

Coaches say Missouri is underrated

By Mitch Sherman
Staff Reporter

The Missouri basketball team is 18-2. The Kansas basketball team is 21-3.

Missouri hasn't lost since Jan. 2, and the Tigers are 9-0 in Big Eight play.

Kansas has lost twice since Jan. 17, and the Jayhawks are 6-2 in Big Eight play.

Yet, in the latest USA Today/CNN Coaches Poll, Missouri is ranked No. 14 and Kansas is No. 2.

"What gives?" Colorado coach Joe Harrington asked Monday during the Big Eight coaches teleconference.

"That's the most amazing thing that has happened in college basketball all season," Kansas coach Roy Williams said. "The fact that they aren't in the top 10 is mystifying."

Missouri beat Kansas 79-67 in Columbia, Mo., on Jan. 31.

Williams offered a possible explanation for the curious nature of the polls.

He said the fact that the Jayhawks won the Preseason NIT in New York City may possibly be inflating KU's ranking.

On the other hand, the Tigers were blown out by No. 1 Arkansas 120-68 on Dec. 2.

BIG 8 CONFERENCE	Conference Games				All Games		
	W	L	H	A	W	L	PCT.
Missouri	9	0	5-0	4-0	18	2	.900
Kansas	6	2	3-1	3-1	21	3	.875
Oklahoma State	5	3	3-1	2-2	16	7	.696
Oklahoma	5	4	2-2	3-2	14	7	.667
Nebraska	4	5	2-2	2-3	14	7	.667
Kansas State	3	7	2-3	1-4	14	8	.636
Colorado	2	7	2-2	0-5	10	11	.470
Iowa State	1	7	1-3	0-4	11	9	.550

Results

Missouri 72, Oklahoma State 70
 Kansas 65, Kansas State 56
 Nebraska 102, Iowa State 96
 Oklahoma 98, Colorado 85
 Monday -- Oklahoma 115, Nebraska 111(OT)



“That's the most amazing thing that has happened in college basketball all season. The fact that they aren't in the top 10 is mystifying.”
 —Williams,
 Kansas coach

"Arkansas could have beaten some NBA teams on that night," Williams said. "They were so hot. There was no way they were going to lose in that building on that night."

The Kansas coach said too much emphasis was being placed on Missouri's early season loss in Fayetteville, Ark.

"I think so many people put way too much stock in that game," he said.

Missouri coach Norm Stewart, whose team is 9-0 in conference play for the first time since 1922, said the Tigers were not worried about their ranking.

"I don't know if surprised is the right word," Stewart said. "But we are not concerned about it. Young people can do just about anything they set their minds to, within reason. And I think 9-0 is within reason."

Harrington, whose Buffaloes have lost to Missouri twice this year, agreed wholeheartedly with Williams.

"I am shocked," Harrington said. "Missouri is 9-0. They have beaten Kansas. My goodness, they are having a great year. They should definitely be ranked higher. But I don't have a vote — not yet."

Possible SWC merger draws mixed reviews

By Mitch Sherman
Staff Reporter

Reports that the Big Eight may soon be merging with the Southwest Conference have caused quite a stir among the conference's football programs.

Talks of multi-million dollar contracts and their impact on the gridiron have received extensive coverage, but what about its effect on the basketball court?

Several Big Eight coaches declined to comment on the matter during Monday's coaches' teleconference, but Iowa State coach Johnny Orr expressed his displeasure.

"In basketball, I would not want to mix up with the Southwest Conference," Orr said. "I just don't think that is a good thing for our basketball program. I don't see any of their teams ranked."

Texas, the only Southwest Conference team that received any votes in the latest Associated Press poll, is 27th in the nation. The Longhorns beat Nebraska 78-75 in Lincoln on Nov. 28. They also beat Oklahoma 87-75 in Austin, Texas, on Dec. 27. The Big Eight is 9-2 against SWC opponents this season.

Orr said the last time the Big Eight coaches met, they decided — on an 8-0 vote — not to merge with the SWC.

Nebraska athletic director Bill Byrne took part in a conference call Monday afternoon with Southwest Conference officials.

Byrne said no new developments came out of the call.

Oklahoma State coach Eddie Sutton said it was just a matter of time

before the merger occurs. "Maybe it's going to happen quicker than expected," Sutton said.

Sutton said he was told by conference officials that the new league could include as many as 14 teams.

"That really makes round-robin play kind of difficult," Sutton said.

Kansas coach Roy Williams said he didn't want to waste his time worrying about something that hadn't happened yet.

"I am much more concerned about our games coming up this week," Williams said. "I haven't spent one second thinking about it and don't intend to. If there is an alliance, then I will think about it. I'm more interested in the luge and backwards downhill than the conference merger."

"We'll talk about it when it happens."

Missouri coach Norm Stewart, who has coached the Tigers for 26 seasons, said he had some strong feelings about the issue but did not want to comment on it at the present time.

Nebraska coach Danny Nee, speaking from Norman, Okla., where the Cornhuskers played Oklahoma Monday night, said conference realignment may not be such a bad idea.

"I am happy that the conference is active," Nee said. "I think we have to be active and looking at things like expansion. It should help us."

NOTE:
 ● Missouri senior guard Melvin Booker was named the Big Eight player of the week. Booker averaged 21.5 points, 5.5 assists and 5.5 rebounds in two Tiger wins.

Loss

Continued from Page 7

"It was pretty tough," Nee said. "I am really disappointed. You can't talk the truth. You can't say how you feel, so I don't know what I can say. You know what I'm going to talk about. It was total bulls—t. It was crazy."

Nebraska... 46 56 9(OT) — 111
 at Oklahoma... 52 50 13(OT) — 115

Nebraska — Badgett 5-10 0-0 10, Piatkowski 8-17 5-5 24, Chubick 5-11 4-8 14, Johnson 9-11 0-1 22, Boone 6-12 0-15, Strickland 4-11 4-4 13, Brooks 5-7 0-0 11, Moore 0-0 0-0 0, Glock 1-2 0-2. Totals 43-81 13-18 111.

Oklahoma — Webster 10-20 11-14 31, Curry 12-18 2-6 33, Conley 8-15 5-8 21, Ontjes 3-7 5-7 12, Lewis 1-3 6-8 8, Barnes 1-5 0-2, Mayden 0-0 0-0 0, Alexander 0-2 3-4 3, Yanish 2-4 1-2 5. Totals 37-74 33-49 115.

3-point goals — Nebraska 12-21 (Piatkowski 3-7, Johnson 4-5, Boone 3-5, Strickland 1-3, Brooks 1-1), Oklahoma 8-18 (Webster 0-1, Curry 7-10, Conley 0-1, Ontjes 1-3, Lewis 0-1, Barnes 0-2). **Fouled out** — Badgett, Piatkowski, Chubick, Strickland. **Rebounds** — Nebraska 39 (Chubick 12), Oklahoma 50 (Curry, Conley 11). **Assists** — Nebraska 24 (Piatkowski, Boone 6), Oklahoma 20 (Ontjes 8). **Total fouls** — Nebraska 32, Oklahoma 19. A — 6, 139.



Nebraska's Erick Strickland (left) and Jaron Boone battle for a rebound against Iowa State Saturday. Strickland scored 13 points and Jaron Boone added 15 in the Huskers' 115-111 overtime loss at Oklahoma.

William Lauer/DN

Yell/Dance Squad Tryouts

Open to any males or females interested in trying out.

Attend information meeting in NE Union
 TUES., Feb. 15, 7:30pm
 (Room to be posted)

Come see what cheering for the Huskers is all about!

If unable to attend or if you have any questions contact:
 Jamie 436-9533 or Norma 472-7063



Dance Contest
 Every Tuesday
 9 p.m.
 1823 "O" Street
 NO COVER

Badgett

Continued from Page 7

"I stopped taking threes," he said, "because I haven't worked it out to three-point range yet. But from 18 feet on, I am going to shoot when I get open."

Badgett has been getting open a lot lately, as have fellow sophomores Boone and Strickland.

Boone, a 6-foot-6-inch guard from Salt Lake City, has stepped it up a notch this year, becoming the team's second leading scorer at 11.7 per game.

Strickland, a 6-foot-2-inch guard from Bellevue, has provided a spark both offensively and defensively off the bench.

Badgett said the three sophomores, along with Jason Glock and transfer

Tom Wald, would constitute a talented junior class next season.

"Jason is very fundamentally sound," Badgett said. "Strickland is a great defensive player, and Jaron is a great point guard. My job is to create a disturbance."

"By the time we are seniors, you are going to see a whole different team. But I am taking it slow — day by day."

As for this season, Badgett said, the Huskers see light at the end of the tunnel.

"We just entered the second part of the Big Eight," he said, "and we think the second part is going to be way different than the first part. There's still a peek of light there for us to do it. We just need to keep our composure and listen to the coaches."