

Johnson soars despite injury

By Tim Pearson
Senior Reporter

Jamar Johnson was coming off a 29-point effort against Appalachian State and a 15-point effort against Ohio.

But then Johnson broke his finger, and his whole season turned upside down.

Johnson missed the next two games and has since been relegated to coming off the bench.

But Johnson said he looked at losing his starting job more as a challenge than as a negative.

"I don't have a problem with that," he said. "If my role is coming off the bench, then I'll do it."

"I've had to prove to myself that I'm a team player."

Johnson said he harbored no regrets about his senior season, even though the fracture of the little finger on his right hand snapped his streak of 64 straight starts.

"Injuries are just something that happen," he said. "I have no control over them."

"Before I got hurt I was playing good, and I was shooting well."

Johnson hasn't lost any of his shooting touch because of the injury.

He's still averaging 10.1 points per game, which is higher than his scoring average last season. He also has 60 assists, only three behind team leader Jaron Boone's 63.

Johnson is also third on the team in average minutes per game, despite losing his starting job.

As a team captain, Johnson said he needed to continue to be a leader coming off the bench.

"I've got to come off and be a leader," he said. "I've got to try and see what's going on in the game from the bench."

Johnson, a senior from Elkhart, Ind., came to Nebraska as one of the most heralded recruits in Husker history. He finished second to Indiana All-American candidate Damon Bailey in the voting for Indiana's 1990 Mr. Basketball Award.

Johnson said although he had not received the same notoriety that Bailey had at Indiana, he could look back at his three-year career at Nebraska and have no regrets.

"I don't look at everything overall," he said. "I'll say I wish I could be doing more, but I can't say that I'm disappointed."

Johnson has had his fair share of accomplishments at Nebraska. He is sixth on Nebraska's career assist chart and seventh in career steals.



Jon Waller/DN

Jamar Johnson puts up a shot over Missouri's Melvin Booker during Nebraska's loss to the Tigers Monday night.

He hit the game-winning free throw against Missouri last season. He also hit a three-pointer at the buzzer in overtime to give the Huskers a victory over then-No. 3 Kansas two years ago.

But individual accomplishments and honors don't matter to Johnson now.

All that matters, he said, is getting Nebraska a Big Eight title and an NCAA tournament win.

"I want to end my season positive," he said. "First and foremost, I want the Big Eight championship, in the league or the tournament."

But the Huskers will have to get back on the winning track to contend for the title.

Consecutive losses to Colorado and Missouri have put a damper on the Huskers' title hopes, but Johnson said Nebraska should not be counted out.

"It's still early in the Big Eight season, and I have to stay positive," he said. "That's part of my job as a team leader."

"I tell you what, I'd rather peak in March or February. I just hope we can get it together."

Nee blames loss on poor shooting

By Tim Pearson
Senior Reporter

After two straight conference losses, Nebraska coach Danny Nee is looking for a solution.

And that solution, he said, lies solely in shooting.

The Cornhuskers, coming off an 89-73 loss to Missouri Monday night, were 2-for-26 from three-point range against the Tigers.

"We're an outside-oriented, fast-breaking, three-point shooting team," Nee said at his weekly press conference Wednesday. "We shot, the last two games, 15 to 20 three-pointers a game."

"That's one-third to 40 percent of our offense. That's the problem. If there is a problem, it's because we're missing the shots."

Senior Eric Piatkowski, Nee said, is one player who needs to start shooting well in order for the Huskers to win.

"Piatkowski has the green light," Nee said. "He's a shooter, and we want him shooting the basketball."

"But he has the responsibility, first, to play a Nebraska-type defense. He has to guard someone, and he has to box out. Second, he has the responsibility to take his shots and lead the offense."

Piatkowski played only 24 minutes

— 66 —
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NU basketball coach



Nee

in the Missouri loss, scoring a season-low nine points. He played only seven minutes in the second half.

Nee said he stood by his decision not to play Piatkowski, because the forward from Rapid City, S.D. was struggling.

"The big thing is that you have to allow the coach to coach," he said. "If you see a player who's struggling, you take him out."

"I've seen 56 minutes of Piatkowski not playing Piatkowski basketball. That's the reason I took him out."

Piatkowski, an All-Big Eight pick last season, will have to step up, Nee said.

"There are two parts to Nebraska basketball," he said. "On the offensive end the spark plug is Eric Piatkowski. He's the key to the offense, and I think the key on the defensive end is Erick Strickland."

"They are integral parts of making us go offensively and defensively."

But Nee said he didn't want to put too much pressure on Piatkowski.

"Piatkowski is a very important part, but he's not the whole team," he said. "He can't shoulder the whole

See SLUMP on 8

Teammates to compete for starting job at 142

By Tim Pearson
Senior Reporter

Nebraska wrestler Justin Ware has defeated four ranked opponents in the last two weeks.

And he came close to defeating the top-ranked wrestler in the nation at 142 pounds.

But Ware's toughest match of the season may come against his own teammate.

Ware is battling All-American Mike Eierman for the Cornhuskers' top spot at 142.

Husker coach Tim Neumann said Ware, who has posted a 19-5 record this season, and Eierman, 19-4, were about equal.

"Justin's probably a better athlete, but Michael has a flair for the dramatic," he said. "Whoever trains the hard-



Eierman



Ware

est will be the starter."

Neumann said the starter would be determined in a wrestle-off during practice on Friday. The wrestling team is next in action Saturday against Oklahoma in Norfolk.

Ware said it was disappointing that both he and Eierman, ranked sixth in the nation at 142 pounds, wouldn't be

See BATTLE on 8

Harding should join pairs competition with Ramaekers

I tell you, I've always had a little something for women with knives on their feet prancing around in leotards in a cold environment.

This is perhaps the basis of my fascination with the Tonya Harding-Nancy Kerrigan incident.

I call it "Frozen Watergate."

Ha, ya get it? Frozen ... water ... ice ... ice skating ... get it? Ahh, screw it. It's stupid. My life's in the friggin' toilet.

That's why I'm so interested in this freak Harding. I think she and I are actually quite similar.

BEAU'S CONFESSION: I've tried on three occasions to whack my competition in law school; however, I was unsuccessful. You wouldn't believe how fast those lawyer dorks are.

I feel compelled to reveal this because I believe the "Hard" one is receiving a bum rap.

Despite what Jeff "Rogaine" Gillooly and Shawn Eric "Larry, Moe and Curly" Eckardt say, this young ice princess (not Shannen Doherty, damn it) has been convicted of nothing.

Certainly, many innocent individ-

uals have been suspected of crimes they didn't commit. Just look at Michael Jackson, Bill Clinton and, well, my sister. Hang tough, Ashley, we'll beat this thing together.

But suspicion is no grounds for the persecution dealt to Harding. This is why I'm endorsing not only the initiation of the "FREE TONYA" club—you know, like that whale flick—but also that she be able to participate in the Olympics.

Oh, don't think I don't hear all you conservatives yelling for justice to be served. Worry not. I've thought of it.

Under my plan, "Hard Copy" will be allowed to skate, but she will have to do it in the pairs competition. She'll be paired with one that will be both a role model to her and will punish her for holding company with such ruffians as "Go-fruity" and Eckardt.

In my mind, there's only one man for the job: Ramaekers. Kevin Ramaekers. That's the one, baby.

Only Ramaekers can make Harding realize her errors and take her on the straight and narrow. Hey, maybe they can even learn to love each other along



Beau Finley

the way.

Not only do I think they'd make a fabulous couple, but I've always wanted to see Ramaekers in ruffles.

Mind you, this move to pairs is not to punish Tonya. It is merely a tool to make her see the error of her ways and make sure such an incident never happens again.

But let's be honest here. If anyone deserved a good clocking, it was Kerrigan. Hell, I've listened to her interviews. It probably made her a little smarter.

I mean, I was getting tired of this "Queen of Clean" shoving hockey players, sipping soup and being inarticulate. If Stant hadn't whacked her, I may have hired someone to do it.

But I probably would have hired someone with a little more experience dealing with criminals, like Colorado football coach Bill McCartney. He'd know how to do the job right, unlike that "Go-loopy" guy.

But despite how outrageous this incident is, it happened right here at UNL just last week.

I guess it's my duty to disclose what the police have been to scared to release. Wussies.

On Jan. 18, NU athletic director Bill Byrne apparently was measuring the Memorial Stadium stands for his new big-screen TV project.

While in the process, an assailant allegedly came up behind him and whispered "What about B-ball?" in his ear.

From all imagined indications, Byrne apparently turned to address the voice and was allegedly struck about the head, neck, chest and legs with what he described as a "hard cheese-steak hoagie."

Byrne later apparently stated he "didn't see the weapon so good" and it could have been anything, even a feather duster or a hunk of salami. Byrne apparently was unable to determine the identity of the assailant.

However, police apparently have unspecified evidence that links one Dan Nee to the assault.

Though not formally charged in the incident, Nee allegedly was interviewed extensively by the police about his potential involvement.

When asked if he possessed any weapons, Nee reportedly responded, "I've only got a Polish rifle."

Nee allegedly followed this statement with a series of expletives and mumblyings about embarrassment and "Big Monday" and then left the interview.

Oh, how life imitates ... um ... you know ... other stuff.

Beau Finley is a first-year law student and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.