

Nebraska 'outhustled, outworked' in loss

From Staff Reports

The Nebraska basketball team had the chance to extend its winning streak to 12 games.

The Cornhuskers had a chance to go 3-0 in the conference for the first time since 1975-76.

They had a chance to strengthen their grip on first place after Kansas State upset top-ranked Kansas Monday night.

They were knocking on the door of the Top 25.

Not anymore.

The Huskers were upset 86-81 Wednesday night by a Colorado team that they had beat by 39 points just 11 days earlier.

The Buffaloes came from behind to steal the victory away from the Huskers at the Coors Event Center in Boulder, Col.

The loss dropped the Huskers to 12-3 and 2-1 in the conference. Colorado improved to 8-6 and 1-2.

During his post-game radio show on KFAB, Husker basketball coach Danny Nee said that

the loss was disappointing, but Colorado deserved to win the game.

"It's really disappointing," he said. "We didn't do a lot of things right."

"But you've got to give Colorado credit. It was very similar to the way Kansas State played Kansas."

Nee said Colorado won every aspect of the game, especially rebounding. The Buffaloes outrebounded the Huskers 53-28.

All-Big Eight guard Donnie Boyce scored 26 points and hit 5-of-6 free throws in the last minute to propel the Buffaloes to victory.

But it was Colorado forward Mark Dean who made the biggest difference.

Dean had a career-high 30 points and 13 rebounds against the Huskers, including a three-point play to put the Buffs up 75-66 with 1:37 to play.

"With Donnie Boyce playing at a high level and Mark Dean having a career game, it meant victory for them," Nee said. "I felt it was more

the excellent play of Donnie Boyce and Mark Dean which decided the game.

"They outworked us and outhustled us to the ball."

The Huskers fell behind by as many as 11 in the first half, but came from behind to take a 37-36 lead going into halftime.

Nee said the Huskers didn't come out of the gate ready to play.

"I know how good our basketball team is," he said. "We're only good when we execute, and early on we were tentative and sluggish."

"We never got into the flow of the game."

Nebraska may have started the game off slow, but they came out ready in the second half, taking a 58-51 lead midway through the half.

But then the scoring drought hit as the Buffs went on a 13-0 run, taking a 64-58 lead on two Boyce free throws.

Colorado then increased its lead to 75-66, its biggest lead of the second half, with 1:37 left.

The Huskers then started fouling to send

Colorado to the free-throw line, where the Buffs nailed 11 of 12 free throws down the stretch.

With 12 seconds left, Husker guard Jamar Johnson banked in a three-pointer to make it 84-81. But Colorado's Pete Hefty hit two free throws to seal the game.

Nebraska... 37. 44 — 81
at Colorado... 36. 51 — 87

Nebraska — Brooks 1-3-2-2-4, Chubick 4-7-3-5-12, Strickland 4-9-4-4-12, Boone 6-12-2-2-17, Piatkowski 7-19-0-0-16, Johnson 3-7-0-0-8, Glock 1-2-0-0-2, Badgett 3-9-0-0-6, Best 2-4-0-0-4, Totals 31-72 11-13 81. Colorado — Goltart 0-2-4-4-4, Dean 12-18-6-8-30, Allen 4-13-3-3-11, Boyce 6-17-12-16-26, Edmonds 4-9-2-2-10, Jensen 0-1-0-0-0, Hefty 1-3-3-4-5, Frandeen 0-0-0-0-0, Totals 27-63 30-37 86.

3-point goals — Nebraska 8-26 (Brooks 0-1, Chubick 1-1, Strickland 0-2, Boone 3-7, Piatkowski 2-9, Johnson 2-4, Glock 0-1, Badgett 0-1), Colorado 2-9 (Goltart 0-1, Allen 0-2, Boyce 2-4, Hefty 0-2). Fouled out — Chubick, Strickland, Boone.

Player's improvement surprises conference

By Sam Snyder
Staff Reporter

After the departure of All-American center Karen Jennings, Nebraska sophomore Pyra Aarden was hoping for more opportunities this season.

Fortunately Aarden, a sophomore from Hudson, Wis., has been able to take advantage of the situation.

Aarden, a 6-foot-4-inch center, is averaging 6.3 points and 5.8 rebounds a game, compared to her 1-point and 1.4-rebound averages last season as a freshman.

Aarden scored a career-high 18 points against the Puerto Rican national team and also had strong performances against Oklahoma and Arizona State, scoring 11 and 13 points, respectively.

In the Kansas game last Friday, Aarden pulled down a career-high 14 rebounds.

Although Jennings is gone, Aarden said she owed her improvement to last year's Big Eight player of the year.

"I learned a lot about playing inside against Karen," Aarden said.

Coach Angela Beck said she had noticed Aarden's improvement this season.

"She has established some post moves, improved her touch around the basket and is handling passes better," Beck said.

Beck said Aarden's improved play had surprised others around the conference.

"People didn't think she could improve as fast as she did," Beck said.

Aarden said her teammates were starting to rely on her more.

“People didn't think she could improve as fast as she did.”

— Beck
NU women's basketball coach

"A lot of it has to do with confidence," Aarden said. "After a good game, I'm more confident as a player, and people have more confidence in me."

Aarden said the team's slow start this season had been a disappointment. With so many new faces, the team hasn't established chemistry yet.

But after several close losses, Aarden said, the team had even more incentive to work hard the rest of the season. Nebraska, 9-8 overall and 1-3 in the Big Eight, faces Colorado Friday and Missouri Sunday.

"We've got a lot of talent on our team and only two of our players are seniors," she said.

Aarden said the Huskers' 78-58 win over Kansas State last Sunday could have been the spark the team needed to finish the season strong and return to the NCAA tournament.

NOTE:

● Nebraska forward Nafeesah Brown was named the Big Eight's player of the week. Brown, a senior from Chicago, averaged 21 points and 10 rebounds in the Huskers' two games last weekend.

Brown scored 22 points and pulled down 12 rebounds in Nebraska's 78-57 loss to Kansas Friday. She also scored 20 points and grabbed eight rebounds in Nebraska's 78-58 win over Kansas State.



Nebraska's Pyra Aarden, a 6-foot-4-inch sophomore center, drives around Kansas' Angela Aycok for a layup during the Jayhawks' win Friday.

Swimming teams face Iowa State in meet Saturday

By Tony West
Staff Reporter

Twelve seniors — five men and seven women — will have their last chance to impress the home crowd when the Cornhusker men's and women's swimming teams face Iowa State Saturday.

"It will be special because it's the seniors' last home meet," Nebraska coach Cal Bentz said of the 1:30 p.m. meet at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Nebraska's men enter the meet ranked No. 22 in the recent College Swimming Coaches Association Top 25 poll with a 2-3 dual record, while the women, 3-1 in dual meets this season, are No. 21 in the nation. The Iowa State men's swimming team is No. 25, and the Cyclone women are unranked.

Bentz said his teams were mainly working toward reaching their final goals of doing well in the Big Eight and NCAA championships in March.

"Our season is kind of building to get to the championships," Bentz said. "We just do the training that has to be done to reach our final goal."

And Bentz said he thought his teams had completed the necessary work at this point in the season.

"We've done the conditioning, and now it's the time to start polishing those skills," Bentz said. "We have to start sharpening up on our races."

The Cyclones should provide enough competition to help the Huskers strengthen those skills, he said.

"They have been very competitive in the past few years," Bentz said. "And we're going into this meet with a great deal of respect for them."

NCAA excitement, parity drown out talks of a boycott

College basketball provided the best argument on Tuesday against any proposed boycott by coaches or players.

First, a devilish Tom Kleinschmidt and the DePaul Blue Demons rallied to upset No. 6 Massachusetts, 78-76. Then, Florida upset No. 7 Kentucky in the game's closing seconds. Purdue topped it off by handing No. 8 Indiana an 83-76 loss in overtime.

And to think Tuesday was just a hangover for the nation's top team this week. On Monday, new-No. 1 Kansas was upset 68-64 by lowly Kansas State after Anthony Beane hit a running jumper with 10 seconds left in the game.

Try boycotting that kind of action. Paity is simply too strong this season to make it a rarity. Consider:

● In 47 games involving ranked teams last week, a rated team lost 14 times. Seven of those losses were to unranked teams. Of the seven other losses, the higher-ranked team was beaten five times.

● There is no flat-out No. 1 team in the land. The top spot in the nation has changed hands four times already.

North Carolina started with it. Arkansas held it for a few weeks. The Tar Heels snatched it back. Kansas then grabbed it around the neck, only to choke it away Monday night by losing in Lawrence.

● Kansas, despite its loss to the Wildcats, will still probably win the Big Eight. But the Jayhawks are not the clear-cut top team in the conference. Oklahoma State, Missouri, Oklahoma, or yes, even Nebraska — despite its loss to Colorado Wednesday



Todd Cooper

night — could easily steal the Big Eight title from the inexperienced Jayhawks.

Nebraska climbed to the top of the conference with a win over the Cyclones, who have uncharacteristically blown games at home, and a win over the Buffaloes, who just plain blow.

But they blew it Wednesday night. With their loss to Colorado, the Huskers gave up the road advantage they had gained by beating Iowa State in Ames. And Nebraska's schedule in January has changed from being

"kind" — as Husker coach Danny Nee had phrased it — to being just a bit cruel.

Nebraska, which beat Colorado by a ridiculous margin in its first matchup (39 points) was outrebounded by an equally ridiculous margin — 53 to 28 — Wednesday night.

The 86-81 loss proved that unless the university finds some way to fit Apollo 9 in the Devaney Sports Center, Nebraska won't be flying high in February against the Big Eight's skyscrapers — Greg Ostertag of Kansas and Big Country of Oklahoma State.

Still, if Nebraska can rebound — literally, rebounds — and wins six or seven of its remaining games, the Huskers could be near the top of the Big Eight by the end of the season.

The remaining, inevitable upsets should spell one of the wildest confer-

ence finishes in a while. But that excitement will come only if the coaches keep their protests — no matter how noble they are — off the court.

As it showed on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, college basketball's upsets and action will make a statement of their own: The sport shouldn't be tinkered with — not by protesting coaches or players, and especially not by the NCAA.

If they want to take a stand, coaches should either do it at the NCAA convention or in court.

Players are working too hard and too long to let an irrelevant issue interfere with their play on the court.

And the results of their toils are too good to boycott.

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