

NU hoping to build on first two wins of season

By Tony West
Staff Reporter

After a long wait, the Nebraska baseball team got out of the gate running Sunday.

The Cornhuskers won two games last weekend and will look to improve on their 2-0 mark today and Wednesday in three games against Oral Roberts.

The two teams will play a 1:30 p.m. doubleheader today at Buck

Beltzer Field, and then will play a single game starting at 1:30 p.m. Wednesday.

Last season, Oral Roberts finished with a 35-17 record as an independent, and that mark was enough to impress Nebraska coach John Sanders.

"We are going to have to turn it up a notch," he said. "Oral Roberts is a good ballclub."

The Huskers are coming off an up-and-down opening weekend against Peru State.

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—Sanders
NU baseball coach

On Saturday, four Husker pitchers combined for a no-hitter, the first for Nebraska in more than 10 years. Ne-

braska hitters also racked up 14 hits in the 15-0 win.

On Sunday, the Huskers had to rally from a seven-run deficit to beat the Bobcats. Newcomer Robert Perry's double in the bottom of the ninth scored the winning run for Nebraska.

Although he was pleased with the come-from-behind win, Sanders said it was important for his team not to get behind early against Oral Roberts.

"I don't want to repeat this (the second game against Peru State),"

Sanders said. "We have to get out quick."

Against Oral Roberts, Sanders said he was planning to continue evaluating a player as he did against Peru State.

"We will try to involve a lot of players," Sanders said.

One of the three games should mark the debut of highly recruited starting pitcher Alvie Shepherd. Shepherd, a 6-foot-7 right-hander from Hillside, Ill., was the Illinois Player of the Year last season.

Jennings' awakening not enough to lift NU

By Beau Finley
Staff Reporter

SALINA, Kan. — For Karen Jennings, her first selection to the All-Big Eight Tournament team was a bittersweet honor.

Jennings, the 1993 Big Eight Player of the Year, was named to the team by the Big Eight Tournament sportswriters after Nebraska lost 64-60 to Kansas in the Big Eight Tournament's championship game Monday night.

It was the Cornhuskers' first-ever trip the tournament's final game.

Coach Angela Beck said Jennings' contributions to the team were important in the Husker's success, especially in the critical moments of the game.

"Jennings, when we needed her, had an outstanding game down the stretch," Beck said.

That stretch started with 7:50 left and the Huskers down 51-38.

Jennings scored the next nine points for the Huskers and cut the Kansas lead to six with 5:44 left.

Jayhawk coach Marian Washington said Jennings' performance during the run didn't surprise her.

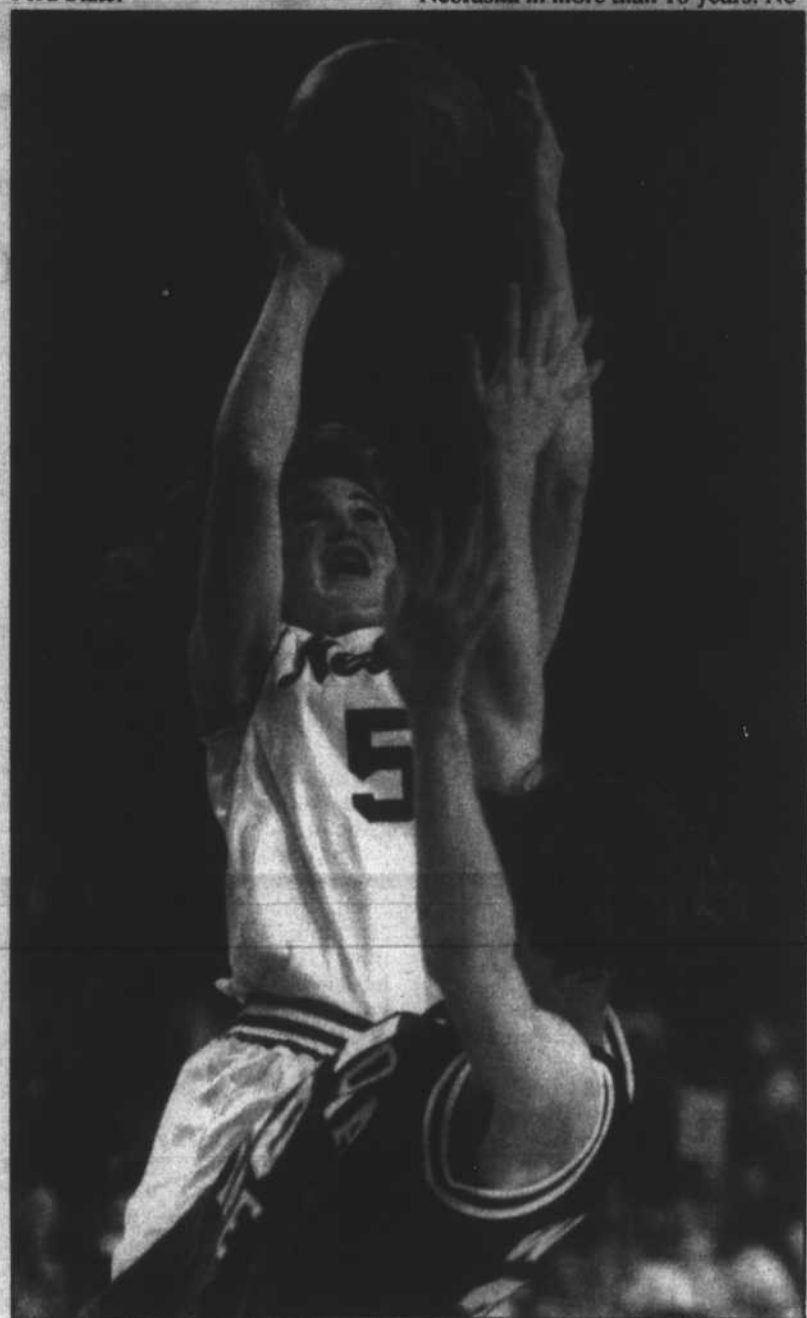
"You have to expect a team like Nebraska to go to their bread and butter," Washington said.

Jennings was certainly that for Nebraska. The senior scored 44 points and grabbed 22 rebounds in the three-day tournament.

Jennings said Kansas' tough defense took her and her team out of the offense.

"I'm the type of player who works better when our offense is in its flow," Jennings said. "Our offense just wasn't in sync."

However, the Husker continuity came around with the help of Jennings. Nebraska went on a 22-11 run to end the game, but came up short when Nafesah Brown's potential game-tying shot was blocked with seven



Michelle Paulman/DN

Nebraska's Karen Jennings shoots over Oklahoma State's Misty Wensler in the semifinals of the Big Eight Tournament. The Cornhuskers lost Monday's championship game to Kansas.

seconds left.

Jennings' nine-point explosion brought her into the flow of the offense. Before the run, Jennings had just six points in the first 32 minutes of the game.

Beck said Jennings had not been a major contributor for Nebraska until late in the game.

"Karen came to life," Beck said. Despite the loss, Jennings credited the Jayhawks and their winning effort.

"Kansas is the type of team that when they're up, they're up, and when they're down, they're down," Jennings said. "Tonight, they were up."

Kansas blocks Huskers' shot at league title

By Derek Samson
Staff Reporter

SALINA, Kan. — The Nebraska women's basketball team's rally against Kansas came up short Monday, and so did the Cornhuskers' hopes of winning a Big Eight title.

Nafesah Brown's last-second shot was blocked and Nebraska was defeated by the Jayhawks 64-60 in the championship game of the Big Eight Tournament Monday night.

After Nebraska trailed by as many as 15 points in the second half, Sara Offringa nailed a three-pointer and connected on layup off a steal 33 seconds later to cut Kansas' lead to 62-60.

Offringa made another steal with 20 seconds left, setting up a game-tying opportunity.

Nebraska worked the ball to Brown, and her shot was blocked by Kansas's Lisa Tate, who was fouled with 7.6 seconds left. Tate sunk both free throws to give the Jayhawks the tournament title.

"My team could have folded early," Nebraska coach Angela Beck said. "We showed a tremendous amount of courage to make this an exciting championship game."

The Huskers were almost invisible in the beginning of the game, with their first field goal coming with 11:07 remaining in the first half.

Kansas had jumped out to leads of 13-2 and 18-5 before the Huskers' offense came out of hiding.

"They really came out with an unbelievable amount of intensity the first five minutes," Beck said. "They were on all cylinders."

Brown kept Nebraska within striking distance throughout the first half by scoring 12 of the Huskers' first 17 points. Her contribution couldn't have come at a better time for NU, as Kansas shut down Husker All-Ameri-

can Karen Jennings throughout the first half.

Jennings hit Nebraska's last two field goals to finish with four points in the first half.

"Every time I got the ball, I had a person in front of me and one behind me," Jennings said.

Angela Aycock scored 10 in the first half as Kansas took a 30-21 lead into halftime.

"Our defense in the first half was tremendous," Kansas coach Marian Washington said. "To play the way we did takes a lot of energy and a lot of work."

Aycock kept the Jayhawks in front in the second half by scoring her team's first nine points. Kansas led 51-40 with 7:50 left when Jennings made her presence known.

Jennings then scored nine points in the next 2:06 to cut the Kansas lead to 53-47.

Brown led Nebraska with 20 points, while Jennings finished with 15.

Kansas was led by Aycock's 25 points. The sophomore forward was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player.

"It's one of my best (performances), if not the best," Aycock said. "Things tend to go your way if you play hard and think positive. That's what I try to do."

Kansas (21-8) — Aycock 11-16 3-5 25, Shinn 2-3 0-0 4, Tate 1-3 2-2 4, Witherspoon 0-0 0-0 0, Leathers 1-10 4-4 6, Kite 3-4 2-2 11, erspoon 0-0 0-0 0, Leathers 1-10 4-4 6, Kite 3-4 2-2 11, Slatter 4-11 6-7 14, Sampson 0-7 0-0 0, Holmes 0-1 0-0 0, Muncy 0-0 0-0 0. **Totals** 22-55 17-20 64.

Nebraska (22-7) — Taylor 2-6 1-5 5, Brown 8-17 4-6 20, Jennings 6-15 2-4 15, Yedsena 2-7 2-2 8, Offringa 4-11 2-2 12, Brenden 0-3 0-0 0, Upthegrove 0-2 0-0 0, Anderson 0-0 0-0 0. **Totals** 22-61 11-19 60.

3-point goals — Kansas 3-7 (Leathers 0-1, Kite 3-3, Sampson 0-3), Nebraska 5-15 (Jennings 1-3, Yedsena 2-4, Offringa 2-5, Brenden 0-3). **Rebounds** — Kansas 38 (Aycock 10), Nebraska 40 (Brown 15). **Assists** — Kansas 16 (Witherspoon, Leathers 5), Nebraska 11 (Offringa 4). **Total fouls** — Kansas 20, Nebraska 15. **A** — 3,855.

Big Eight's bid to NCAA Tournament is anyone's guess

Why not Colorado?

Why not in the year of Big Country from midcourt, the year of Kansas State over Nebraska in Lincoln, the year of a three-way tie for second place in the Big Eight?

Why not take the Buffs to win this weekend's Big Eight Tournament?

It's so illogical, it's logical.

A possible scenario:

KEMPER ARENA — Colorado's Joe Harrington triumphantly cut down the nets Sunday after what was called the wackiest Big Eight Tournament in history.

The Buffs, who improved to 13-15 overall by winning the three-day tournament, drew a first-round NCAA Tournament game with No. 1 North Carolina, and Harrington asked the Tarheels to "bring it on."

Harrington said his team's strong play — including a 33-point barrage by guard Pete Hefty in the finals against Missouri, was poetic justice.

"Hefty's All-Big Eight caliber," Harrington said. "We just wanted him to redeem himself, because throughout the year he was wimpy, wimpy, wimpy."

OK, so maybe that's a stretch. Maybe Colorado won't win the tournament. That narrows the field to seven teams — all with legitimate shots at earning the NCAA's automatic bid.

You say Kansas State doesn't have a shot? Wrong. The Wildcats are the Big Eight's most underrated defensive team. After a three-game week, they looked tired in their last meeting against Nebraska (an 80-59 loss), but they'll have an entire week to rest up for their first round matchup Friday.



John Adkisson

Is Missouri washed up? Hardly. Any team with an inside-out duo like Melvin Booker and Jevon Crudup has a shot.

In all his gloating, Nebraska radio man Kent Pavelka said after the Oklahoma game Sunday that the Cornhuskers "spanked" the Tigers twice this year. Apparently Pavelka's definition of "spanking" equals two one-point, last-second wins.

Plain and simple, Missouri's a threat to Nebraska and everybody else in the tournament.

If Bryant Reeves gets rolling, Oklahoma State will stay in contention. If

Bryant Vann and Bryan Sallier play like they did Sunday against Nebraska, Oklahoma will win at least one game.

But if you've got money to throw around, take one of three teams to be cutting down the nets on Sunday: Nebraska, Kansas or Iowa State.

The young Huskers can do one of two things: They can go into Kemper intimidated or they can turn the tournament into their playground. If Nebraska doesn't play tentative, the Huskers have as good a shot as anybody to win.

But how do you beat Kansas in an arena less than an hour from the Jayhawks' campus? Nebraska did it two years ago, but it took a near-perfect effort. Kansas isn't as good as they were in 1991, but the rock-chalkers are masters at feeding off crowd enthusiasm.

The only Big Eight team that can beat Kansas at Kemper is one that can neutralize the guard tandem of Rex Walters and Adonis Jordan. Iowa State

— with the duo of Ron Bayless and Justus Thigpen — can do just that.

The Cyclones, as Coach Johnny Orr said Saturday, are riding into Kansas City for once without worrying about making the NCAA Tournament.

Like Nebraska, Iowa State can play loose and wouldn't have to face Kansas until the tournament final.

The Cyclones are the pick here.

Why not? Imagine the scene... Julius Michalik dousing Orr's bald dome with Gatorade, Thigpen frantically patting center Loren Meyer on his shaved-down head, Fred Savage look-alike Hurl Beechum pumping his fists to the cardinal and gold-clad fans.

It would be like a freak show. And how fitting for the Big Eight this year.

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