

SPORTS

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Nee hopes Devaney curse holds Jayhawks

By Trevor Parks
Staff Reporter

Nebraska coach Danny Nee said he hoped the Bob Devaney Sports Center would continue to be a house of horrors to the Kansas Jayhawks.

The Cornhuskers play host to the No. 3 Jayhawks, 18-3 and 7-2 in the Big Eight, in an 8:05 game tonight at the Devaney Center.

Kansas coach Roy Williams, who has seen his team lose four straight games in Lincoln, has a 1-5 record against Nebraska on the Huskers' home floor.

Now the Jayhawks try to avoid a fifth-straight loss tonight against the Huskers, who are 16-7 and 3-5 in the conference.

Nee said he didn't know why the Devaney Center had been so difficult for Kansas, although he did admit the fans could make a difference.

"We need our fans," Nee said. "Our fans have to be with us whether we're behind or if we're ahead. For the home-court advantage, the fans need to be behind us the whole game."

Nee, who has beaten Kansas six times at home, said Nebraska's dominance at home against the Jayhawks

was hard for him to believe.

In 1987, the Huskers beat the eventual national champions 83-81 in overtime when Beau Reid made the game-winning shot after Danny Manning dribbled the ball off his foot out of bounds.

The Huskers won another two-point game in 1988 with a 70-68 victory on another late basket.

Nebraska's lone loss came in 1990 when No. 1 Kansas trailed by as many as 18 points but rallied in the second half to win 98-93.

In 1991, the Huskers rolled over No. 12 Kansas 85-75.

Nebraska pulled out another miracle in the 1992 game.

Jamar Johnson hit a 3-pointer as time expired in overtime to give Nebraska an 81-79 victory.

In 1993, the Huskers defeated the No. 3 Jayhawks 68-64.

And last year Nebraska crushed No. 10 Kansas in a 96-87 win.

Nee said the Huskers dominated last year's game.

"Last year we were up by as many as 24, and I think Phoenix could have been here, and probably lost the game," Nee said. "We've been very fortunate to play our best when our

best was needed."

The Huskers need a win now. After a tough 72-69 loss at Iowa State, Nebraska is looking to rebound, but that will be difficult against Kansas.

Nee said Kansas dominated the first game Jan. 23, when Nebraska lost 84-67 in Lawrence.

The Huskers shot a season-low 32.4 percent from the field in the game.

Nee said the Kansas defense was great at stopping opponents, and it

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KU coach looks to ignore history at Devaney Center

By Mitch Sherman
Senior Reporter

For 51 weeks of the year, Roy Williams tries not to think much about his past visits to Lincoln.



Williams

Unfortunately for the coach of the third-ranked Jayhawks, this week is the one week of the basketball season that he is forced to remember his gloomy history in the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

And even if Williams tried to forget about Nebraska on Monday, the press wouldn't let him.

During the weekly Big Eight coaches' teleconference, Williams was asked why Kansas could never beat Nebraska in Lincoln.

He was asked how Kansas could end its losing streak in the Devaney Center. He was asked if the Jayhawks prepared differently for the Cornhuskers. Williams was even asked if he had ever considered consulting a psychic hotline before traveling to play Nebraska.

Since leaving his assistant coaching job at North Carolina in 1988 to take over the reins at Kansas, Williams has visited Lincoln six times, escaping only once with a victory, a 98-93 win in 1990.

"We haven't done as well as we'd like to up there, by any means," Williams said. "Hopefully, we'll get it turned around."

A loss tonight to Nebraska, 16-7 and 3-5 in the Big Eight, would be Williams' seventh defeat at the hands of the Huskers, who also beat Kansas at the Big Eight Tournament in

1991. In his career at Kansas, no team has beaten Williams more than six times.

"I haven't dialed any hotlines or anything," said Williams, whose .786 winning percentage is No. 1 among active Division I coaches, just ahead of Dean Smith, under whom Williams coached at North Carolina. "We played poorly up there a couple of times. And a couple of times we played well. That's all I attribute it to."

In the five setbacks at the Devaney Center, Kansas has lost by an average of six points. To avoid a repeat performance, Williams said the Jayhawks would have to exploit the Huskers on the inside.

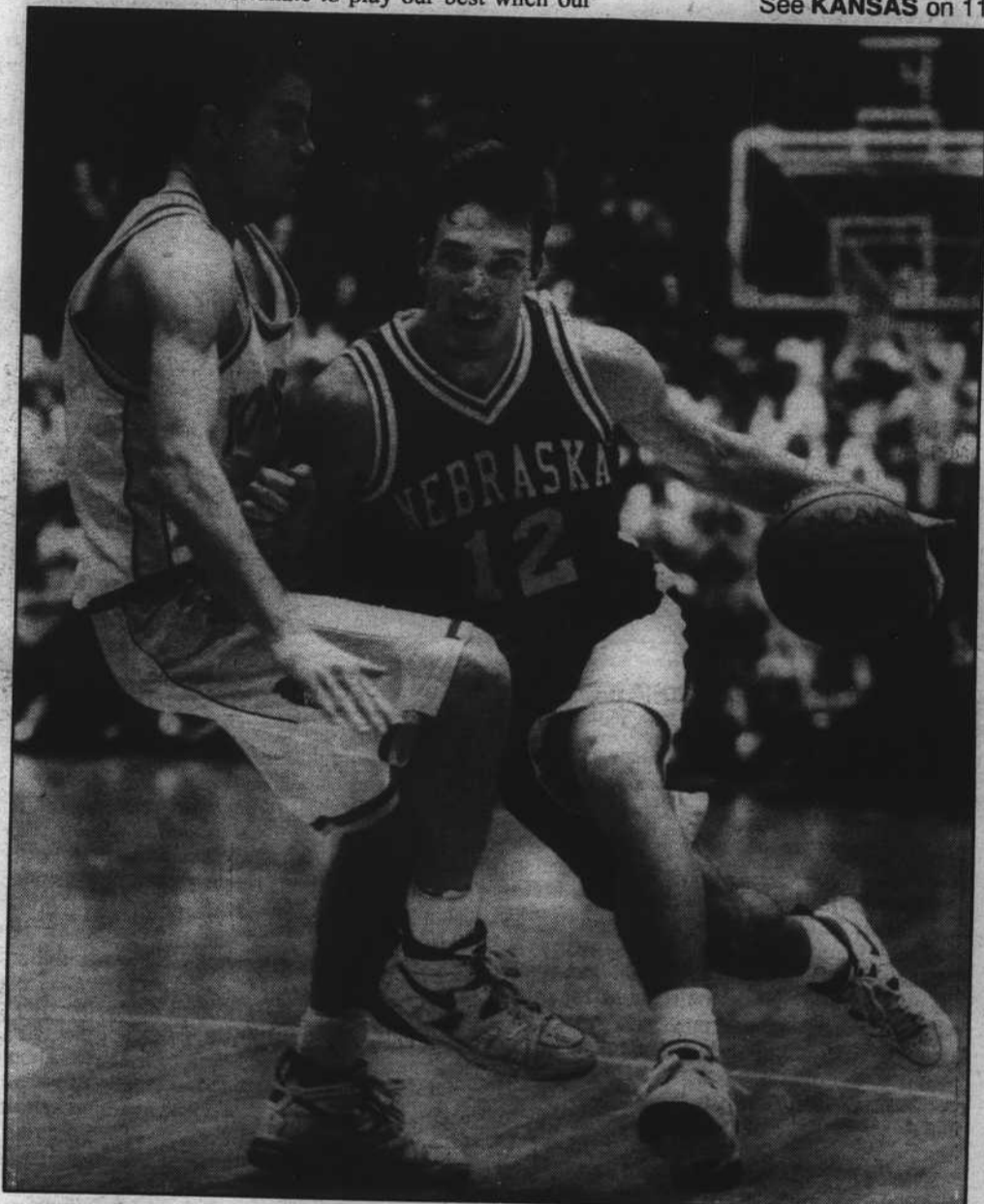
Kansas, 18-3 and 7-2 in the Big Eight after losing at Iowa State and Oklahoma State, starts 7-foot-2 center Greg Ostertag and 6-11 forward Raef LaFrentz, and brings 6-10 forward Scot Pollard off the bench. The Huskers start only one player taller than 6-8, center Mikki Moore, who stands 6-11.

"We are going to have to take advantage of that," Williams said.

Two of the Jayhawks' starters, LaFrentz, a true freshman, and guard Jerod Haase, a transfer from California, will be playing in Lincoln for the first time. Point guard Jacque Vaughn and Ostertag started a year ago in the 96-87 Nebraska win.

Williams said his team would be prepared to endure a raucous crowd and a hostile environment.

"It's probably louder for us than it is for any other game up there," he said. "But we get that at a couple of other places, too. So I don't think it's anything psychic. We've just got to play better."



Nebraska's Tom Wald drives past Iowa State's Jacy Holloway during Nebraska's overtime loss in Ames Saturday.

Gerik Parmele/DN

From mole to mail carrier, today not just for lovers

I'm the best dang friend a gerbil could have.

I say this not to toot my own horn — which I do carry around with me — but to demonstrate to people that Valentine's Day should not be reserved strictly for romantically amorous endeavors.

So it was off to Raleigh, N.C., to take in the Hearts Invitational with the Nebraska women's gymnastics team.

Here's the story behind the trip. Mookie, my pet gerbil, confidant and recent nominee for the vacant Surgeon General position, has found himself a friend of the opposite sex. She is a 4-inch long teddy-bear hamster, and Mook refers to her as "hot as the 4th of July."

I personally think this trans-species dating is patently disgusting. I mean, if I were dating an orangutan — now that I think of it I have, but in my defense, I was having trouble adapting to my new contacts — I would guess there would be objections.

I guess my deal is that he wants to hang with this rat-faced femme

on Val's day. Well, I was hoping we could go to bowling leagues tonight and pick fights with drunk electricians.

Anyway, I got a little perturbed when he opted for señorita weasel and I ... well ... I started saying some derogatory stuff about Jerry from "Tom and Jerry."

This, of course, threw Mook into a rage.

He screamed at me, "You're just jealous 'cuz she's got more hair on her body than you do!" Mook has always been insightful like that.

I should have apologized instead of escalating the verbal sparring, but due to adverse nature and the fact that I just had 16 Mountain Dew's, I retorted, "Well, at least I have shoulders, Rodent-lover."

He's never much cared for that nickname. It ranks up there with "Dog-licker."

Well, needless to say, Mook left, went straight to this buck-tooth babe's hole and refused to come back.

I realized my unfairness and offered a reconciliation: I'd take Mook to Raleigh to see the Huskers



Beau Finley

participate in the annual Heart Meet.

Mookie has been a fan of gymnastics ever since he saw Kristi Camp do that thing on the uneven bar where she swings around the bar with her pelvis, her body at a 45 degree angle. You see, Mook can't bend at the waist so he's just amazed by this maneuver.

Once we got to Raleigh, the good times returned. No more squirrel-like girlfriends, no more love stuff, no more cold shoulder. Well, I guess Mook doesn't have shoulders, so it's more like "cold side of his body."

(As a quick sidenote, I think love is suspect and difficult enough

without introducing the possibility of rabies into the romantic equation.)

Anyway, the meet went quite well with the Cornjumper taking home the victory as they easily defeated the rest of the four-team field.

The only downside to the weekend was Mookie's constant screams at senior Nicole Duval to do that "pelvis spin thing."

Also, there was the almost-boycott by Shelly Bartlett, who tied with teammate Joy Taylor as the meet's all-around champion.

Bartlett allegedly refused to perform on the uneven bars, which Mookie and I sat directly in front of, because she had ethical problems with Mook being at the meet.

"I don't perform in front of rats," Bartlett allegedly said.

But besides these occurrences, the meet went beautifully.

Perhaps more importantly though, Mookie and I overcame our early squabbling and reaffirmed our beautiful friendship.

And now to my theme. Valentine's Day needn't be

exclusively devoted to those whom you solely love romantically. Just don't forget those people who have contributed substantially to your life.

People like your uncles, your pets, your chums, your mail carriers and your probation officers deserve a little detached and platonic love on this day that commemorates good feelings.

I say all this with a purpose, vast readership.

I tell you what, babies — the Violent Femmes were wrong. Love ain't "Gone daddy gone;" Love simply is not "gone away."

We all have the capacity to love and to be loved. So go out and throw your arms around someone you love — or think you could potentially love, ya know, if the lighting was just right and the proper beverage was handy.

Yeah, that's the ticket — you do the hugging and let me worry about the potential litigation.

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