

## Kansas slams door on NU's title chances

Jeff Singer  
Senior Reporter

LAWRENCE, Kan. — End the Big Eight race immediately.

That was exactly what Kansas did Wednesday night as the Jayhawks beat Nebraska 94-83 to win their 41st conference championship and end the Cornhuskers' hopes of sharing a piece of the league title.

A sold-out Allen Fieldhouse crowd of 15,800 people saw the No. 8 Jayhawks perform on all cylinders and withstand numerous Nebraska scoring streaks to clinch the Big Eight crown with a 11-3 mark.

The Huskers fell to 7-6 in league play and 19-9 overall.

Nebraska coach Danny Nee said trying to beat Kansas in Lawrence was a difficult task.

"I want to congratulate Kansas on being conference champs; they played like a conference champ," Nee said. "I think . . . coming into Allen Fieldhouse and competing is a tougher assignment than in the Big Eight Tournament or the NCAA Tournament."

Despite Allen Fieldhouse's atmosphere, the Huskers were able to threaten the Jayhawks' chances of clinching the conference crown in their final home game of the season.

Nebraska managed an 18-17 lead following a layup by Husker guard Erick Strickland halfway through the first half, but Kansas center Eric Pauley, returning from a tendon in-

jury, had 16 points and eight rebounds in the first half to help the Jayhawks to a 48-38 halftime lead.

Kansas pushed its lead to 70-55 in the second half, but Nebraska used scoring spurts to keep the game close. The Huskers cut the Jayhawks' lead to 84-76 following a Terrance Badgett layup with just more than three minutes left.

But just as it looked like Nebraska would make another last-second run, Kansas was able to finish the Huskers on clutch free-throw shooting.

Nebraska forward Bruce Chubick said Kansas didn't provide the window of opportunity that Missouri and Iowa State did in previous last-second Husker wins this season.

"With Missouri and Iowa State, they left a little crack open and we were able to break through that crack," Husker forward Bruce Chubick said. "But (Kansas) didn't leave us any cracks."

Nebraska was led by forward Eric Piatkowski's 23 points, but that couldn't offset the balanced scoring of the Jayhawk trio of guards Steve Woodberry (26 points) and Rex Walters (19) and center Pauley, who finished with 18.

Kansas coach Roy Williams said he was proud of his team winning its third-straight league title for the first time since 1954.

"This was a great accomplishment

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## NU gymnasts will rock Penn State, Allen says

By Susie Arth  
Senior Reporter

Nebraska men's gymnastics coach Francis Allen said his team would be at its best Sunday in a dual meet against Penn State.

Allen said he would rely on his team's depth to score 283 to 284 points against the Nittany Lions.

"I would say our team is in the best shape it's been in all season," he said. "Hopefully we'll be sharp."

Penn State, which is 7-1 this season, suffered its first loss against Ohio State last week.

And Allen said he thought his team would be able to hand the Nittany Lions their second loss.

"Penn State is not a bad team," he said. "But they're not quite the caliber Nebraska is."

The Huskers, who are 6-0 this season, have scored more than 280 points in their last five meets.

Penn State's highest team score this season was 277.65 against Michigan State.

Allen said he was a little worried that the Huskers would be unmotivated for the meet because Penn State's top gymnast was injured and would not participate in the all-around competition.

Sunday's dual, which begins at 7 p.m. at the Bob Devaney Sports Center, will be the final home meet for Cornhusker seniors Louis Ball and Josh Saegert.

Allen said he hoped the seniors would be able to motivate the rest of their teammates to perform their best.

"We need to get them pumped up and ready to go," he said. "We'll work on motivation."

But regardless, Allen said he expected the Huskers to improve their record to 7-0.

"Penn State's going to have a lot of problems with us," he said.



Michelle Paulman/DN

Nebraska's Karen Jennings shoots in a game against Kansas earlier this year. Nebraska will play Iowa State in the first round of the Big Eight Tournament Saturday at Salina, Kan.

## Huskers' tourney hopes high

By Derek Samson  
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska women's basketball team is flying high heading into the Big Eight Tournament this weekend at Salina, Kan.

The Huskers earned the second seed and will play Iowa State at 6 p.m. Saturday in the first round at the Bicentennial Center.

"The whole team chemistry is real good right now," Husker guard Meggan Yedsena said. "Our trouble in the past couple years has been that we peaked at the wrong time.

This year, we are peaking at the perfect time."

Senior forward Rissa Taylor echoed Yedsena's comments.

"This is a great time for us to be peaking. Last year we peaked in the middle of the season," Taylor said. "It should help us in the Big Eight and NCAA (Tournament)."

Nebraska finished the season with an 89-40 win over Iowa State and a 20-6 overall record. Iowa State tied for last with Kansas State, but won the tiebreaker and earned the seventh seed.

Although Nebraska has a 14-19

overall record in the tournament, Taylor said defense could help the Huskers succeed this weekend.

"We have to play good defense.

That is a great part of winning," Taylor said. "People pay most of the attention to the scoring and assists and defense goes unnoticed, but defense makes you win."

If Nebraska beats Iowa State Saturday, it will play the winner of the Oklahoma State-Oklahoma game.

Oklahoma State swept Nebraska

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## Nebraska basketball overlooked, underrated in AP polls

To be in the Top 25 or not to be in the Top 25?

The answer for Nebraska's men's basketball team is that they're looking in from the outside of the rankings, but maybe it's time to let the Cornhuskers in from the cold.

Even after last night's tough loss at Kansas, Nebraska will still end up finishing 20-9 after they beat Oklahoma Sunday at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Not only does 20 wins guarantee a NCAA Tournament berth, but it should put the Huskers in the Associated Press' rankings, especially considering they'll finish third in the Big Eight. The Big Eight is probably the most balanced conference in the nation and deserves at least a trio of teams to be ranked in the Top 25.

I don't want to sound like an average naive, hometown college basketball fan, but the numbers speak for themselves.

After last week's performance by the Huskers, in which they went 3-0 to jump into third place in the Big Eight, Nebraska only received 49 votes this week and a No. 32 rating.

Although the Huskers' previous season-high ranking of No. 17 in December might have been a bit high at the time, Nebraska has shown that it deserves to be back in the polls. This is true especially after Nebraska beat No. 3 Kansas and No. 23 Kansas State last month in winning seven of its previous nine games before Wednesday.

But let's look at some of the other teams who were ranked higher in this



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week's AP poll — who deserve the votes about as much as 8-18 Creighton deserves to go to the NCAA Tournament:

No. 17 New Orleans and No. 20 Tulane — This is two too many teams from New Orleans in the rankings. Since it's Mardi Gras time, people in Cajun Country should have other things to worry about than putting a pair of good teams on the hardwood.

No. 18 Xavier, Ohio — Please

don't tell me the Huskers are ranked behind a school that begins with the letter "X." Also, Xavier, Ohio, is not to be confused with its outstanding counterparts, which include Xavier of California, Xavier of Alaska or Xavier of Mexico.

No. 25 St. John's and No. 29 Pittsburgh — I'll grant Seton Hall earning a ranking at No. 10, but to allow more than one team in the ratings from the Big East (a.k.a. Big East, Big Bore, etc.) is absurd.

No. 27 Marquette — The Warriors can't be receiving votes ahead of the Huskers, can they? I didn't even know Marquette had a team anymore, much less one good enough to receive votes.

No. 31 Western Kentucky —

Here's the one that makes Nebraskans wince, since the Huskers' first NCAA Tourney appearance in 1986 was cut short by this team, which is nicknamed the Hilltoppers. Having these Hilltoppers (by the way, if somebody knows what a Hilltopper is, please let me know) ahead of Nebraska in the rankings seems to be salt in the Huskers' wounds — or better yet, soil on top of the hill.

But I'll continue to whine about Nebraska's absence from the Top 25 until the Huskers make a return to the rankings or win their first-ever NCAA Tournament game, whichever comes first.

Singer is a senior news-editorial and political science major and a Daily Nebraskan sports senior reporter.