

SPORTS

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Page 11

Huskers may end post-season loss streak

By Trevor Parks
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska men's basketball team finds itself in a familiar part of the season, getting ready for post-season play.

For the 11th time in the past 13 seasons, the Cornhuskers will appear in either the NCAA Tournament or the National Invitation Tournament.

Nebraska has participated in the NIT six times and in five NCAA Tournaments over that span.

The Huskers will keep a school-record-

tying five-year streak of post-season play alive when they play host to 18-9 Georgia in 7:05 p.m. game Thursday at the Bob Devaney Sports Center in the first round of the NIT.

Coach Danny Nee, who has helped the Huskers to the five straight post-season appearances and seven in the past nine years, said he was glad his team had a chance to extend its season.

"It is an exciting time," Nee said. "With the University of Georgia in here, it should be a very enjoyable game."

But this year the Huskers would like to stick around for a while in the tournament instead of

losing in the first round, like they have the last four years at the NAAs.

The last time Nebraska won a post-season game was in 1989, when the Huskers defeated Arkansas State 81-79 in first round of the NIT in Lincoln.

Nee said winning a post-season game for the first time since beating the Indians would be great.

"I think it would be big," Nee said. "Off the top of my head (the last time) was 1989. It seems like it's been 1989 since we've won a game."

Actually the Huskers last won on Feb. 22

with a 78-75 win at Missouri.

Since then, Nebraska has lost four straight games.

Nebraska closed out the season with losses to Colorado, Kansas State, Iowa State and Oklahoma State.

Nee said now was a good time for his team to put those losses behind them and learn what it was like to experience a post-season win.

The Huskers have lost to Xavier, Connecticut, New Mexico State and Pennsylvania the last four years in the first round of the NCAA

See NIT on 12

Success shot puts Mitchell into track team record history

By Vince D'Adamo
Staff Reporter

Under the word dedication in the dictionary, Nebraska shot putter Paulette Mitchell's name would be found, Cornhusker throws coach Mark Colligan said.

Mitchell, who finished fifth at the NCAA Championships in the shot put last year, dedicated herself to going beyond that during the indoor season.

And Mitchell did on Saturday, when she finished second at the NCAA meet behind UCLA's Dawn Dumble. Dumble won the event with a toss of 57 feet, 8 1/2 inches.

"Paulette from the get-go this season dedicated herself to a higher commitment," Colligan said. "It has been appreciated."

Mitchell has had a goal all season of improving after each meet and of setting a personal record, or P.R.

When she threw on Saturday, Mitchell did more than set a personal record. She also set a school and Big Eight record with a toss of 55-5.

Mitchell surpassed her previous career best of 54-10 3/4 and broke the Big Eight record of 54-11 1/4 set in 1987 by Kansas State's Pinkie Suggs.

On Saturday, Mitchell earned her fourth All-American honor in the shot put in her three years at Nebraska.

Mitchell, a junior from

"Paulette is a prime example because she's a great person, too. She cares about her teammates and living up to the expectations of this program."

MARK COLLIGAN

Nebraska throws coach

Abraham Lincoln High School in Council Bluffs, Iowa, said she had put a lot of work and energy into the shot put. And she knows her All-American status has been deserved.

"It takes a lot of dedication and hard work," Mitchell said. "I guess maturity is a strength because I know what it takes to get where I need to."

The positive influence that Mitchell displays every day is not lost on Colligan, who said every team needs great individuals.

"Paulette is a prime example because she's a great person, too," Colligan said. "She cares about her teammates and living up to the expectations of this program."

Mitchell wasted no time making an impact. As a freshman, Mitchell broke the school record in the indoor shot put twice. First she gained indoor All-American honors with a throw of 51-0 1/4. During the outdoor season, at the

Minnesota Invitational, Mitchell turned in a clip of 52-6 3/4.

Mitchell said that invitational meets always brought out the nation's best.

"It's really important because the good people come, and you get the top throwers," she said. "It gets you motivated because I know that they can throw far."

Despite her success, Mitchell still wants to improve.

"I would like to get stronger than I was last year," Mitchell said. "I would like to build up my upper body."

Even though Mitchell had other schools on her list before opting for Nebraska, there was no doubt that she made the best choice.

"There were a few other schools like Tennessee or LSU (Louisiana State) but I really didn't take any visits," Mitchell said. "It was close to home, and Nebraska had everything that satisfied me."



Jay Calderon/DN

Nebraska shot-putter Paulette Mitchell finished second at the NCAA meet last Saturday.

March Madness: in like ice cream, out like a gerbil

You know, vast readership, when life is reduced to its most fundamental elements, only two things are truly important: carp and tapioca.

But there are several close seconds, though, and one of those happens to be ... that's right, baby ... March Madness.

Let me take you back to what happened to me last Saturday, a trip down neurosis lane if you will, and I'll give you a little — and I mean that in the small sense of the word — insight as to what the Madness means.

Saturday, Mookie, my pet gerbil, confidant and (if you remember) the original James Bond, and I were hanging out at the only Baskin-Robbins in this entire friggin' town.

Mookie insisted upon getting a sample of every single flavor before he chose a cone, which in itself is fairly time-consuming in its own right. But being as thermally sensitive as Mook is, he got a frozen headache after each sample.

Thus, this would be the sequence of events.

The person at the counter handed Mook the sample, Mook ate it, glanced at me, screamed "my brain's frostbitten" and then proceeded to run up and down the store howling at the other customers.

"They're lobotomizing me with Pralines n' Cream. Save yourself," he shrieked.

This happened 31 times. But Mook finally settled down or passed out or whatever the furry freak did, and in walked Danny Nee.

I was highly jazzed to see the Czar of Hoops, especially since I sort of forgot to go to all the home games.

But I quickly recalled Nebraska's less-than-stellar record this year and realizing that ... well ... you know, Nebraska's not going to friggin' make the tournament, I thought I'd be nice to him.

I walked up to the Reverend of Roundball and said, "Hey, coach, no matter what happens in the selection committee tomorrow, all us Nebraskans and I bet a few Iowans and Oklahomans are proud



Beau Finley

of you." The Minister of Midcourt responded, "Thanks, Debbie, it's nice to be thought of."

Coach Nee has called me "Debbie" since I started covering Cornhumper basketball. Apparently, "Beau" is a little too hard to pronounce.

I then proceeded to give him a little reassurance.

"Hey, big man, don't sweat this. You got Boone, Strickland and stick man, uh, Mikki Moore, coming back. You're in like Flynn next year."

Danny got a long look on his face and said, "I tell you, Debbie, Strickland plays defense like a Chihuahua, and Boone is an

offensive supernova. The ball goes in to him, and it ain't never coming back out. I just don't know, baby."

Realizing I was going to be unable to perk up the Prince of Double-pump, I said my goodbyes and commenced to find Mook.

I found him just getting a cup of hot cocoa. I told him we were blowing out, and he'd better hurry. He then gulped the cocoa, screamed "my esophagus is singed" and sprinted off.

I tell you, vast readership, this country is going to have to address the plight of the thermally sensitive. Mook is just one of the many.

NCAA prediction: You know, I don't know why I'm even attempting to do this. Last year I lost 50 bucks and the right to my first-born child betting on NCAA tourney pools.

But being a sportswriter, I feel compelled to talk about sports at least once a semester.

Very briefly, let me give you my choices for an early exit:

● Connecticut: they have not played well all of 1995 — a very fortunate team that shall run out of

luck. ● Wake Forest: without Randolph Childress, this team doesn't even make the field.

● Arkansas: Mook told me to pick them — I have absolutely no reasoning whatsoever.

Now, here are my horses of the dark:

● Maryland: great team — goofy nickname.

● Temple: defense es el uno.

● Indiana: I don't give a rat's fat butt what the Hoosiers are seeded; a Knight-coached team is always dangerous.

So you want the prediction, babies? I believe you've come to the right column.

My prediction is that I'll either be convulsing, be incarcerated or be deported during the national championship, so I won't have the opportunity to see ... Kansas crowned as national champions.

In fact, it'll probably be that friggin' rock-chalk-Jayhawks chant that will throw me into convulsions.

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