

Emphasis on guards changing

By Mitch Sherman
Senior Reporter

Before the season, the play of the guards on the Nebraska basketball team was not supposed to be a problem.

The Cornhusker perimeter players were prepared to stake their claim as the best backcourt in the Big Eight.

Four games and three losses into the conference season, starting guards Erick Strickland, Jaron Boone and Tom Wald are certainly contributing their share of points to the offense—perhaps too many points, forward Terrance Badgett said.

"Whatever you are going to do," Badgett said, "you have to get your big men the ball. That's kind of the heart of the team."

In conference play, Wald, Strickland and Boone have accounted for 58.8 percent of the Huskers' scoring. Starting post players Mikki Moore and Badgett are scoring only 16.5 percent of the team's points.

"I think Strickland and Tom and Jaron will realize that you have to get the ball in."

They already have.

"We have got to use our big men more," said Boone, whose 16.3 points per game rank second to Strickland's 17.1. "I think we have got to recognize when they are in the game and get it down to them more. Sometimes we get so guard-oriented that our offense isn't so hard to

See BASKETBALL on 8

Coaches face heavy stress during season

By Trevor Parks
Staff Reporter

With college basketball becoming a big business, coaches are being placed under a tremendous amount of pressure.

The same follows for Big Eight coaches who know that no matter how much success they're having, they're always under scrutiny.

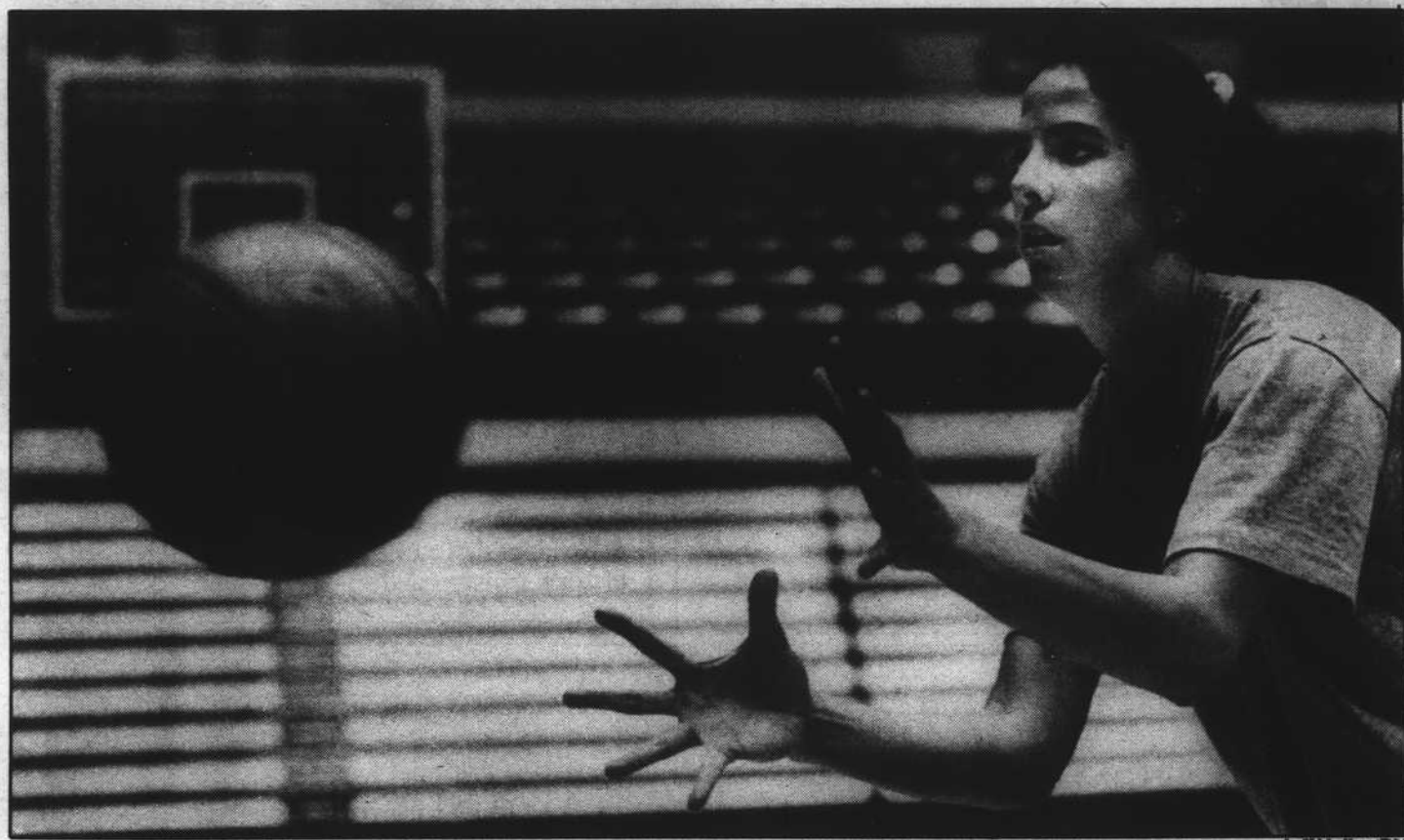
Kansas coach Roy Williams said the pressure to win was immense.

"I have always felt no one has put pressure on me like I do on myself," he said. "It's not going to bother me as much as I bother myself."

This season, two NCAA basketball coaches

See PRESSURE on 8

Waiting it out



Jeff Haller/DN

Nebraska basketball player Emily Thompson catches a pass while shooting around last week. Thompson tore her anterior cruciate ligament and is redshirting this season.

Center works hard to play another day

By Jeff Griesch
Senior Reporter

Emily Thompson wants to help the Nebraska women's basketball team.

The Cornhuskers have been plagued with injuries all season and could use a fresh set of legs to spark a turnaround after a 2-5 conference start.

Thompson would love to be the player to ignite the Huskers, but one of her legs isn't strong enough.

The 6-foot-3 sophomore center from Springfield, Mo., tore the anterior cruciate ligament in her right knee Sept. 14 in a pickup game and has missed the entire season.

Thompson should be healthy enough to return to practice next week, but she will not play.

Instead, Thompson will continue to work on improving her leg strength while redshirting.

She knows that rehabilitating her leg slowly will help her in the long run, but Thompson said she was mentally ready to

play right now.

"I feel like I can be playing and running and doing everything today," Thompson said. "My mind thinks I can do more than my body is letting me do. It is kind of frustrating. I want to be out there."

Last season, Thompson averaged 5.1 points and 4.0 rebounds per game, and Nebraska coach Angela Beck said she would like to have Thompson back.

"Having Emily would make a huge difference," Beck said. "She is a true center who could pound the boards and get us some big rebounds. Having her would be big, but we're not going to risk bringing her back to save our season."

Although Thompson may have lost any chance to play this season, her season has not been a total loss.

While she sits, she learns.

"I have learned a ton this season just watching the games," Thompson said. "I feel like I have a whole new perspective on the game."

"I have learned to see the game from the guard's point of view. Instead of being on

"My mind thinks I can do more than my body is letting me do. It is kind of frustrating. I want to be out there."

EMILY THOMPSON
Sophomore center

the inside and looking out, I have been on the outside looking in, and it gives you a better understanding of the whole offense and the whole game."

Although she has gained new insight, Thompson said she also felt like an outsider on the team.

"I really don't feel like I am a part of the team," Thompson said. "They are out there working and struggling and I am over here stretching. It makes me want to get back out there even more and be a part of it."

Fresh fish fetish inspiration for freshman track star

I was lounging with Mookie, my pet gerbil, confidant and now lead counsel for the O.J. Simpson defense, when he brought it up.

We were indulging in our favorite snack, Cheerios and Tabasco sauce, when Mook said, "So what do think of that Nora Shepherd?"

I replied that I knew the name, but I did not really know that much about her.

"And you call yourself a sports-writer and a man, Dr. Chumpenstein?"

"Dr. Chumpenstein" is the name Mookie christens me with when I'm especially ignorant.

He continued.

"She's only a track superstar for Nebraska," Mookie retorted with that snide rodent tone that only he has. "She is going to be regarded as the greatest runner in the whole friggin' history of the school."

I then told my enlivened companion to perhaps settle down a bit. I told him if he could accomplish

enlightening me on Shepherd without using expletives and derogatory statements as to my manhood, then he should do so.

He proceeded to slug me in the gut while simultaneously yelling out, "shut up, sissy boy!"

But he did calm himself enough to tell me about the greatness that is Nora Shepherd.

Nora Shepherd is a freshman sensation on the Cornhusker track team. She currently specializes in the 800-, 1600-, and 3200-meter runs as well as the 100-meter backstroke. Wait, that's not right. Aw, screw it—I'm rolling.

But don't let that freshman status fool you—this is a woman that has led a difficult and heroic existence, negotiating each hurdle that has positioned itself in her incredible ascent to track greatness. Or something like that.

Shepherd was born in Juneau, Alaska. Actually she's from York. But this is my story.

In fact, the name "Nora" is



Beau Finley

Eskimo for "she who prances above the snow swiftly with large reptiles strapped to her hips." An apt name for this track wunderkind.

Nora realized early in life that she would have to use her talent not only to forge an identity, but literally to survive.

So what was Nora's biggest motivation to run when she was younger? That's an easy one—fresh fish.

You see, Nora came from a family of 18 brothers and sisters and six step-half cousins, and if she wanted to get the good fish for

dinner, she had to be there first.

Nora learned early on that the fresh stuff was gone if she was slow. Upon this realization, Nora was always first to the table. Nora's a special athlete and fresh fish is a big reason why.

Actually she won 10 Nebraska State Class B Championships in cross country and track.

Now, I know what you're asking. Just how fast is this Nora Shepherd?

Well, my vast readership, let me tell you, um, well, she's... she's, you know, really pretty fast.

In fact, Nora has been clocked in the 40-yard dash in a faster time than Brook Berringer. Wait, I've been clocked in the 40 faster than Brook Berringer.

No, no, no—I'm kidding. I love Brook. Why do you think I'm getting my hair cut just like his?

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Nora Shepherd, however, is her Greek affiliation. Shepherd is a recent initiate into the Delta

Gamma sorority, the same house that is the home of Husker golf great, Molly Hallett.

For those of you who have somehow forgotten the transcendence of Hallett, she was unanimously chosen as 1993 Big Eight female athlete of the year by... well... by Mookie and me.

Also, Hallett is currently able to bench press more than Brook Berringer. I am JOKING.

C'mon, Brook—you got a national championship, baby. All I got is a rat.

Anyway, don't let this fraternal commonality confuse you. Nora is very much her own person. She follows in no one's footsteps.

No, this is one fish-eating Alaskan trackster that's going to create her own name for herself.

And that name is going to be Nora Shepherd, Big Eight champion.

Finley is a second-year law student and a Daily Nebraskan sports columnist.