

SPORTS

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Big 8 teams fighting for NCAA bid

By Vince D'Adamo
Staff Reporter

With only one week of regular-season play remaining, Kansas and Iowa State are the only NCAA Tournament certainties among the Big Eight schools.

The rest of the league, including four teams still fighting for a bid, have emerged black and blue from a grueling conference season, league coaches said Monday.

Big Eight champion Kansas is 24-2 overall and 12-1 in the conference after Monday night's victory over Missouri. The Jayhawks have earned the No. 1 seed in the league tournament, March 8-10, and will play either Colorado or Nebraska in the first round.

With a win at Oklahoma on Saturday, Kansas would be in good position to also claim a No. 1 seed in the NCAA Tournament. The pairings will be announced March 10.

Iowa State coach Tim Floyd, who has led his troops to a 19-7 and 8-4 mark, defended the Big Eight, which has been called a weak conference this

season.

"This is a very good league," Floyd said. "I think we'll be well represented."

Since the NCAA Tournament expanded its field to 64 teams in 1984-85, every Big Eight team that has finished its regular season with seven or more wins in conference play and 17 Division I wins has advanced to the NCAA Tournament.

Other than Kansas and Iowa State — which already have met those standards — Oklahoma, Kansas State, Missouri and Oklahoma State still have hopes of going to the big dance.

But the NCAA Tournament probably will not take more than four Big Eight teams, which will leave two of those teams disappointed and bound for the NIT.

The Sooners, at 16-10 and 7-5, are the on the verge of securing an NCAA bid. Oklahoma, which has games remaining against Oklahoma State and Kansas, controls its own fate, Sooner coach Kelvin Sampson said.

Sampson said it was difficult to say how the selection committee would view the Big Eight this season.

Big Eight Standings

Team	Conference		Overall	
	Wins	Losses	Wins	Losses
Kansas	12	1	23	2
Iowa State	8	4	19	7
Oklahoma	7	5	16	10
Kansas State	6	6	15	9
Missouri	6	7	16	12
Oklahoma State	5	7	15	9
Nebraska	3	9	15	12
Colorado	2	10	8	16

Kansas State is 15-9 and 6-6. Wildcat coach Tom Asbury said every game in the Big Eight this season had been a fight, causing teams to wear each other out.

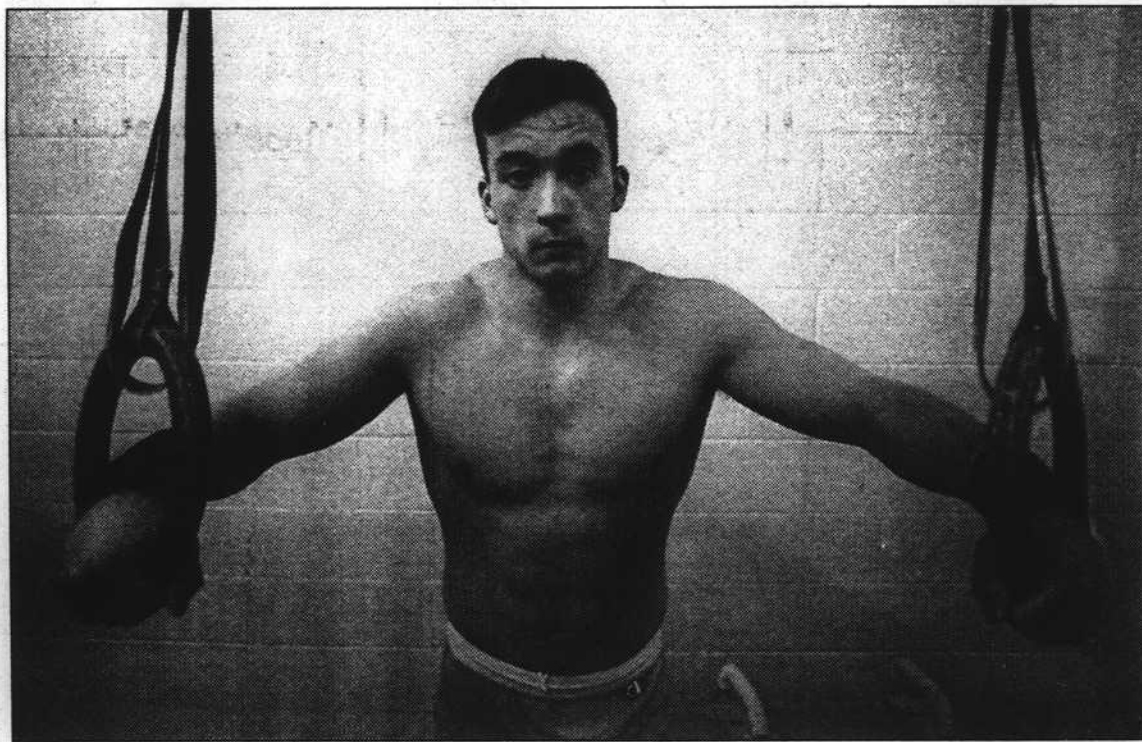
"You've got teams in the middle beating up on each other," Asbury said. "There's so much balance in the

middle, and you've got a lot of great coaches."

Missouri is 16-12 and 6-7, but the Tigers still have hopes of qualifying for the tournament with a win over Oklahoma State on Saturday in Co-

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On the rise



Travis Heying/DN

Sophomore gymnast Jim Koziol came to UNL on a partial scholarship in 1994. Koziol has been Nebraska's top all-arounder this season.

Koziol leads NU in all-around

By Gregg Madsen
Staff Reporter

Five years ago, Jim Koziol didn't even think about gymnastics.

In his freshman year of high school, after six years of training at the Cahoy School of Gymnastics in Omaha, Koziol decided to quit the sport because of bone chips in his elbow and chronic knee problems.

He spent the next three years attending high school at Millard South and working a part-time job. But in his senior year, a friend convinced him to come back to gymnastics.

So after a three-year hiatus and only two weeks of practice, Koziol competed in the all-around at the 1994 High School national championships.

He won. "I didn't think things would develop like they did," Koziol said. "I was just doing it for fun."

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JIM KOZIOL

Nebraska gymnast

Nebraska coach Francis Allen saw Koziol compete in high school, but Allen said he never considered recruiting him.

But in the summer of 1994, former Husker Dennis Harrison and 1980 Olympian Phil Cahoy convinced Allen that Koziol had the potential to be an outstanding gymnast.

"He (Cahoy) called me on the phone and told me this kid was going to come around," Allen said. "That was enough to convince me to give him a chance."

Allen gave Koziol a partial scholarship, and Cahoy's prediction

began to come true.

"He came in here with something to prove," Allen said. "He was OK, but he wasn't an outstanding gymnast like he is now."

Since coming to Nebraska, Koziol has proven that he is not only worthy of the scholarship, but one of the nation's top all-arounders.

At this year's Winter Cup Challenge in Colorado Springs, Colo., Koziol won the all-around in the 19-and-over division, earning a spot on U.S. Team 2000.

See **KOZIOL** on 8

Frazier ill with sinus infection

From the Associated Press

All-American quarterback Tommie Frazier, struck with a serious sinus infection, has been treated at a hospital, the son of Nebraska's football coach said Monday.

Mike Osborne, whose father Tom Osborne was not reached for comment, said that Frazier was ill and had been hospitalized, but he would not elaborate. He then referred questions to the Nebraska Athletic Department.

"I'm not able to confirm any medical information at this time," said Chris Anderson, Nebraska sports information director.

Anderson said she didn't know if there would be a time when she could confirm any information.

The Associated Press checked with every hospital in Lincoln and with the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha. All said Frazier was not a patient.

Mike Osborne said Frazier was quite sick last weekend when he visited Norfolk to appear at a book store to sign posters.

Osborne is involved in a Lincoln business called Husker Video, which helped with the promotion in Norfolk. He was reluctant to talk about Frazier's condition.

"You're safe to say that Tommie is sick," he said.

As a matter of courtesy, Osborne said he wanted to let the Norfolk book store owner know how Frazier was doing.

"I wanted to let her know that, yes, he was in the hospital," Osborne said.

The book store owner, who did not want to be identified, confirmed that Frazier was ill and had to take several rest breaks during his appearance on Saturday.

Frazier missed seven games in 1994, his junior year, because of blood clots in his right leg. The clots were successfully dissolved and he returned to play in the Orange Bowl on Jan. 1, 1995.

As a senior, he led Nebraska to its second straight national championship and was named the most valuable player in Nebraska's 62-24 Fiesta Bowl win over Florida on Jan. 2.

Frazier, the 1995 Heisman Trophy runner-up, is the all-time total offense leader in Cornhusker history.

Big 8 Notebook

The Kansas State women's basketball team will forfeit 11 games for using ineligible player Carlene Mitchell this season, school officials announced Monday.

The Wildcats, who finished their season with a 14-15 overall record and 5-9 mark in the Big Eight, now will drop to 3-26 overall and 3-11 in the conference.

Because of the forfeits, Kansas State now will be the eighth seed in the Big Eight Tournament and play top-seeded Kansas in the 2 p.m. game Saturday at the Bicentennial Center in Salina, Kan. Oklahoma will move up to the seventh seed and play Colorado in the 6 p.m. game.

On Feb. 9, before the Wildcats were to play Nebraska, Kansas State athletic director Max Urick suspended Wildcat third-year coach Brian Agler and Mitchell, a senior point guard. Urick said Kansas State was looking into possible NCAA violations by Agler and Mitchell.

Former Wildcat men's coach Jack Hartman was named interim coach two hours before the Nebraska game on Feb. 9 and coached the Wildcats to an 81-75 win.

On Friday, Kansas State officials announced Agler had been reassigned to a position with the Office of the Vice President for Institutional Advancement.

Before her suspension, Mitchell was averaging 5.5 points per game and was the Wildcats' fourth-leading scorer.

Kansas junior point guard Jacque Vaughn was named the Big Eight player of the week Monday. In wins over Nebraska and Kansas State last week, Vaughn made 12 of 20 shots. He had 13 points, seven assists and three steals against the Huskers and 20 points against the Wildcats.

With the Jayhawks' victory over Kansas State on Saturday, Kansas clinched its 43rd conference title and 13th and final Big Eight crown.

No Nebraska players were named to the players' All-Big Eight women's team. Cornhusker senior guard Kate Galligan and junior forward Tina McClain were named to the second team. The teams were selected by a vote of the conference players.

Named to the first team were Missouri senior Erika Martin, Colorado junior Erin Scholz, Oklahoma senior Pam Pennon, Kansas junior guard Tomcka Dixon and Oklahoma State senior Stacy Coffey.

The RPI report for Feb. 17 listed the Big Eight as the second strongest conference behind the ACC. The Feb. 20 USA Today/Sagarin Computer Rankings listed the Big Eight No. 4 behind the ACC, the Big East and the Big Ten.

Nebraska center Pyra Aarden was one of five players named to the District VII Academic All-District team Monday. Aarden, a 6-foot-4 senior from Hudson, Wis., has earned a 3.63 cumulative grade-point average and is averaging 13.3 points and 5.8 rebounds per game for 18-8 Nebraska.

Notebook compiled by senior reporter Mike Kluck.