

Nebraska women demolish Iowa State

By Derek Samson
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska women took a final step in preparation for the Big Eight Tournament by crushing Iowa State 89-40 in their final regular-season game Sunday at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

"I was worried about all the distractions," coach Angela Beck said. "This team is pretty mature, though. They did what we set out to do today."

The last-place Cyclones did not weigh as heavy on the minds of the players as did performing well to prepare for the Big Eight Tournament, which begins Saturday in Salina, Kan.

"Our plans were pretty well set. We wanted to prepare for the tournament," Beck said. "We wanted to work on certain areas like our free-

throw shooting."

Beck said most of her objectives were accomplished in the win. Nebraska hit 21 of 26 free throws, caused 39 Cyclone turnovers and edged Iowa State 51-49 in the rebounding column.

"We focused on executing, and we wanted to get the confidence going into the tournament," Nebraska guard Meggan Yedsena said. "This is going to give us momentum."

The Huskers blew the game open early, going on 19-0 run and increasing their lead to 26-4 with 9:13 remaining in the first half. The Cyclones committed 22 turnovers in the first half as Nebraska took a 45-18 lead into the locker room.

Karen Jennings scored 12 points, and Kristi Anderson pulled down eight rebounds for Nebraska in the half.

"This team believes they can win the Big Eight (Tournament). I don't think (Nebraska) is going to fall on their face."

—Beck
NU women's coach

"We had good distribution of the ball," Beck said. "Everything we wanted to occur did occur."

Nebraska kept rolling in the second half as Rissa Taylor scored 11 of Nebraska's first 19 points over a 5:56 span.

Jennings finished with a game-

high 21 points while Nafeesah Brown added 14. Jennings played her last home game along with three other seniors: Anderson, Taylor and Sara Offringa.

Anderson finished with a career-high 10 points, while Offringa and Taylor each added 11.

"They've gone from 2-12 in the Big Eight as freshmen to being tied for second," Beck said. "They've done an outstanding job of putting us on the map."

The goal of the Huskers' second-straight 20-win season was accomplished with the victory, as Nebraska improved to 20-6 overall and 10-4 in the Big Eight.

Iowa State finished the regular season at 1-13 in the Big Eight and 2-24 overall.

"This is a nice way to end the

regular season, but I like playing in the close games a lot better," said Yedsena, who dished out nine assists. "I'd much rather have the Colorado or Missouri-type game than this."

The Cornhuskers finished tied for second in the conference, one game behind Colorado. They will play Iowa State Saturday at 6 p.m. in the first round of the tournament.

Other tournament pairings include No. 1 Colorado against No. 8 Kansas State, No. 3 Oklahoma State against No. 6 Oklahoma and No. 4 Kansas against No. 5 Missouri.

Beck said her team has as good a chance as any.

"I think we are playing as good as any team in the Big Eight," Beck said. "This team believes they can win the

See NU WOMEN on 8

NU throws all punches to knock out Iowa State

By Jeff Singer
Senior Reporter

After this weekend's game between Nebraska and Iowa State, one might think that the Cornhuskers boxed their way to a men's basketball victory Saturday.

"Every time they put us to the canvas, we popped back up and kept fighting," Nebraska coach Danny Nee said.

"I felt after we got over the hump that there was no way that they could get back off the canvas and come back and win," Cornhusker center Derrick Chandler added.

But Iowa State fought the Huskers to the wire before Nebraska escaped with a 91-87 win at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

For the third time this season, the Huskers were able to win a conference home game in the final minute, this one coming down to a Nebraska defensive stand in the game's last 10 seconds in front of 14,520 fans.

After the Huskers eliminated a seven-point deficit with less than six minutes remaining in the game, Nebraska went on a 20-9 run, capped by a slashing layup by Husker guard Erick Strickland with 10 seconds left to give Nebraska a 89-87 lead.

After an Iowa State timeout, the Cyclones tried to set up a last-second shot, but a steal and layup by Husker reserve guard Erick Strickland sealed the win for Nebraska.

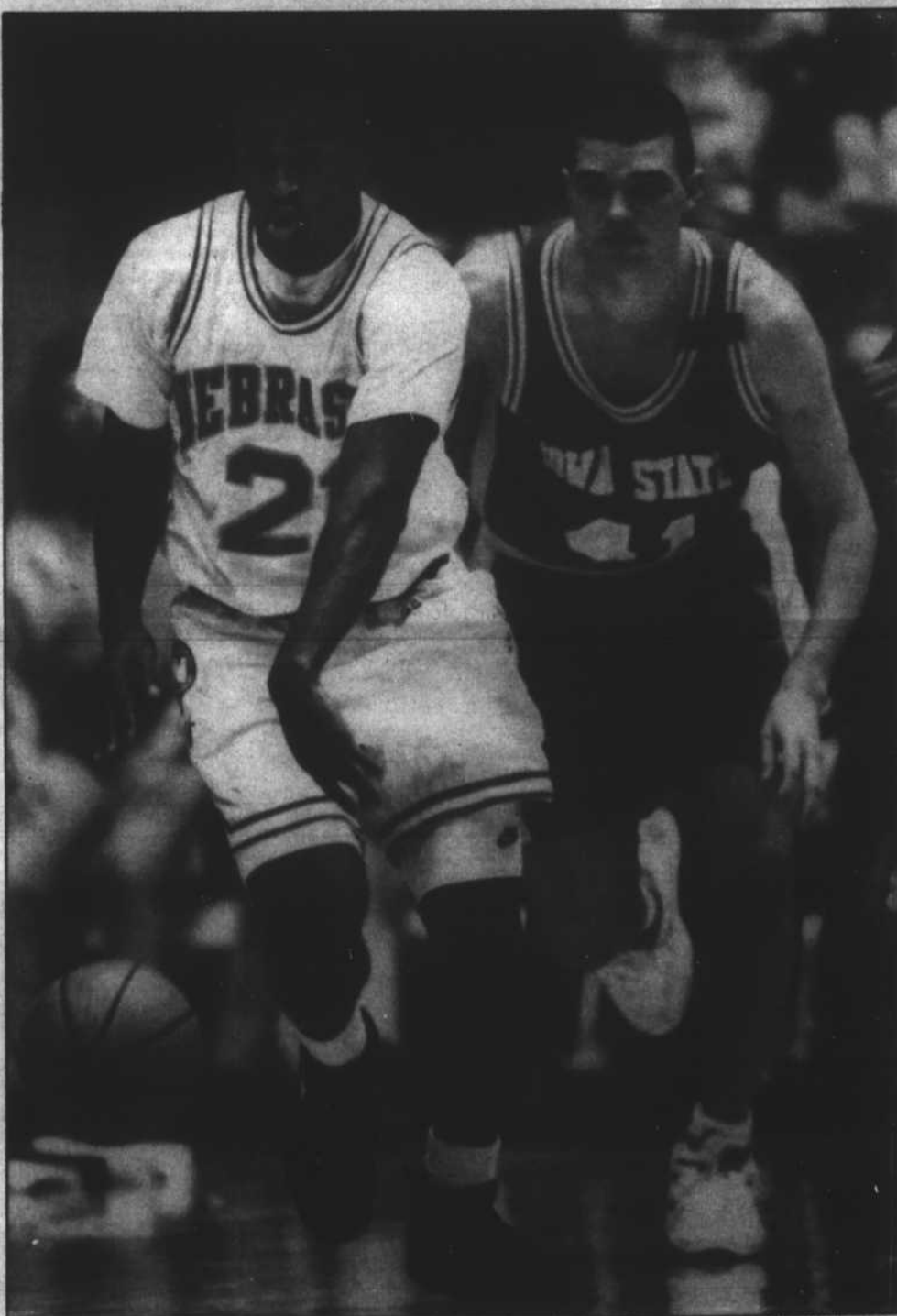
The Huskers, who improved to 7-5 in league play and 19-8 overall, were able to avenge their worst loss of the Big Eight season, a 96-69 trouncing to Iowa State three weeks prior in Ames, Iowa.

Iowa State dropped to 0-6 in conference road games this season, while falling to 6-6 in Big Eight play and 17-9 overall.

Nee said his team didn't want to get swept by Iowa State.

"There's a lot of pride; we got our

See CIRCUS on 8



Nebraska's Erick Strickland pushes the ball upcourt in Saturday's game against Iowa State. The Cornhuskers improved their record to 19-8 with the 91-87 victory over the Cyclones.

Staci McKeer/DN

Track teams overcome flu, perform well in Big Eight

By John Adkisson
Senior Editor

Battling through sickness, the Nebraska women's track and field team stifled the competition to win their 14th straight conference title this weekend.

Led by sprinters Shanelle Porter and Kwani Stewart, the Cornhuskers won the team title with 160 points and easily outdistanced second-place Kansas State at the Big Eight Indoor Championships at Ames, Iowa.

The Nebraska men, the meet's defending champions, finished second behind Iowa State 145-112.

Husker coach Gary Pepin said both teams overcame the flu bug and performed well over the course of the two-day meet.

"When we got done and on the bus the first night, I thought I'd entered the coughing ward of a hospital," Pepin said. "So considering that, I thought both teams had a heck of a meet."

Porter, a junior, won the 55-meter dash with a time of 7.03 seconds, won the 200-meter dash in 24.21 and won the 400-meter dash in 53.21. She was also a part of Nebraska's winning 1,600-meter relay team.

Stewart won the 55-meter hurdles with a time of 8.08, beating teammate Cris Hall, who came in second with a time of 8.11.

Pepin said Porter and Stewart were major parts of the Nebraska victory.

"If you put those two with (Husker distance specialist) Theresa Stelling, they'd probably get third place in the Big Eight between the three of them," Pepin said.

Stelling finished second in the 3,000 meter run with a time of 9:26.38. She also placed second in the mile.

Other first-place finishers for Nebraska included triple-jumper Nicola Martial, who won with a jump of 40 feet, 2 inches.

Pepin said Nebraska's men performed well, but couldn't keep up with Iowa State in the meet's distance events.

"I was looking at the scores and Iowa State scored enough just in the distance and middle-distance events to win the meet," Pepin said.

Nebraska's best showing came in the shot put, where senior Kevin Coleman won with a throw of 64-6. Coleman beat teammate Andy Meyer, who placed third with a throw of 60-6.

Husker Robert Thomas won both the long jump and triple jump, finished fifth in the 55-meter dash and was named the men's Most Valuable Performer of the meet.

"Robert turned in an excellent performance," Pepin said. "He's had a little bit of heel bruise, so he overcame that really well."

Other winners for Nebraska's men included Pat Trainor in the 600-meter dash and the 1,600-meter relay team, which won with a time of 3:09.30.

Pepin said competing in a hostile environment would help his young teams down the road.

"For a lot of our freshmen and sophomores, this was the first time they were really in a battle," Pepin said. "To go in there and dominate the whole thing, it was special to see our team do that."

Piatkowski pilots win over Cyclones

By Beau Finley
Staff Reporter

In November, Eric Piatkowski was nominated for the prestigious John Wooden award for the country's best basketball player.

On Saturday, he showed why.

The Nebraska men's basketball team defeated Iowa State 91-87 in front of 14,520 fans at the Bob Devaney Sports Center Saturday to take sole possession of third place in the Big Eight standings.

And when crunch time came, Piatkowski was clutch.

The junior from Rapid City, S.D. scored a game-high 24 points, including five points in the last minute and the game-winning shot with 10 seconds to play.

Piatkowski said he was emotional as the Cyclone showdown approached.

"I was a little nervous before the game but

once it began, I was jacked up," Piatkowski said. "I was thinking that everything would be going down."

It looked like that might be the case as Piatkowski hit his first four shots, two of which were three-point goals. He finished the first half with 14 points.

But it was the second half that truly brought Piatkowski into the spotlight.

With one minute left to play and the Cornhuskers down 86-84, Piatkowski was fouled on a three-point shot that narrowly missed being an opportunity for a four-point play.

Piatkowski made all three free throws to put the Huskers up by one point.

After the Cyclones' Loren Meyer tied the game at 87, it was Piatkowski who broke the deadlock with a gliding, game-winning layup to put the Huskers ahead for good.

Despite his performance, Piatkowski said he wondered during the game if the Huskers would be able to pull out a victory.

"At times, we'd try this and that and they adjusted to it," Piatkowski said. "It was hard to do different things. They're a good team."

Piatkowski said the 96-69 beating that Huskers took in Ames, Iowa earlier this year wasn't as motivating for him as the fact that the Cyclone starters were still on the floor with two minutes to play in that game.

"It's been in the back of my mind since then," Piatkowski said. "I didn't think it was a very classy move."

Piatkowski said he used the decision by Iowa State coach Johnny Orr to prepare him for Saturday's showdown.

"I was extra fired up about (the game)," Piatkowski said. "Each time I see (Orr), I think about it."