

Huskers hope momentum halts Cyclones

Winning streak stirs confidence

By Jeff Singer
Senior Reporter

Playing on the road in the Big Eight can often be intimidating, but recently, the Nebraska men's basketball team has felt right at home in Ames, Iowa.

The Cornhuskers have won their last two meetings at Iowa State, and will be looking to make it three in a row tonight at 7:05 p.m. at the Hilton Coliseum.

Nebraska was one of two Cyclone opponents to win in Ames last season, and the Huskers have won their last

four overall meetings against Iowa State.

So does the recent success against the Cyclones make the Huskers confident?

"The last two years we've gone down there and won; I just feel that that's a game that if we play well, we can win there," Nebraska forward Eric Piatkowski said.

Piatkowski, who leads the Huskers in scoring with 15.9 points per game, said if Nebraska is going to win the game, the Huskers have to control the game's momentum to keep the Iowa State fans quiet.

"I think it's important right from the tip-off for us to get out ahead of them, because Hilton is always sold out and they get great crowds," he said.

Nebraska currently has a two-game winning streak following a 0-3 Big Eight start. The Huskers registered conference victories last week against Colorado and Missouri to improve their overall record to 14-6.

Nebraska guard Erick Strickland was the star of the Huskers' 88-87 overtime win over the Tigers, coming off the bench to lead Nebraska with 28 points.

Strickland said tonight's game is important to keep Nebraska's momentum going for the rest of the season.

"I'm looking at trying to get on a winning streak in the Big Eight and just keep winning," Strickland said.

"We're just trying to take it game by game, and if we can win Wednesday, that would be a big uplifter for us."

Home crowd may help ISU

From Staff Reports

Nebraska's improved play has Iowa State coach Johnny Orr concerned about tonight's 7:05 p.m. game against the Cornhuskers at the Hilton Coliseum.

"They're a good team," Orr said. "They have good solid players, and they have a lot of them."

Iowa State comes in at 12-6 for the season and 2-3 in the Big Eight. Orr said this year has been both up and down for his team.

"We've been both off and on. I've been pleased at times, and sometimes I haven't been," he said.

The Cyclones are coming off a 94-77 loss at Oklahoma State last Saturday.

Orr, now in his 12th season at Iowa State, said he didn't know how that loss would affect his team in tonight's game, but he said he was glad they would be playing at home in a sold-out arena.

The Cyclones are 10-0 at Hilton Coliseum, with wins over Oklahoma, Oklahoma State and Minnesota.

"We play much better here than on the road," he said. "I'd much rather play in front of the home crowd than on the road."

In their last four matches, the Huskers beat the Cyclones — including an 80-70 win in Ames last year.

Orr said that he hoped to reverse that trend this year, even with Nebraska on a two-game winning streak.

Track team to take on tougher foes

By Chris Hain
Staff Reporter

Last Saturday two members of the Nebraska men's and women's track teams had record performances, but both of those athletes will face tough matchups this Saturday.

For the women, freshman Paulette Mitchell broke her own school record in the shot put with an NCAA-qualifying distance of 52 feet, 3 3/4 inches. This Saturday, Mitchell will face Colorado junior Melisa Weis, who has a Big Eight best throw of 53-3/4.

Cornhusker sophomore Robert Thomas broke Von Sheppard's 1985 school record of 25-4 3/4 by long jumping a distance of 25-6.

Thomas will have to face one of the world's best long jumpers, Arkansas's Erick Walder, who has already leaped a distance of 26-11 this year.

Both Colorado and Virginia will bring their men's and women's teams to Lincoln this weekend, and Arkansas's men and Iowa's women will also be competing in men's and women's quadrangulars.

"There will be some great athletes in this meet," Cornhusker coach Gary Pepin said.

The Huskers are coming off second-place finishes in both the men's and women's divisions in last Saturday's quadrangular in Champaign, Ill.

Along with Mitchell, event winners for the Husker women were Theresa Stelling in the mile, Kwani Stewart in the long jump and Nicola Martial in the triple jump.

For the men, three Huskers joined Thomas as a first place finishers. They were Kevin Coleman in the shot put, Steve Gordon in the triple jump, and Kevin Miller in the 3,000 meters.



Nebraska's Lisbet Brenden (13) tries to keep a foul from being called on her as Southwest Missouri State's Melody Howard fights to regain control of the ball. Nebraska's Rissa Taylor (22) looks on.

Staci McKee/DN

Record-setting Jennings lifts NU past Bears

By Jeff Griesch
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska women's basketball team survived a strong second half run by Southwest Missouri State and escaped with a 88-84 win on Tuesday night.

The Cornhuskers blew a 16-point halftime lead before rallying for an 10-0 run late in the game to put the game away before 1,842 fans at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Behind the strong shooting of Karen Jennings, the Huskers raced to a 53-37 halftime lead. Jennings scored 35 points and became Nebraska's all-time leading scorer when she hit a free throw midway through the first half.

Jennings was presented with a game ball during a timeout and said that she was moved by the appreciation of the Nebraska fans.

"I was really touched that all the fans gave me a standing ovation," Jennings said. "I didn't expect it to be such a big deal."

Nebraska coach Angela Beck said that Jennings' impressive performance surprised her.

"For her to play as well as she did was kind of a surprise to me," Beck said. "Sometimes when a kid comes into to a game with a record on her mind she won't play well."

Along with the play of Jennings, Nebraska used an aggressive full court press to force 16 Bear turnovers in the first half.

"We had a tremendous first half," Beck said. "I knew that they had more in them, and they were going to come after us, and they came out and played a great second half."

The Bears applied a trapping press of their own after halftime, forcing Nebraska into 12 second half turnovers, erasing the Husker lead and tying the game at 78 with 2:56 remaining in the game.

Beck said poor offensive execution by the Huskers let the Bears back in the game.

"We didn't execute on offense, and we took some bad shots," Beck said. "But I have to credit their defense for causing us not to execute."

Nebraska never surrendered the lead and hit 10 consecutive free throws to regain an 88-78 lead with 27 seconds left.

Beck said that Nebraska teams of the past would not have been able to find a way to win in a similar situation.

"The difference between this year's team and last year's, is that this team let them cut the 20-point lead, and then shut the door on them," Beck said.

Meggan Yedsena hit four of the 10 free throws down the stretch and finished the game with 13 points and 12 assists.

"Yedsena had a great game," Beck said. "She really ran the offense well in the first half."

Secelia Winkfield led Southwest Missouri State with 32 points and Melody Howard added 20.

Winkfield kept the Bears in the game in the first half by scoring 18 points.

Beck said that Winkfield's performance was one of the best games she has ever seen by an opposing player since she had been at Nebraska.

Athletic skill, defensive hustle make Strickland top dog

I took a trip down Dead Dog Alley Saturday.

Oh sure, I had been to that haven of heinous hounds before. But I was just a puppy at the time.

So I never, ever dreamed that I'd stand in the alley sandwiched between the "swat team" and two guys with basketballs on their heads.

And I never ever imagined that Nebraska's real pack of puppies — the Husker freshmen — would make these hounds howl.

Let's just say this bulldog was expecting to see a puppy show Saturday. Up until Nebraska's last two games, the Husker freshmen were paraded around more for their potential than anything they had proven.

But their performances Saturday added some bite to that bark.

Although he shouldn't start,

Terrance Badgett played tough, aggressive defense in helping the Huskers jump to a 51-33 lead, just before he fouled out.

And long after Nebraska blew that lead, Jaron Boone showed composure — not a very common Cornhusker commodity these days — in the clutch.

But only one freshman had the dead dogs around me drooling. Every time the Huskers stumbled, the dogs began barking.

And who were those hounds howling for? Erick Strickland, the prospect who has turned out to be the pick of Nee's litter.

Make no bones about it, Strickland's just a pup. His struggles at the line — 3 for 7 in the last few minutes — showed his age.

But in terms of athletic ability, this pup's a pro.



Todd Cooper

Even a Tiger — the snarliest one of all, no less — admitted that Saturday.

"Strickland's a good ballplayer," said Norm Stewart, an uncommon compliment from a coach who normally growls more than he gloats about players. "He's a pro baseball player, so he's a good athlete also."

Make that the best athlete among the Huskers. But Strickland's athleticism goes beyond the baseball diamond, where he plays minor league ball for the Florida Marlins.

He's the quickest Husker.

His cat-like quickness snarled the Oklahoma State Cowboys, just like it checked Colorado's Donnie Boyce.

He's the most focused Husker.

Besides his lapse at the line Saturday, Strickland was poised during prime time.

And that was only because he was prepared. While the other Husker newcomers showed off and slacked off during Saturday's pregame shootaround, Strickland shot solo at the other end of the floor. And he shot smart.

But his focus is best seen after he makes his shots.

When other Huskers make a bucket, they either prime their polish rifles, punch the air and hop down the court

or salute their "swat team."

When Strickland makes a shot, he does his "duty" and plays defense.

For that reason alone, he should start.

Strickland admitted he's comfortable coming off the bench.

But clearly, Husker opponents wouldn't get out to their comfortable early cushions — witness Missouri's 9-2 lead after three minutes and Kansas State's 15-6 lead after six minutes — if Strickland was in to put the bite on their leads.

Until he starts, Husker opponents will continue to dog Nebraska's defense early.

And Husker hounds will continue to howl.

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