

# Tigers, controversial calls nip Huskers

By Jeff Griesch  
Senior Editor

With three seconds left, Eric Piatkowski squared from 28 feet on the right wing and released Nebraska's last chance at an upset of sixth-ranked Missouri.

Piatkowski's desperation shot looked good. But it rimmed in and out, and the Cornhuskers fell to the Tigers 80-78 in Columbia, Mo., Saturday.

Piatkowski's shot typified Nebraska's day on the road.

The Huskers, 17-9 overall and 7-7 in the Big Eight, looked good but couldn't nail down the victory.

With 1:35 remaining in the game, Bruce Chubick hit two free throws to put the Huskers on top, 78-75.

But Melvin Booker scored the last five points of a game cluttered with questionable calls down the stretch.

In the last 45 seconds, referee Ron Spitzer called an intentional foul on Piatkowski for his foul on a breakaway layup by Kelly Thames. Piatkowski appeared to touch the ball before Thames released it, and Tom Best swatted it

away.

Then it looked like the Nebraska defense had stopped the Tigers with 25 seconds left, when referee Paul Janssen called an offensive foul on Missouri's Melvin Booker for running into Erick Strickland.

But Stanley Reynolds called a block on Strickland. The officials met at halfcourt and called a double foul on Booker and Strickland, who went to the bench with his fifth foul.

The double foul resulted in the Tigers getting the ball because the alternating possession arrow was in their favor.

Booker again got the ball and drove to the left side of the lane. He then hit a leaning 12-footer and was fouled by Jamar Johnson with 12 seconds left.

Booker then hit the winning free throw. He finished with 18 points, while four other Tigers scored in double figures.

The win gave the Tigers, 24-2 and 14-0, the first perfect season in the conference since Kansas went undefeated in 1970-71.

Nebraska coach Danny Nee, who went on a tirade immediately after the game, was obviously upset by the events that unfolded in the final minute.

"Because of the circumstances, I can't comment on any of that (the officiating)," Nee said on KFAB's postgame radio show. "But if it was on TV, our fans know what happened."

Nee also said he planned action when the Huskers returned home.

"There are things that Bill Byrne and I can do," Nee said. "I can assure you that we will follow all the proper procedures that we can."

Despite his outrage at the outcome, Nee remained positive afterwards.

"We can't play any better than we played," Nee said. "That is the best that Nebraska has ever played, and I think that will be our focus from now until the end of our season. We have to handle this with class."

It didn't take long for the Huskers to show they were ready for the Tigers, as Nebraska jumped to an early 18-10 lead behind the hot hand of Piatkowski.

The senior forward from Rapid City, S.D., scored 14 of Nebraska's first 18 points and finished with 26 points on the afternoon.

Bruce Chubick finished with 19 points and Jaron Boone added 11 for the Huskers, while Best ended with a game-high 14 rebounds.

"I really thought that Nebraska came ready

— 66 —

**We have to handle this with class.**

—Nee

Nebraska basketball coach

— 99 —

to play," Nee said. "And what we accomplished today was that we showed everybody that we're for real now. I am more excited about our potential now and what we can do in March."

As the fourth seed, the Huskers will play Oklahoma in the first round of the Big Eight tournament at Kemper Arena in Kansas City, Mo., Friday at 2:20 p.m.

Missouri, the No. 1 seed, will face Colorado to open the tournament at 12:10 p.m. If the Huskers and Tigers both win on Friday, they'll meet again Saturday.

"I really relish the opportunity to play them again," Nee said. "The way I want to think about it is that we still have to play our way into the (NCAA) tournament."

## Huskers get sweep, even record at 5-5

By Mitch Sherman  
Staff Reporter

Following three weekend victories over Western Illinois, the Nebraska baseball team is turning its season around after a slow start.

The 5-5 Cornhuskers beat the Leathernecks 12-2 and 9-8 on Saturday and squeaked out a 9-8 come-from-behind win on Sunday at Buck Beltzer Field.

Nebraska coach John Sanders said he was pleased with Sunday's win but was happier to see the Huskers' reaction when they fell behind by three runs.

Western Illinois scored three runs on three hits in the top of the seventh inning to take an 8-5 lead.

Huskers Darin Petersen, Darin Erstad and Alvie Shepherd opened the bottom of the seventh with walks. Western Illinois pitcher Matt McLaughlin then hit Nebraska third baseman Derek Dukart, driving in Petersen. That cut the Leathernecks' lead to 8-6.

After center fielder Jed Dalton popped out to third, first baseman

Matt McKay singled in Erstad, cutting the lead to one run.

"We reacted well to scoreboard pressure," Sanders said. "And early in the year, scoreboard pressure can be tough to overcome."

Nebraska pitcher David Gappa, who relieved starter Cody Winget with two outs in the top of the seventh inning, held the Leathernecks scoreless in the eighth.

In the bottom of the eighth, the Huskers tied the game at eight when second baseman Scott Wulfinf scored on Erstad's sacrifice fly with one out. In the next at-bat, Nebraska took the lead for good when Petersen scored on a wild pitch by McLaughlin.

Gappa, 1-0, shut down Western Illinois in the ninth inning to preserve the victory. The Huskers had just six hits to Western Illinois' 13.

After a 2-5 start, Sanders said the Huskers appeared to be taking steps in the right direction but needed to continue to play well for the rest of their six-game homestand.

"It's nice to establish some consistency. I see some improvement, and we are starting to get some resiliency."

The Huskers continue their homestand Monday at noon when they play Northern Iowa in a doubleheader.



Michelle Paulman/DN

**Alvie Shepherd, left, congratulates Matt McKay on his home run in Nebraska's game against Western Illinois on Saturday. McKay's homer put Nebraska up 6-0 in the first inning, and the Huskers went on to win 12-2.**

## Buffalo's performance boots NU

By Derek Samson  
Senior Reporter

SALINA, Kan. — Colorado's Jamillah Lang was too much for the Nebraska women's basketball team in its 77-67 semifinal loss to the Buffaloes in the Big Eight women's basketball tournament Sunday.

Nebraska women's basketball coach Angela Beck said Lang, who tied her career-high with 32 points including a 5-of-5 performance from 3-point range, seemed to be in a league of her own. Lang scored 16 points in the first eight minutes as Colorado built a 20-10 lead.

"Jamillah Lang had one of those zones tonight," Beck said. "She couldn't miss. She is the kind of kid if she gets one or two down, she is unstoppable. I kept talking about the fact that we had to take her out when she had 18 at half, but that is easier said than done."

Colorado, which held a 34-29 lead at intermission, kept its lead in the six-to-eight-point range throughout the game.

"We had some really good defensive series," Beck said. "I felt like we had a little momentum. It seemed like when we had some things going our way, we turned the ball over. We turned the ball over a lot, and that just kills your momentum."

In the second half, Nebraska scored seven unanswered points to cut the Buffaloes' lead to 57-50 with 8:58 left, but Colorado didn't let Nebraska come much closer.

"It just seemed like with about eight minutes left, everything started falling their way, as far as loose balls and those things," Beck said. "I thought emotionally our kids were ready. It just didn't go our way down the stretch."

Colorado, which was the tournament's top seed, had a tough time in its opening-round win over eighth-seed Iowa State.

Colorado knew it had to turn it up a notch to beat Nebraska, Beck said.

"You have to end your season sometime. It's just unfortunate we had to end it today," Beck said. "Colorado played a quality game. They got their wake-up call against Iowa State, and they were ready for this one."

Meggan Yedsena, who was called for her third foul and sat out the final 10:23 of the first half, ended the game with two assists and became the Big Eight's all-time assist leader with 696.

## SPORTS BRIEFS Men gymnasts place second

From Staff Reports

Nebraska's men's gymnastics team scored a season-high 284.40 points but settled for second Saturday at the Stanford Invitational.

Two-time defending national champion Stanford won the meet with 285.125 points.

Junior Richard Grace won the all-around with a 57.25, while senior Dennis Harrison was third with a 56.80.

The Huskers had season-high team marks in the parallel bars, horizontal bar, pommel horse and still rings.

## Gymnasts take fourth in meet

From Staff Reports

The Nebraska women's gymnastics team placed fourth at its meet in Corvallis, Ore., Friday.

Oregon State won the meet with 193.725. Penn State was second with 191.55, and Minnesota was third at 189.975.

## Wrestler takes down Big Eight title

By Tim Pearson  
Senior Reporter

AMES, Iowa — Frank Velazquez walked up onto the medal stand at the Big Eight wrestling championships.

And for the second-straight year, the top step was his. Velazquez, a Cornhusker senior, won the Big Eight title at 134 pounds Saturday at Hilton Coliseum.

He became the first Husker to win back-to-back Big Eight titles since Johnnie Selmon in 1981 and 1982.

But the Husker co-captain was one of the few bright spots in what Nebraska coach Tim Neumann called a "sub-par performance."

Nebraska, which advanced only four wrestlers to the finals, finished a disappointing third behind champion Oklahoma State and Oklahoma.

In a repeat of last year's final, Velazquez, the top seed, met up with Iowa State's Derek Mountsier, the second seed who was ranked sixth in the country.

With Velazquez up 5-3 in the third period, Mountsier scored a takedown to send the match into overtime and the Cyclone-partisan crowd of 3,007 into a frenzy.

Velazquez said the crowd noise made him more determined to win.

"That just makes me more aggressive," he said. "Everybody's against me, and I've got to show them."

Show them, he did.

Velazquez had a hold of Mountsier's leg as Mountsier struggled to get out of bounds. But Velazquez pulled him back in bounds and took him down for the win.

"I was trying to pull him back in to reach for his other leg," Velazquez said. "It was a tug-of-war, but I knew I would score."

One title was all the Huskers could score.

Tolly Thompson and Scott Gonyo, both No. 2 seeds, were upset in first-round matches.

At 118, Gonyo was upset by Oklahoma's Eric Ivins 13-5.

Thompson, a freshman heavyweight, fell behind early in a loss to Oklahoma's John Kading, whom Thompson had beaten twice this season. But Thompson did break the Husker school record for most wins by a fresh-

— 66 —

**Everybody's against me, and I've got to show them.**

—Velazquez,  
Nebraska wrestler

— 99 —

man with 36.

Neumann said those two losses hurt the Huskers in their quest to defend their Big Eight title against Oklahoma State, which was favored to win.

"We're the second-best team in the conference," he said. "We've proved it all year long, and I think we'll prove it at nationals."

"I thought if we had six finalists, we'd have a pretty good shot at them."

Freshman Justin Ware came close to becoming the Huskers' second finalist against top-ranked and undefeated Alan Fried of Oklahoma State.

Ware — the only wrestler to take Fried down all season — took him down once more but came up short in a 10-5 loss in the final at 142 pounds.

Two other Husker freshmen — Temoer Terry and Jason Kraft — were Nebraska's other finalists.