



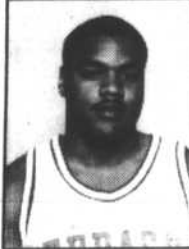
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Seniors lead team in turnaround

By Mitch Sherman
 Staff Reporter

Just when the season looked like it was headed down the tubes, the seniors came to the rescue of the Nebraska men's basketball team.



Johnson

Following Nebraska's 91-82 loss to Appalachian State in Boone, N.C., Wednesday night, senior captains Jamar Johnson, Eric Piatkowski, Tom Best and Bruce Chubick decided it was time to "straighten things out" during a layover in the Louisville, Ky., airport.

The setback to the Mountaineers dropped the Cornhuskers' record to 1-2, Nebraska's worst start since the 10-18 season of 1989-1990.

"We, as the seniors, decided it was time to call a team meeting now," Johnson said. "So we had a layover in Louisville and did it there."

Piatkowski said the loss to Appalachian State, coupled with the Huskers' 78-75 loss to Texas on Nov. 28, put a damper on the beginning of the season, but did not cause panic among the players.

"If we can go ahead and take everything one game at a time," he said, "then we can make up for all of this. But I'm not even thinking about us getting back where we should be until we win some more."

"We can't afford another letdown. We already had one big one. As far as I'm concerned, we let two games slip away that we should have won."

Johnson said the meeting served as a time to reevaluate the keys to a successful season. He said the team decided to place more emphasis on the defensive aspects of the game.

Shuffling of the Husker lineup prior to Nebraska's first-round game against Ohio on Friday reflected the decisions made in the meeting.

Nebraska coach Danny Nee said he started sophomore Erick Strickland,

"We can't afford another letdown. We already had one big one."

—Piatkowski
 NU men's basketball player

who leads the team in steals, for defensive purposes. In addition, senior Tom Best replaced sophomore Terrance Badgett in order to add leadership, Nee said.

Johnson said the layover — and the meeting — served the Huskers well.

"A lot of things were said in that airport," Johnson said. "And everything we talked about in that meeting, we did it all this weekend."

"We really turned it around, especially on the defensive end. But we needed to. We demanded it, as seniors."

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NU men's gymnastics team wins

From Staff Reports

The Nebraska men's gymnastics team rolled to a victory in the Big Eight Invitational Saturday night at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Nebraska, which was competing without injured Richard Grace, scored 275.50 points, while second-place Air

Force finished with 250.85 points. Iowa State came in third with 217.35 points.

Nebraska's Dennis Harrison won the all-around title by scoring 57.35 points. Huskers Jason Christie and Burkett Powell finished second and third.



Jay Calderon/DN

Cornhusker guard Jamar Johnson examines the finger he broke during the first half of Nebraska's win over Portland Saturday.

Wins

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They narrowed the gap to three at 17-14. The Huskers then picked up their defensive intensity.

Portland was held scoreless for the next four minutes as Nebraska took a 31-14 lead. The Pilots could come no closer as the Huskers scored a season-high 111 points.

NOTE:
 ● Chubick and Strickland were both named to the all-tournament team with Piatkowski taking MVP. Ohio's Gary Trent, Navy's T.J. Hall and Portland's Matt Houle were also named to the team.

Portland..... 31 54 — 85
 at Nebraska..... 53 58 — 111

Portland — Houle 8-17 4-4 22, Chatman 2-6 5-9 9, Ranta 2-3 5-6 9, Allen 1-4 0-2, Ross 8-22 2-22, Flicker 0-2 0-0, Brainard 2-5 0-4, Fines 5-13 1-2 13, Bristol 0-6 0-0 0, Harris 2-3 0-4. Totals 30-81 17-23 85.

Nebraska — Best 1-8 3-4 5, Chubick 5-6 5-15, Strickland 5-8 1-2 12, Johnson 3-3 1-2 7, Steinbrook 2-2 0-4, Boone 7-7 3-5 18, Glock 5-9 1-2 12, Moore 1-1 3-4 5, Brooks 5-6 0-10, Badgett 3-7 2-8, Reath 0-2 0-0, Piatkowski 6-15 3-4 15. Totals 43-74 22-31 111.

Three-point goals — Portland 8-29 (Houle 2-5, Chatman 0-1, Allen 0-3, Ross 4-11, Flicker 0-2, Brainard 0-1, Fines 2-5, Bristol 0-1), Nebraska 3-9 (Best 0-1, Strickland 1-4, Boone 1-1, Glock 1-2, Reath 0-1). Fouled out — none. Rebounds — Portland 38 (Chatman, Fines 6), Nebraska 49 (Piatkowski 8). Assists — Portland 19 (Flicker 6), Nebraska 31 (Piatkowski, Strickland 8). Total fouls — Portland 26, Nebraska 16. A — 11, 022.

Bowls

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Virginia or Nebraska, is that I am the best football team in the country because nobody has proven otherwise," he said.

But that doesn't mean that Bowden, who hasn't won a national championship in his 28 years of coaching, wouldn't want at least half of the national title, from either the Associ-

ated Press or CNN/USA Today polls on Jan. 2.

"I would like to have any part of it I can get, so I can go to my grave without you saying that I never won one," Bowden said.

NOTE:
 ● Nebraska defensive lineman Billy Wade injured his knee in a pickup basketball game Friday. Wade, who tore his left patellar tendon, will not play in the Orange Bowl.

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