

SPORTS

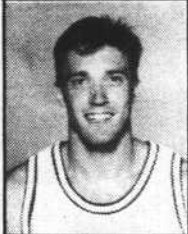
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Altman: Huskers will be a tough task for Creighton

By Todd Walkenhorst
Staff Reporter

Nebraska will put its 4-1 record on the line when the Cornhuskers face in-state rival Creighton in a 7:05 game tonight.



Wald took over as Bluejay coach after

Rick Johnson was fired at the end of last season.

Nebraska coach Danny Nee said Altman would help the Bluejay program rebuild quickly.

"It's definitely a positive factor for that program," Nee said.

Nebraska junior guard Tom Wald said that he expected the Huskers' full attention to be on the Bluejays Wednesday night and not Michigan State, the Huskers' opponent on Saturday.

"I don't think we're looking ahead to anyone," Wald said. "Someone tried to mention it (Michigan State game), and everybody got on him."

Wald said that the Huskers were expecting a tough game from Creighton.

"I think we match up with them very well," Wald said. "It should be a good game."

Wald said he and his teammates would be looking forward to playing the Bluejays because of the natural rivalry. Many of the players knew each other from playing together in summer leagues, he said.

The Bluejays' record is 1-1; their loss was against Southern Methodist 77-70 last Saturday.

The Huskers have won their last four meetings with the Bluejays, including a 67-53 victory in Omaha

last year. Nebraska has never lost to Creighton in the Devaney Center.

Creighton coach Dana Altman said it would be a difficult task for his team to upset the Huskers, who have made the NCAA tournament the past four years.

"We're a young, inexperienced ball club," Altman said, "and we have a long way to go as a team. It will probably be a growing up experience. We haven't been real sharp."

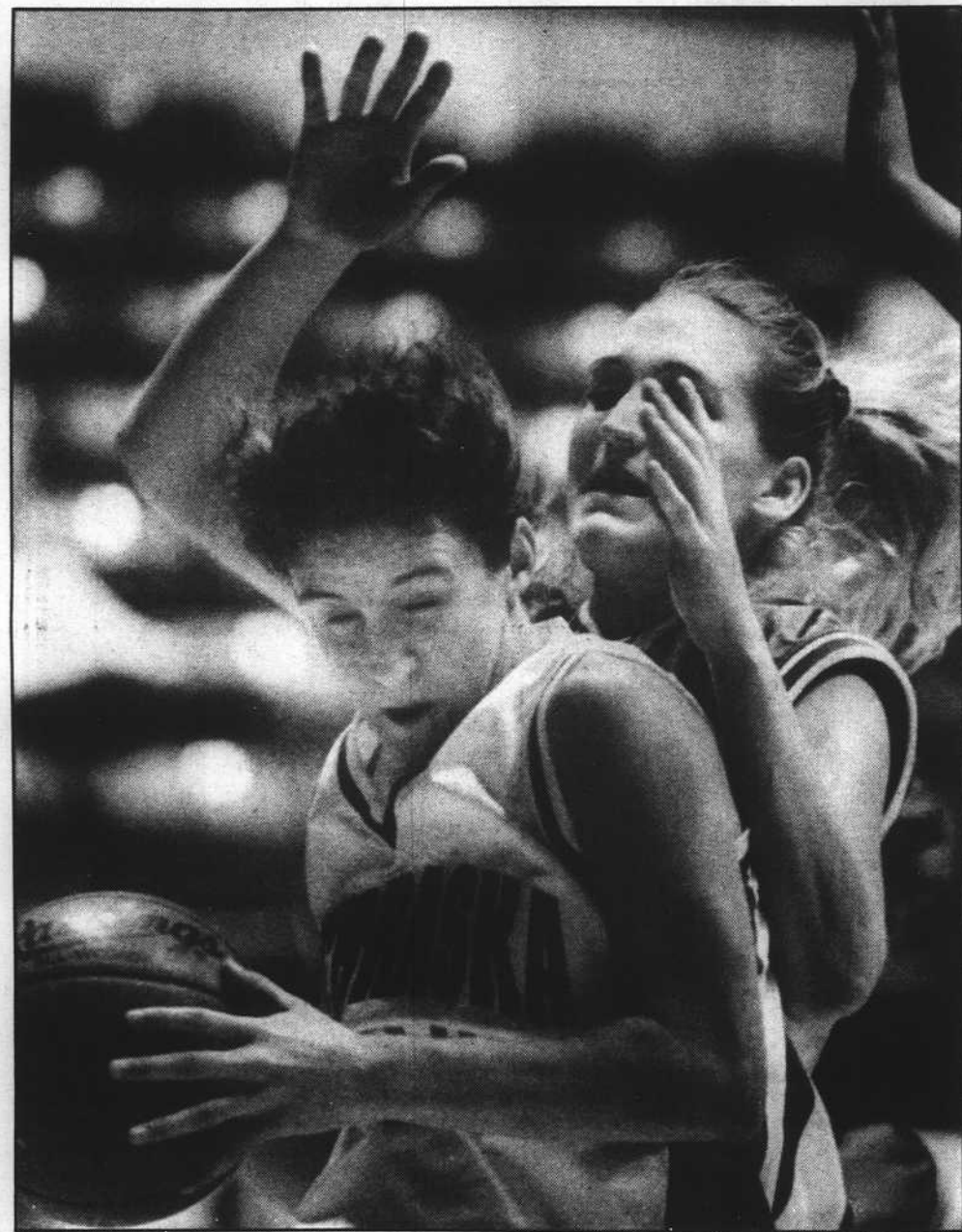
Creighton has been hindered early in the season by injuries. Starting center Nate King will not play tonight because of a lingering calf injury.

Dana Altman coached four years at Kansas State. Now he's in his first year at Creighton. His record against Nebraska at Bob Devaney Sports Center:

1990 85-78 loss
1991 91-62 loss
1992 66-64
1993 86-77 loss



DN graphic



Michelle Paulman/DN

Nebraska freshman guard Jami Kubik pulls down a rebound as Buffalo's Kristen Holtz defends during the Huskers' 79-66 win Tuesday night.

Strong defense, turnovers help Huskers defeat Buffalo

By Trevor Parks
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska women's basketball team turned up the defensive pressure in a 79-66 win over Buffalo Tuesday night.

The Nebraska defense held the Royals to only 30 second-half points and forced 12 turnovers in rallying from a 36-34 halftime deficit in front of 309 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Nebraska, 5-2, also held Buffalo to only 11 points in the first 10 minutes of the second half.

Coach Angela Beck said she wanted to keep the team fresh in the first half, which was why Nebraska was cautious in using its full-court press.

"I felt that they had a lot more legs than we had," Beck said. "Overall in the second half I thought we played good defense."

Center Pyra Aarden said the Huskers turned things up a notch after blowing a 12-point lead in the first half.

The Cornhuskers' second-half press gave Nebraska the wakeup call it needed, Aarden said.

"It was something we threw in, and if it works we stay with it," Aarden said. "We're trying all kinds of different things and see what works, I guess."

After trailing at halftime, Nebraska began the second half with a 21-4 run that put Buffalo away.

Tina McClain, who led the Huskers with 18 points, tied the game just 16 seconds into the half at 36-36.

After an Aarden basket, with 18:53 remaining, Nebraska never trailed again.

Aarden finished the game with 16 points and a team-high 12 rebounds, including seven offensive boards.

Beck said she was happy with Aarden's play.

"I thought we did a good job of crashing the boards," Beck said. "What I thought we didn't

do a good job of was getting quality putbacks." Nebraska led by as many as 19 in the second half after a Roquayyah Brown layup.

However, Aarden said the sporadic play of Nebraska was a major concern.

"We need to work on being consistent," Aarden said. "I think it's something that everyone wants to put together, a 40-minute game, and obviously that's a big goal."

The Huskers were able to remain consistent throughout the second half.

After Nebraska's hot start in the second half, the closest the Royals managed to come was within 10 at 71-61 after a Brenna Doty 3-pointer with 3:02 remaining.

Doty and Kristen Holtz led the Royals with 15 points each.

In the first half, Nebraska built a 34-22 lead before the Royals rallied.

Aarden picked up her third foul with 3:46 remaining, and after being replaced, the Royals went on a 14-0 run to close out the half and take the lead.

Aarden said she needed to be a little more cautious when she gets into foul trouble.

"Getting in foul trouble is no fun," Aarden said. "Obviously it doesn't help, I think it's just a concentration level, and that is something we need to work on."

Beck said she was disappointed with the way her team finished up the first half.

"We just played really horrendous the last four minutes," Beck said. "I just tried to play a lot of numbers and had a real bad combination those last four minutes."

Both teams struggled at times in the first half, at one point going 3:55 without a score.

Overall both teams combined to score just five points in a 5:08 span.

Beck said she was glad to get a win over the 3-1 Royals, who finished 20-9 last season.

"They are not a bad team," Beck said. "It's not like we're getting teams in here we can walk over."

Poll gives college football fans a much needed voice

What do the writers know?
What do the coaches know?

Finally, the fans are starting to speak out. They are starting to demand a better method of determining the true national champion. But they may be going down the wrong track.

That path should include clamoring for an NCAA playoff, but instead the fans have initiated their own college football poll.

And according to the fans, Alabama is the No. 1 team in the nation.

Or make that, the Tide were the No. 1 team in the country.

Well, after the Tide's loss to Florida last Saturday, that No. 1 spot is in jeopardy. In the last poll, released last Thursday, Alabama was No. 1, followed by Nebraska, Penn State, Miami and Florida State.

But we won't know who the new No. 1 team is until January because the Sports Fan Poll, based in Clermont, Fla., doesn't come out

again until the bowl games are over.

Nick Bacon, along with partner Ed Augustine, set up the Sports Fan Poll to give fans a say.

It all started in a local coffee shop.

"A bunch of us were sitting in a coffee shop arguing about who's No. 1," Bacon said. "And we thought maybe the fans ought to have a poll of their own."

And the fans have been heard — kind of.

More than 8,000 fans respond every week to the poll, which sounds like a lot of calls.

But Bacon begs to differ. He has greater expectations for his little poll extravaganza.

"We get 8,000 calls, which I think is minimal," he said. "If we took three percent of the college football population, we'd get 50,000 calls."

Also, 50,000 calls would mean more money for Bacon and his partners. Calling the number — 1-900-



Tim Pearson

407-8683 — costs approximately \$1.25 per call.

But money isn't the issue here. Bacon insists that he and his cohorts aren't in this for the money. They're not in this to make a fast buck. They're doing this to make a point.

To make a point that the fans need a voice.

But not everybody thinks like Bacon.

Bacon said one writer from Birmingham, Ala., criticized him for starting the fan poll.

"I had a big argument with him, and he said that our poll was baloney," Bacon said. "He told me, 'Our poll is scientific; we analyze all the

games and all the teams,' and I told him he was crazy.

"I don't see how you're any more scientific than I am."

This may be true. There may be some writers that don't take their vote seriously. But I also know there are some who look at their vote as a privilege.

As far as coaches go, I don't think the college football coaches take the poll votes any more seriously than the writers.

And Bacon maintains that his poll is not some number that people can call over and over to get votes for their favorite team.

"If their (favorite) team is doing good, they'll spend a buck and call us," he said. "There's probably some fanatic who calls three times a day."

"But this is the only fair way to do it."

Bacon said that they had AT&T install a system that would post the number of calls from each area code.

And the results have shown that

people from all around the country call in.

"For every team in the top 15, we get calls from 20 to 30 different area codes," Bacon said. "It's not strictly a hometown thing. It was amazing to me, sort of."

And after the football season is over, Bacon hopes to tackle specific topics — such as players of the week. Eventually, Bacon hopes to get someone to sponsor the poll.

"It'd give us a little bit better circulation," he said.

Maybe all this better circulation will help calm the furor over the current poll system.

It's about time the fans made themselves heard.

It may not be their strongest voice, but at least it's a little more than a whisper. It's a step in the right direction.

Pearson is a junior news-editorial major and the Daily Nebraskan sports editor.