been reluctant to say either one," he said. "So playing two back-to-back road games starting off the Big Eight is a difficult challenge."

See LOSSES on 8



Susie Arth

ninth in the UPI rankings, 11th in the AP rankings, and made an appearance in the NCAA tournament.

A year ago, "Nee-braska" was the home of yet another exciting basketball team. The running tradition was carried on by seniors Dapreis Owens and Carl Hayes, and the Huskers again appeared in the NCAA tournament.

So far this year, the run-and-gun tradition has persisted with only one element missing — success.

The Huskers have struggled this season, losing to USC, Michigan, Southwestern Louisiana, Oklahoma and Oklahoma State. They have an

11-5 overall record, and are 0-2 in the Big Eight Conference.

The Huskers lack senior leadership, and they lack discipline. The lone senior on the team, Derrick Chandler, is only playing his second season as a Husker. Juniors Eric Piatkowski and Bruce Chubick each have three years of experience, but neither has assumed a crucial leadership role, at least not on the floor.

The team is dominated by freshmen. Andre Woolridge, Erick Strickland, Jaron Boone and Terrance Badgett have proven that they can run in Division I basketball, but they have yet to prove they can play.

The Huskers seem to prefer the Houston Oilers' offense, the run and shoot, over the more standard route of running a half-court offense. They run down the court, pass once, maybe twice, and then shoot.

But win or lose, "Nee-braska" still brings excitement to the state.

Where else could you find a coach who would allow center Amos Gregory to fire freely from three-point range? Where else could you find a team firing 70-plus shots a game? And where else can you find five first-year players trying to imitate the Lakers' "showtime"?

So maybe "Nee-braska" needs to help its players understand their roles better, or maybe "Nee-braska" needs to exercise some sort of discipline on its players.

And if it doesn't, "Nee-braska" could revert back to the days before change blessed the state — it could end up in the NIT.

Arth is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan senior reporter.