

Freshmen-led Huskers win in overtime

By Jeff Singer
Senior Reporter

Just when it looked like the season was lost for the Nebraska men's basketball team, a group of Cornhusker freshmen grew up in a hurry.

Led by freshman guard Erick Strickland, the Huskers raced to an 88-87 overtime victory over Missouri on Saturday at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Strickland set a new Nebraska freshmen record by scoring 28 points off the bench, and helped the Huskers improve their Big Eight record to 2-3 in front of 14,404 fans.

After comfortably leading the game

with a 51-33 margin with just more than 15 minutes left in the game, the Tigers mounted a furious comeback that almost spelled doom for Nebraska.

Missouri outscored the Huskers 29-7 in a little more than six minutes of play to take a 62-58 lead with just 8:47 remaining in the game. The Tigers were led primarily by guard Melvin Booker, who had a team-high 27 points in the game.

Enter Strickland. The Bellevue native hit five of six three-pointers in the game, including a pair of threes in the final minutes of regulation to keep the score close.

In the extra frame, Nebraska again squandered a big lead. The Huskers

were ahead 85-78 with just 1:02 to play. But a pair of Tiger three-pointers and erratic free-throw shooting by Nebraska eventually let Missouri tie the game with just 13 seconds left in overtime.

A foul by the Tigers' Chris Heller put Strickland on the line, and he made one of his free throws to give the Huskers a one-point lead.

Missouri had a last chance to win, but Strickland knocked the ball away from a pair of Tigers underneath the basket, and a three-pointer by Missouri's Mark Atkins bounced off the rim and kept Nebraska's faint Big Eight championship hopes alive.

The Tigers' record dropped to 3-1

in league play and 13-5 overall.

Strickland said the game was solid for all the freshmen, including Jaron Boone, Andre Woolridge and Terrance Badgett.

"I think this is a great momentum builder for the freshmen, because playing in tough games are always good for you, especially if you can win," Strickland said.

Junior Husker forward Eric Piatkowski, who had 18 points in the effort, said he was proud not only of Strickland's effort, but of all the freshmen.

"At one point in the game, you looked in there — there was myself out there, but then there was four freshmen out there with me," he said.

"This is a huge game and they showed great poise out there on the floor and did a fantastic job."

Nebraska center Derrick Chandler, who had 16 points and 12 rebounds, agreed.

"Coach recruited them highly, and we have confidence in them," he said. "We don't consider them freshmen anymore."

Husker coach Danny Nee said he was happy his freshmen came through in time to improve Nebraska's overall record to 14-6.

"It was a very exciting game, but this time of year in the Big Eight, the only thing that matters is winning," Nee said.

Strickland fills expectations with big win

By Tim Pearson
Staff Reporter

When Erick Strickland arrived in Lincoln last fall as part of Danny Nee's best-ever recruiting class, big things were expected of him.

Big things happened Saturday. Just getting over the stomach flu, Strickland exceeded those expectations and led Nebraska to an 88-87 overtime victory over Missouri.

The 6-foot-3 freshman guard came off the bench and scored 28 points, a single-game record for a Cornhusker freshman.

"When I shot a couple times, I thought they were off," Strickland said. "But when the shots are falling, they're falling."

Missouri coach Norm Stewart said Strickland, who played in the Florida Marlins' minor league system last summer, is a good athlete.

"Strickland's a good ballplayer," he said. "He's a pro baseball player, so he's a good athlete also."

Strickland was the man Nebraska looked to for the big play against the Tigers, and he didn't disappoint.

He made all four of his shots in the first half, including two three-pointers.

Stewart said Strickland hurt the Tigers in the first half with a couple of big baskets.

But in the second half and in overtime, Strickland hurt the Tigers even more, scoring 18 points in the remainder of the game.

In the second half Strickland hit three key three-pointers, including one in the final two minutes of the game, tying the game at 74.

"Eric (Piatkowski) missed a couple of threes, so I knew his confidence wasn't there," Strickland said. "So I just felt that it was the big time now, getting down to crunch time, and I wanted the ball."

Strickland saved the game for the Huskers on both sides of the court.

He hit the deciding free throw in overtime and blocked Chris Heller's tip-in try at the overtime buzzer.

"I told myself that there's no way I'm getting beat on a buzzer-beater by a tip," Strickland said. "I just said I'm going at him."

Strickland is starting to be more of a force on the offensive end during Big Eight play.

He scored 19 against Oklahoma, and now with 28 points against Missouri, Strickland gives the Huskers another offensive threat after a slow start offensively.

"I'm just letting time come. I'm being patient," he said. "It's the same thing that happened in high school. It just took time to adjust."

Strickland has not taken long to adjust to college basketball, but he said he is still learning.

"The physical aspect wasn't that bad, but the pace is a lot more quicker, and the mental aspect is tougher," he said. "There are also a lot more better athletes at this level."



Erick Strickland drives past Chris Heller of Missouri. The Huskers won 88-87 in overtime during Saturday's game.

Robin Trimarchi/DN

Despite victory over Iowa State, Beck calls team's execution poor

By Beau Finley
Staff Reporter

Angela Beck knew that intensity would be a factor when her Cornhusker women's basketball team went on the road against decidedly outmanned Iowa State.

Nebraska fulfilled expectations and won an 82-52 blowout against the Cyclones Sunday, but Beck said her team was sloppy in its execution.

"We didn't play hard," Beck said on her postgame radio show. "I thought we looked like a bunch of fat, lazy campers."

Even a below-average performance by the Huskers was enough to best a Cyclone team beset by injury and personal problems. Iowa State was only able to suit up seven players for Sunday's game, one of whom was the team's student manager.

Beck said that Iowa State's situation was "weird" and that she didn't know what to expect from the handicapped Cyclones. Nonetheless, she said she respected Iowa State's effort

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—Beck
NU Coach

in the game.

"I thought they were a real emotional team and played real hard... they outthusted us," Beck said.

The game began with a Husker flurry as Nebraska scored the first seven points. But Iowa State used a 14-4 run to tie the game at 22 near the middle of the first half.

The Huskers then turned to the steady shooting of senior Karen Jennings. Jennings scored 20 of her 21 points in the first half and sparked the Huskers to a 40-26 lead at intermission.

Nebraska took control in the second half with a tough defensive press

and balanced scoring as they cruised to their fifth Big Eight win in seven tries.

Beck said the lead did allow her to substitute more freely and give younger players some valuable playing time.

"I hope everyone thinks I was somewhat generous. All 12 of our players got into the game," Beck said. "I think we learned a lot today."

The substitution limited the playing time of Jennings, who came out early in the second half and only scored one point. Entering the game, Jennings needed 29 points to break the all-time Nebraska scoring record held by Maurice Ivy.

Beck said that she thought it would be better for Jennings to break the record in Lincoln. The Huskers will play host to Southwest Missouri State on Tuesday.

"I took Jennings out and said to her 'Jens, let's break the record at home,'" Beck said. "It's a once-in-a-lifetime event and I wanted her to break it at home."

NU defends No. 2 rank, gives coach 98th dual win

By Tony West
Staff Reporter

Nebraska's wrestling team looked like the No. 2 team in the nation Saturday night.

The Cornhuskers, fresh off receiving news of the highest ranking in school history, promptly proved it by stomping Wyoming 36-3 in a dual at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Nebraska All-American Corey Olson said the match with Wyoming, an unranked team with a 1-3 dual record, afforded the Huskers a chance to practice.

"This match wasn't as big of a deal since we were picked to win," Olson said. "It was more of a learning experience and a chance to improve on mistakes."

Coach Tim Neumann agreed with Olson and said he was pleased with the improvement he saw.

"We were a lot better on the

edge," Neumann said. "I don't think they (Wyoming) scored on the edge tonight."

The Huskers started off slow, losing the first match by decision. But Nebraska reeled off seven straight victories and brought the team score to 24-3.

Wyoming forfeited the 190-pound and heavyweight matches, giving Nebraska the 33-point win.

With the victory, Neumann became the all-time winningest coach in Nebraska wrestling history, winning his 98th dual in only his eighth season as Husker coach.

Neumann said his team was impressive after last weekend's National Dual Meet Championships, where the Huskers placed second to No. 1 Penn State.

"We didn't look too bad," Neumann said. "Intensity was good and I was really impressed. We were sharp after coming off last weekend."