

SPORTS

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SPORTS OPINION



Derek Samson

Finger pointing won't translate into victories

Iowa State's Dedric Willoughby summed up the Cyclones' success this season after they rolled past Nebraska 74-59 Saturday in Ames, Iowa.

"We were all like a bunch of Lego parts when we came here," said Willoughby, who scored 29 points against the Cornhuskers. "Nobody knew each other. But I knew we were all going to be a together group. It was all about whether we would listen or not. And so far we've been listening."

The Cyclones and Huskers are complete opposites.

Iowa State's win improved it to 17-5 and 6-2 in conference play. Not bad for a group of drifters trying to replace four starters lost from last season's 23-11 squad.

Meanwhile, the Huskers dropped to 15-9 and 3-6 in the Big Eight with their fifth straight loss.

Not good for a team that returned six seniors, four starters and all its scoring except 5.5 points per game from last year.

While other teams improved, the Huskers have resorted to finger pointing.

They pointed fingers at each other after the Iowa State loss. They pointed fingers at the officials and even pointed fingers at the fans.

Coach Danny Nee burst into an irate display at his weekly press conference three weeks ago, reciting lines from the Encyclopedia of Obscenities and Curse Words.

But this isn't the fans' problem. Nor is it the officials' fault — sorry Kent Pavelka.

This is a problem that starts at the top. It began in 1994 when Nebraska lost another first-round NCAA game, this one to Pennsylvania after winning the Big Eight Tournament. Since that embarrassing loss, the Husker basketball program has been in a constant downward slide.

When a team's goals before a game are teamwork, hustle and listen to coaches, something has gone tremendously wrong.

Block out? Maybe. Better shot selection? Sure. But teamwork, hustle and listen to coaches? Please, this is Division I college basketball, not third-grade YMCA.

Nebraska has the second-most talented team in the Big Eight, but it is only a half game away from the cellar.

The team needs to care when it loses. It needs to take responsibility for losses and not blame officials, teammates and fans.

In other words, Nebraska needs Iowa State's attitude.

Until then, Nebraska can be thankful that it has one thing in common with Iowa State — both teams are extremely fortunate the Big Eight is bad this year.

Samson is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan sports columnist.

Huskers searching for answers

From Staff Reports

After five straight losses, Nebraska basketball players are trying to sort through the team's problems.

Most of the Cornhusker players, including guards Jaron Boone and Erick Strickland, met with Athletic Director Bill Byrne on Tuesday, delaying the start of practice. Byrne said Tuesday night that he would not discuss what was talked about in the meeting.

The team wanted to get suggestions from Byrne about what could be done to halt the Huskers' five-game skid, said a player who requested to not be identified.

Nebraska coach Danny Nee said he also met with Byrne this week to discuss the recent woes of the basketball team.

The Huskers may have had more problems in practice the past two days.

On his radio show Tuesday night, Nee said that not everybody showed up for a required workout on Monday.

Originally a workout wasn't scheduled for Monday, redshirt freshman center Leif Nelson said. But then the coaches scheduled a workout before canceling it after the players had called and requested to switch their off day to Monday instead of Thursday, he said.

Instead, Nelson said the players spent the time in a team meeting without the coaches. Over the past 48 hours, he said the players had met at a variety of places, including the players' homes and the Hewitt Center, to discuss the team's problems.

Talk of a team boycott was not discussed, players said.

"There is no such thing as a boycott," junior forward Bernard Garner said. "Nobody talked of a boycott. All we want to do is play basketball."

Garner also dismissed rumors that Nee may resign.

"From what I've heard, Danny Nee will be my coach the remainder of this

NU aims for NCAA Tournament

By Trevor Parks
Senior Reporter

Now is the time for the Nebraska women's basketball team to capitalize on its opportunities, senior guard Kate Galligan said.

"We need to try and build some momentum going into the end of the season," said Galligan, who scored a career-best 38 points in the Cornhuskers' 94-85 loss at Kansas on Sunday.

Nebraska, 15-8 overall and 5-6 in the Big Eight, plays host to No. 18 Colorado (20-6 and 7-3) tonight at 7 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

The game is the first of three straight home games for Nebraska, which also plays host to Missouri and Iowa State over the next 10 days.

Galligan, who was the Big Eight player of the week after averaging 31 points in two games last week, said beating the Buffaloes could be a major step toward making the NCAA Tournament. Nebraska hasn't made the tournament since 1993.

"We can't just win this game and then lose our last two and still expect to get in," Galligan said. "Every game from here on out is another step closer to the NCAA's."

A win over Colorado, Beck said, is crucial to the Huskers' NCAA Tournament chances.

"It would be huge," Beck said. "This team still has a little bit of an attitude. And this team has won a few games that a lot of my teams maybe haven't."



Travis Heying/DN

Cornhusker basketball coach Danny Nee defended the character of his team Tuesday at his weekly press conference. He said he still held out hope that the Huskers could make the NCAA Tournament this year.

year and next," said Garner, who walked out of a team huddle in the second half of Nebraska's 74-59 loss to Iowa State on Saturday. He did not return to the court the remainder of the game.

Nee defended his team and his 10-year coaching career at Nebraska during his press conference on Tuesday.

"Are you judging Danny Nee on the last two weeks or are you judging Danny Nee on 9 1/2 years?" Nee said.

Nee, who owns a record of 179-

126 at Nebraska, has taken seven teams to postseason appearances, including four NCAA Tournaments.

After what started out as a promising season, Nebraska has been the target of criticism since its current five-game losing streak began.

"When you start losing, everything gets magnified and put in a whole different perspective," Nee said. "There are players in that locker room who have never lost two games in a row."

Nee said he also was trying to show the Huskers that he still had confidence in their ability to play as a team.

"I recruited them," Nee said. "I'm committed to them, and I'm sticking with them."

Nee said he was confident the Huskers would turn their season around, and that they could still be contenders for the NCAA Tournament.

"When I look at the rest of the season," Nee said, "I see opportunity."

Brown turns down Buccaneers' offer

By Trevor Parks
Senior Reporter

Nebraska receivers coach Ron Brown announced Tuesday that he would reject a coaching offer from the Tampa Bay Buccaneers to remain at Nebraska.



Brown

Brown was interviewed Feb. 7 in Tampa, Fla., by Buccaneers' first-year coach Tony Dungy. The nine-year Cornhusker assistant was offered a position as receivers coach under Dungy, who was formerly the Minnesota Vikings' defensive coordinator.

"After I had a few days to think about it, I made my decision," Brown said. "It was a ministry decision, not a career decision."

Brown assists in the running of four Christian Youth camps during the summer across Nebraska, and he has a weekly show on Christian radio station. He also writes a monthly article in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes national magazine. Dungy's strong Christian values were one of the reasons Brown was interested in the job, he said.

This was the third time Brown had turned down other offers to stay at Nebraska.

He has turned down opportuni-

ties to become the head coach at his alma mater, Brown University. After the 1993 season, in which Nebraska lost 18-16 to Florida State in the Orange Bowl, Brown turned down a coaching position with Florida State.

"All of them were tough decisions," Brown said. "Certainly Tom Osborne has played a major role in me staying here. He has been great to his staff. That was a determining factor, and I love my players too."

Brown was the defensive coordinator of the New Jersey Rams, a semipro team, in 1982. He coached at Brown University from 1983-86 before coming to Nebraska in 1987. He has been the Huskers' receivers coach since.

Brown has coached 17 Nebraska tight ends and receivers who have gone on to have professional careers.

After deciding Tuesday to stay at Nebraska, Brown said, he might not be leaving Lincoln anytime soon.

"I am not desperately looking to leave Nebraska," Brown said. "If something comes up, I will look at the opportunity. In this case, with the help of God, I think I made the correct decision."

"If and when the time comes for me to leave here, God will give me the wisdom."

Huskers to wrestle Missouri

By Antone Oseka
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska wrestling team will be in action tonight at 7:30 against Missouri at the Bob Devaney Sports Center indoor track area.

"They've wrestled in anonymity this year," Nebraska coach Tim Neumann said of the Tigers. "They graduated six seniors last year, so they have a real young team."

Neumann said the key matches for the third-ranked Huskers were the lower weights.

"118 and 126 are important," Neumann said. "I'm honestly looking to make sure we prepare mentally for good teams and individuals."

At 126 pounds, starter Jeramie Welder will sit out for the Huskers because of a nagging ankle injury. Freshman Matt Infranca will take Welder's place for the dual.

Nebraska will see the return of 158-pounder Temocer Terry, who is ranked No. 2 in the nation. Erik Josephson, at 177 pounds, also will return to the Husker lineup. Ninth-ranked Josephson returns for Nebraska after resting a back injury last week.

The Huskers will wrestle without 142-pounder Mike Eierman, whose eligibility has expired. Eierman wrestled in two duals earlier this season, but the Huskers had to forfeit both after learning Monday that Eierman was not eligible.