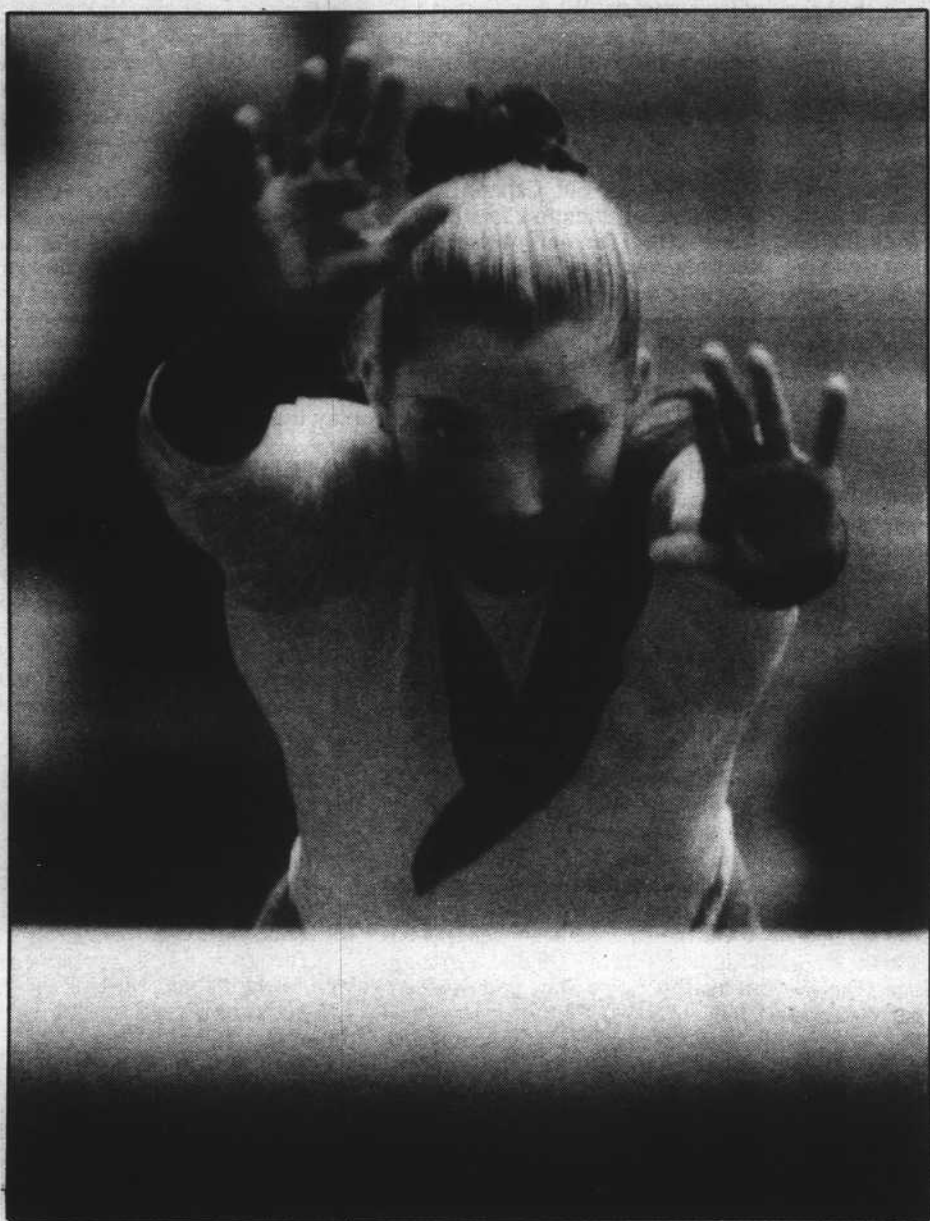


SPORTS

Tuesday, January 24, 1995

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Nebraska's Martha Jenkins competes on the vault during the Huskers' win against Utah State Jan. 15. Gerik Parmele/DN

Gymnast heals from injury, sees team make adjustments

By Trevor Parks
Staff Reporter

Martha Jenkins has seen the Nebraska women's gymnastics team come together. Jenkins had just finished her sophomore season in 1993 when Rick Walton was replaced by current Nebraska gymnastics coach Dan Kendig. Along with current seniors Nicole Duval, Jennifer Hawkinson and Kristi Camp, Jenkins had to make the adjustment to the new coach. It was an adjustment she said was easy. "Everything is a lot better now with Dan

as the coach than my first year," Jenkins said. "Dan came in during the summer, so that helped us adjust well."

"All four of us seniors have been through a lot."

The 5-foot senior from Kingwood, Texas, adjusted well, along with her other Cornhusker teammates, helping the Huskers win the Big Eight title last year after a three-year drought.

This year the Huskers are looking to remain on top.

Jenkins has helped 16th-ranked Nebraska

See JENKINS on 8

Huskers caught by early bird; Jayhawks fly to 84-67 win

By Derek Samson
Senior Reporter

LAWRENCE, Kan. — If Nebraska was wondering how long it could stay with No. 7 Kansas, the Cornhuskers' poor shooting provided the answer quickly in the Jayhawks' 84-67 win Monday night at Allen Fieldhouse.

The loss dropped Nebraska to 14-4 overall and 1-2 in the Big Eight. Kansas improved to 14-2 on the season and 4-1 in the conference.

Nebraska, which lost its 13th consecutive game against Kansas at Allen Fieldhouse, shot only 32 percent from the field in the first half.

The Jayhawks countered in the first half by hitting 7-of-12 3-point attempts to take a 46-30 lead into halftime.

Nebraska coach Danny Nee said the Huskers' poor performance was a result of Kansas' stingy defense — which has held every opponent to less than 50 percent shooting.

"I thought they shot the ball, executed and played at a very, very high level," Nee said. "They came at us and took it to us real strong. I thought we missed too many shots, but I also thought that Kansas was very effective."

Nebraska never led after the 13-minute mark in the first half, when the Huskers held an 8-7 advantage.

Kansas went on a 14-2 run after trailing 8-7 and finished the first half with a 14-6 run.

The only Husker to pose a threat to Kansas in the first half was junior guard Jaron Boone, who finished the half with 13 points, including three 3-pointers.

Boone said despite scoring a team-high 18

points, it just wasn't Nebraska's night.

"We knew that if they broke our defense down, they could hit the shots," he said. "That's what they did. Any good team like Kansas can shoot, and you have to expect that."

"When they broke our defense down, they knocked down their 3-pointers. There's nothing we could do about it."

The Jayhawks stopped Nebraska's Erick Strickland, who was held to two points on a 1-of-6 shooting performance. Strickland picked up three fouls early in the first half.

Nee said the minutes Strickland sat on the bench for foul trouble had no effect on the outcome of the game.

"Erick wasn't playing well, so I don't think that was a big factor," he said. "Kansas was just playing at a very high level, and that was the factor."

Strickland, who finished with eight points in just under 23 minutes of action, said he couldn't remember a worse personal performance.

"I shot terrible tonight," Strickland said. "I don't know when I've shot any worse. (The foul trouble) hurt my aggressiveness. I couldn't play (defense) like I wanted to."

Nebraska's shooting woes continued in the second half, when it again shot just over 32 percent from the floor.

"They are a top 10 team," Nee said. "They're just a quality team. They play good defense, they have a great home crowd — they've got it rolling."

"That's it. There's nothing you can do about that."

CU's winning season offers proof it's Big Eight quality

By Mitch Sherman
Senior Reporter

The Colorado basketball team may finally be ready to join the rest of the Big Eight.

The Buffaloes have been members of the conference for years, but that fact is not made completely evident by looking at the number of Big Eight victories Colorado has recorded in the last few seasons.



Harrington

Since 1985, the Buffs have won only one conference game on an opponent's home court, and can boast of only 23 Big Eight victories, an average of less than three wins per year.

Although the Buffs sit at 1-2 in conference play, they are 10-4 overall, and on track to register their second winning season since 1984. Coach Joe Harrington said Saturday's 91-77 loss to seventh-ranked Kansas served notice that Colo-

rado is no longer a pushover for the Big Eight's elite teams.

"We are a better basketball team than in years past," Harrington said. "And I don't see us going anywhere but up."

In the Buffaloes' loss to the Jayhawks Saturday in Boulder, Colo., Colorado stayed close to Kansas for much of the second half, at times trailing by less than five points.

"I was not at all dissatisfied with our effort," Harrington said. "Kansas did a great job of getting the ball inside. Kansas is well-balanced. They have great depth inside. They are strong, they shoot the ball well, and they are certainly worthy of their ranking."

Colorado's lone conference victory came against No. 11 Iowa State at the Coors Event Center in Boulder on Jan. 7. Harrington said Colorado expected more Big Eight victories to come later in the season.

"I enjoy coaching this team," he said. "Even on the bad days, I enjoy it, because we're

See COLORADO on 8

Huskers must make their usual season-ending run

Looking at the Nebraska basketball schedule before the season, three letters came to mind. N-I-T. As in National Invitation Tournament.

I would have never expected the Husker Hoopsters to be at 14-4 and making a run at their fifth-straight NCAA tournament.

But they are. And now the NIT and those three extra home games that Nebraska might have had are just a fond memory, like the Moe Iba days.

Of course Nebraska is struggling at 1-2 in the Big Eight, with losses to Missouri and at Kansas Monday night.

That's nothing new. The Huskers were 2-4 after the first six Big Eight games last year, yet finished 7-7 in the conference and won the Big Eight tournament.

They were 0-3 the year before that and finished 8-6.

The Huskers were 1-3 in 1991-92 and ended conference play at 7-

7.

So slow starts in the Big Eight are a familiar thing to Husker basketball fans.

All of these seasons ended up with the Huskers going to the NCAA tournament.

But that hasn't meant much, since the Big Red has been the Big Dead in the first round.

Now the question remains that even if the Huskers can finish strong like they have in the past, will they make it to the Big Dance?

Twenty wins looks good. A conference record of .500 or better is nice.

However, all is not good for the Huskers' NCAA fortunes.

Especially since the Huskers have struggled on the road against no-names like Northern Iowa and Missouri-Kansas City.

The Huskers have won lucky — as Coach Danny Nee would say — and escaped from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and Kansas City, Mo., with narrow victories.



Trevor Parks

Northern Iowa lost the home-court advantage when the roof of its home facility, the UNI-Dome in Cedar Falls, collapsed due to heavy snow. So the Panthers had to play Nebraska in Cedar Rapids, 75 miles from home.

Missouri-Kansas City had four starters out for the year with injuries, and the Kangaroos couldn't run an offensive play to save their lives, but they almost beat Nebraska.

The Huskers got clobbered at Texas.

And Nebraska escaped a 10-point halftime deficit in the wee

hours of the morning (or evening, depending on how you look at it) at Long Beach State.

Now after getting lost at Allen Fieldhouse last night at Kansas, the fun is just beginning.

With five home games remaining, the Huskers must win all five. On the road, though, it may be a different story.

The Huskers will have to contend with Hilton Magic at Iowa State, the Antlers at Missouri, mile-high at Colorado, Wabash Cannon ball at Kansas State, the Cowboy Posse at Oklahoma State and the dog at Oklahoma.

Those Big Eight teams are not the cupcakes the Huskers have seen so far this season. Morehead State, Northeastern Illinois and Delaware State, teams that Nebraska padded its schedule and wallet with, do not even come close to comparing with the Big Eight powers.

But the Huskers do have one very impressive win at home over Michigan State, which will be very

crucial come tournament time.

But that was a narrow, lucky win with Tom Wald making three free throws in the final 0.5 seconds.

Maybe the NCAA selection committee will overlook that part.

Or the Huskers could bypass the selection committee by winning the conference tournament again.

Once is enough for a while. Let's not get too greedy now.

It looks as if the Huskers' hopes of post-season glory hinge on how they finish up the conference season.

What's new?

Looking at the last three years, Nebraska is in perfect position to make its annual all-or-nothing run.

Don't fret, Danny Nee-tie diehards!

After all, this season is just a typical one in the new history of Nebraska basketball.

No NIT included.

Parks is a junior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan staff reporter.