

SPORTS

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Jayhawks rock, chalk up win over Huskers

Poor shooting dooms Huskers in 23-point loss

By Derek Samson
Senior Reporter

Nebraska went ice cold in the second half just as fast as it heated up in the first half during its 91-68 loss to No. 3 Kansas in front of 14,552 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center Tuesday night.

The Cornhuskers shot 46 percent from the field and 60 percent from 3-point range in the first half, but hit only 25 percent from the field and 7 percent (1-of-14) from behind the 3-point line in the second half.

Nebraska, which trailed 47-45 at intermission, was outscored 44-23 in the second half.

Coach Danny Nee said he didn't know why the Huskers' offense disappeared in the second half.

"I thought we played about 30, 32 or 33 minutes of decent basketball against what I think is a great basketball team," Nee said. "Then the house caved in. I don't know if we just got worn out or if playing the superior team just caught up with us. Maybe they were just toying with us and all of the sudden they just lowered the boom."

After falling behind 18-7, the Huskers went on a 17-9 run and eventually took a 39-37 on two Jaron Boone free throws with 3:41 remaining.

"We started off slow again," guard Erick Strickland said. "We didn't hit the shots, not even the open shots. I had a few open shots and just couldn't hit them. There's nothing you can do if you're not hitting the shots."

But during the run, Boone and Strickland hit plenty of shots, combining to make six 3-pointers, and junior forward Terrance Badgett scored six straight Husker points to give Nebraska a 45-44 lead with 1:05 remaining.

See KANSAS on 8



Nebraska's Erick Strickland puts up a layup while Kansas' Greg Ostertag (right) and Raef LaFrentz defend during the Cornhuskers' 91-68 loss Tuesday night.

Jon Waller/DN

Cornhusker duo questions Nee's sub decisions

By Derek Samson
Senior Reporter

Over the final 10 minutes of the first half, Jaron Boone and Erick Strickland scored 22 points, including six 3-pointers, in Nebraska's 91-68 loss to Kansas Tuesday at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

In the first half, the duo combined for 27 points, after making six of nine from 3-point range.

But in the second half, the tandem combined for only 10 points and missed 11 of their 14 shots.

The reason for the difference, both Boone and Strickland said, could be linked to Coach Danny Nee's substitution pattern.

"We started out the first half with some jitters, but once we settled down we were all right," Boone said. "We came out the second half and planned on playing the same way, but it seemed like Coach Nee was trying to save us. We didn't come out flat, but once you play for three minutes, then sit out for three minutes, you're back to where you were at half. "Three minutes into the game, you're just not loose. It may look like you're tired, but I don't think you are."

Boone, who played 33 minutes and scored a game-high 20 points, said it made it especially difficult to sit out when he and Strickland were shooting so well.

"That's a prime example," Boone said. "It takes you out of your game. You think, I'm feeling good about my jump shot, I'm in the flow of the game, why am I sitting on the bench? It's a question that should be asked."

Strickland, who added 17 points in 34 minutes, said Kansas benefitted from Nebraska's substitution pattern.

See HUSKERS on 8

Healthy gymnasts needed to help team achieve potential

By Mitch Sherman
Senior Reporter

The cloudy picture that was once the Nebraska men's gymnastics team is beginning to clear up for coach Francis Allen.

With a 3-2 record almost a month into its national championship-defending season, the Cornhuskers are ranked No. 3 in the nation following a pair of meets on the east coast last weekend.

Nebraska started slowly, missing four consecutive pommel horse routines Friday against fourth-ranked Penn State and the Huskers

couldn't recover, falling to the Nittany Lions 227.95-226.50.

"We did well after the first rotation," Allen said. "I don't like losing to Penn State, but it's tough to win on the road with a young team at this point of the season."

On Sunday in Williamsburg, Va., Nebraska easily defeated William & Mary and James Madison.

"It's good to get the experience of a weekend like that," Allen said. "We need to get used to it, because when nationals come around, you could have to go three times in a weekend."

Richard Grace, the Huskers' top all-arounder, posted a season-high 57.60 Friday against Penn State. Junior Jason Christie scored a 57.05 in the same meet.

Allen said he was pleased with Grace and Christie, but Nebraska's other returning all-arounder, senior Rick Kieffer, scored a 55.20 on Friday and 54.45 on Sunday.

"That's got to come up," Allen said. "We need to have three 57s. Going into regionals, we are going to need it."

Freshman Jim Koziol has competed in the all-around in each of Nebraska's last three meets, filling in for Bill Mulholland, who

suffered a season-ending knee injury last month. Allen said Koziol had done well, but he would prefer not to use a fourth all-arounder.

Until freshman Lev Schieber, hobbled by a bruised heel, returns to full strength, Allen said, Grace, Christie and Kieffer would be the only all-arounders.

"My ideal potential," he said, "is to get my three 57s and mix the rest of the guys to get us up to 228. Four 57's equals out to 228, but we've got just three. So the younger guys are going to have to put it together."

See GYM on 8

Fans leave early as Nebraska looks destined for NIT

Now we know.

It was not the arena. It was not the atmosphere. It was not the home court that beat the Kansas Jayhawks six out of the last seven times they traveled three hours north to play in Lincoln.

It was Beau Reid — who sat 10 rows deep in the bleachers Tuesday night at the Bob Devaney Sports Center — who beat the Jayhawks.

It was Derrick Chandler, who stood on the floor five feet behind the Cornhusker bench and watched Kansas trounce Nebraska 91-68 before a stunned home crowd.

It was Eric Piatkowski, who sat on the bench for the Los Angeles Clippers in Houston Tuesday night and watched his new team lose by 20 points to the defending NBA champs.

Good thing Pike didn't have time to come back and see the Huskers Tuesday.

He would have been disappointed.

In fact, he probably would have left early, just like most of the Husker fans, who began to stream toward the exits with four minutes remaining in the game.

In those final few moments of the second half, when the Huskers exhibited almost no poise, discipline or leadership, the fans understood where this team was headed.

NIT.

If you aren't convinced the Huskers will be making a trip to the National Invitational Tournament, just look at the facts. Four times in the last four seasons, Nebraska has beaten the Jayhawks at the Devaney Center. Four times Nebraska has qualified for the NCAA tournament. In 1990, the last time the Huskers lost at home to Kansas, they failed to make it.

Coincidence? Probably not. You knew the Devaney Center mystique was gone late in the second half when Kansas point



Mitch Sherman

guard Jacque Vaughn called a timeout with 15.8 seconds left so the reserves could get a piece of the action.

That must have really hurt. With about five minutes left in the game, some Kansas fan sitting in the first row of the second level of the Devaney Center hung a big red and blue Jayhawk banner over the balcony.

I hope Beau Reid wasn't looking.

At the opposite end of the athletic spectrum, Tuesday night

was sweet revenge for Kansas coach Roy Williams.

"I was tired of reading about my batting average," Williams said after the game. "I was tired of talking being one for six. I was sick and damn tired of it."

"There's never been a building that's beaten anybody. I'm tired of talking about it now. The building didn't beat Nebraska tonight. Kansas beat Nebraska. The last four times Kansas lost to Nebraska, not to the Bob Devaney Center. I bet Bob wasn't a very good basketball player anyway."

People have said before, in past years, that Nebraska was headed for the NIT. But never have their words been filled with such resounding truth. Five conference games remain on the schedule, and Nebraska needs to win four in order to make the NCAA Tournament.

Sorry, but Missouri and Oklahoma State are not going to lose at home in the midst of a furious race

for the Big Eight title.

If the Huskers are fortunate enough to win the other three games, they will finish 6-8 in the Big Eight, good enough for sixth place and a meeting with Missouri in the first round of the conference tournament — one game away from their first NIT game since March 20, 1989.

Call it the end of a four-year run. Call it a learning experience. Call it a young team ready for a title run next year.

Whatever you call it, Tuesday night was certainly a sad night for Husker basketball. Not because they lost by 23 points to a better team. Not because they watched their tourney hopes slip away.

It was a sad night because Nebraska gave up and accepted it all.

I hope Beau Reid left early.

Sherman is a sophomore news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan senior reporter.