

SPORTS

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Huskers still breathing after win at Missouri

By Mitch Sherman
Senior Reporter

COLUMBIA, Mo. — Nebraska coach Danny Nee said his team didn't play great. But it did come up with a much-needed win Wednesday night against Missouri.

After three straight losses to ranked opponents by a combined 66 points, the Cornhuskers turned the tables Wednesday night.

The Huskers topped No. 14 Missouri 78-75 before a crowd of 13,300 at the Harnes Center.

In extending their hopes to finish with a .500 Big Eight record, the Huskers improved to 17-9 overall and 4-7 in the Big Eight. Missouri fell to 18-5 and 7-4.

"It's a real big win for us because we just had so much trouble," said Nee, who won in Columbia for the second time in three years. "Our kids, our confidence level, everything

was just questionable. We didn't play a great game, but our kids played 40 minutes."

Two free throws by Tom Wald with 17.6 seconds left in the game gave the Huskers a 76-75 lead. On the ensuing possession, Nebraska guard Erick Strickland, who led all scorers with 27 points, rebounded a Kendrick Moore miss and delivered the ball to a streaking Mikki Moore, whose dunk gave the Huskers a 3-point lead with less than five seconds to play.

Tiger guard Paul O'Liney took the inbound pass, dribbled past half-court and launched a 30-foot jumper, which hit the left side of the rim and fell to the floor.

Missouri was paced by O'Liney, who scored 23, but the senior guard, an 82-percent shooter from the line, missed two free throws with 19.3 seconds left that could have given the Tigers a 3-point lead.

So instead of being down 77-74, the Huskers trailed by only a point after O'Liney's

misses. Wald grabbed the rebound and was immediately fouled by O'Liney.

Nee said O'Liney's two misses were in the midst of a critical series of events. Before going to the line, O'Liney stole an inbound pass from Strickland after two consecutive timeouts with 23.5 seconds to play in the game.

"The play broke," Nee said of the inbound pass, which was intended for Terrance Badgett. "It didn't go where we wanted it to go, obviously. But we were just fortunate. It took a little luck."

The Tigers were playing without junior forward Julian Winfield, out with a strained muscle in his left leg. Junior center Sammie Haley stepped up in Winfield's absence. The transfer from Connors (Okla.) State junior college scored a career-best 24 points and grabbed a game-high 12 rebounds in 29 minutes.

More importantly, Haley's presence on the inside caused Husker center Chris Sallee to foul out with 6:50 left. Moore picked up foul No. 4 with 10:57 to play, but managed to play the nearly the rest of the way without fouling out.

"Coach just told me to keep my hands up," said Moore, who scored 11 points and grabbed 7 rebounds in 22 minutes. "He said to not try to put my hands on Haley and try to guard with my body."

Nebraska guard Jaron Boone, who scored 23 points, his fifth straight game with at least 20 points, said a win on the road over a ranked team changed the Huskers' outlook on the remainder of the season.

"It's a big win for us," Boone said. "We played it to the end. We haven't done that before, but we knew we were due."

Inconsistency plagues Missouri in loss to NU

By Todd Walkenhorst
Staff Reporter

COLUMBIA, Mo. — Despite Missouri's 18-5 record and 8-4 record in the Big Eight conference, Tiger coach Norm Stewart summed up his team's season in two words after losing to Nebraska Wednesday night.

"Just inconsistent."

When the Tigers fell to Nebraska 78-75 at the Harnes Center, Stewart cited youth and inconsistency as reasons for his team's loss.

Stewart said he believed that his team was still relatively young — even 23 games into the season.

"The thing that frustrates you is you've got a young ball club," Stewart said. "Even though it's 25 games into the season, we're still a young ball club. After 25 games you're not supposed to be a young ball club."

Missouri used a starting lineup that included only one senior, guard Paul O'Liney. O'Liney scored 23 points for the Tigers. Junior Sammie Haley led Missouri with a career-high 24.

The Tigers were without junior guard Julian Winfield, who will be out for a week with a quadriceps strain in his left leg. Winfield is Missouri's leading rebounder and second-leading scorer, but Stewart said Winfield's absence didn't matter.

The Tigers won earlier this year against Colorado when Winfield was out.

"We've been able to overcome all of the things that have happened all year long," Stewart said. "Tonight

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NORM STEWART
Missouri coach

we couldn't do it."

With the Tigers up 75-74, O'Liney had a chance at the free-throw line to increase Missouri's lead with 19.3 seconds left in the game, but he missed both shots.

"We missed some free throws," Stewart said, "not just the ones at the end."

Missouri only shot 62.9 percent from the free-throw line and made just 16 of 26 shots in the second half.

Stewart said that both the Husker defense and the play of junior guard Erick Strickland helped Nebraska leave Columbia with a victory.

"Strickland is a heck of an athlete," he said. "They did some good things. They kept us off balance defensively. You have to give them credit."

"We gave them too many easy baskets in the first half," Stewart said, "and that comes from preparation. It's a tough loss and it doesn't get any easier."



Nebraska guard Erick Strickland shoots over Oklahoma State's Randy Rutherford during last Saturday's 40-point loss.

Jeff Haller/DN

Baseball negotiations get stickier

MILWAUKEE (AP) — The baseball players won't be the only ones going hungry this spring if the strike continues.

So will the fans, and so will minor league players.

Even as baseball negotiators agreed to resume talks Monday in the Phoenix area, striking major leaguers formally asked minor leaguers to boycott exhibition games.

And Teamsters said it would refuse to deliver beer and other supplies to the 23 ballparks supplied by its drivers.

Union head Don Fehr and acting commissioner Bud Selig attempted to downplay the pressures that picketing and the involvement of the Teamsters and other unions might bring to bear on the two sides.

"There are complications on all sides," Selig said. "But everybody hopes to have a deal before then, so we hope it becomes academic."

And with the minor league players being asked not to participate in exhibition games, the strike has become even more complicated.

"Players not on the 40-man roster of course have a legal right to play in replacement games," Fehr said Wednesday. "Major league players, however, have the corresponding right to regard any individuals who play in such games as scabs."

Teams maintain that minor leagu-

See STRIKE on 8

Grand slam Sunday brings smiles to Husker ballpark

Sunday was a great day for baseball.

The sun was out, the temperature pushed near 60 degrees and for the hitters at Buck Beltzer Field, the wind was blowing out.

Almost 1,500 fans watched the Nebraska baseball team dominate Nebraska-Kearney 9-0 by throwing strikes, playing perfect defense and hitting bullets around the inside and outside the park.

It was a great atmosphere — the way it should be for baseball every day in every ballpark.

Nebraska coach John Sanders wore a broad smile that made the lines around his eyes stretch beyond the reaches of his black Oakley sunglasses as he summed up his thoughts about the Huskers' win over the Lopers.

"We had great weather and a great crowd," Sanders said. "And you just couldn't have asked for a nicer start to the season."

But the Huskers' season wasn't originally scheduled to start at

home in Nebraska.

The Huskers were supposed to throw out the first pitch of 1995 against Southern Utah at the Arthur Gallagher Tournament in San Diego, Calif., this Friday.

Instead, Nebraska right-hander Cody Winget did the honors Sunday, and the Huskers get to head out to California with the opening-day jitters behind them and a bundle of confidence under their belts.

Nebraska leadoff hitter Jed Dalton started his season with a perfect day at the plate, including a home run on the second pitch of the season.

Dalton struggled last season and posted a miserable .263 batting average, almost 100 points lower than his average in his first season, when he earned second-team freshman All-American honors.

For Dalton, the day provided a perfect start to what he hopes is a redeeming season for an embarrassing 1994.



Jeff Griesch

Darin Petersen's day was almost as promising as Dalton's.

The senior shortstop singled, doubled, drove in a run and scored another.

Like Dalton, Petersen hit .263 last season, almost 70 points lower than his average in 1992, when he was a first-team freshman All-American.

Like Dalton, Petersen has something to prove.

But Dalton and Petersen aren't the only Huskers looking to rebound from a disappointing 1994

season.

Darin Erstad's batting average fell more than 20 points last year as he hit a very human .317.

Although Erstad's explosive bat speed makes him look better striking out four times a game than most college players who go 4 for 4 with two homers, he wants to put up better numbers to prove something. He wants to prove to himself that he deserves to be considered the best college baseball player in the country.

On Sunday, he awed the crowd twice on big cuts with those hands so quick he could wash them without getting them wet.

On both those swings, he missed and struck out. On another shutter-speed swing, he pulverized a pitch and connected for a grand slam.

Erstad showed he was ready to shoulder the load for the Huskers, but he also knows that one game really doesn't prove anything.

The other Huskers know it, too. Second baseman Scott Wulfin-

knows he has to prove he is better than a .228 hitter. Catcher David Crain knows he must hit better than .223 if Nebraska is going to make a run for a regional bid.

The Huskers' unknown pitching staff must throw strikes and improve on a 5.41 ERA that was second-worst in the Big Eight last year.

More than a dozen junior college transfers and freshmen must prove that they belong.

The Arthur Gallagher Tournament could set the tone for a group of Huskers out to prove that they belong in the NCAA Tournament this year.

If they play well against Southern Utah, New Mexico State, San Diego State and Big Eight rival Oklahoma State, it could be the start of a great season for Nebraska baseball.

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