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# Erdmann shines for Sooners

By David Wilson  
Staff Reporter

The Oklahoma basketball team rallied from a 15-point deficit in the second half of Sunday's game to beat Nebraska with little help from Ryan Minor, the Big Eight's leading scorer and defending player of the year.

After a 16-point performance in the first half, Minor, who averages 21.8 points per game, was held to four points after halftime.

Sunday's game marked just the sixth time this season the senior forward had scored more points in the first half than in the second half. The Cornhusker defense put more pressure on Minor in the second half, he said, allowing other players to step up.

Forward Nate Erdmann stole a pass from Nebraska guard Erick Strickland in the final seconds of the second half to solidify a 65-65 tie and send the game into overtime, where Oklahoma prevailed 80-76. Erdmann broke the tie with a 3-pointer to begin the overtime period.

"All of our guys were playing hard," Minor said. "We're not a one-man team. The rest of our guys were making big plays."

The Sooners, 16-10 overall and 7-5 in the Big Eight with games remaining against Oklahoma State and Kansas, are now in good position to earn a bid to the NCAA Tournament.

Erdmann, a 6-foot-5, 210-pound junior from Portales, N.M., finished Sunday's game with 23 points and seven rebounds. In the first half, he was held to two points and no rebounds, prompting Sooner coach Kelvin Sampson to seek out Erdmann at the half.

"I wasn't prepared to play in the first half," Erdmann said. "I was just out there sleepwalking. I was chewed out pretty good at halftime."

Sampson said he was disappointed with Erdmann's first-half performance.

"I challenged him," Sampson said. "I said, 'We need you to step up and play.' And he did."

Erdmann woke up in the second half, hitting three 3-pointers and scoring 15 points, including a 3-point shot with 22 seconds remaining in regulation, to give the Sooners a two-point lead.

"Coach wants me to shoot more, but I'm definitely not going to start forcing shots," Erdmann said. "If I'm

going to take a shot, I want to make sure I can make it."

Erdmann, who has started in 25 of 26 games for the Sooners this season, shot 8 of 13 from the field, upping his shooting percentage to a team high 53.5 percent. Erdmann also is tied with Minor for the team lead in assists.

After redshirting in 1992-93, Erdmann was coached by Sampson for one season at Washington State. He transferred to Hutchinson (Kan.) Community College for his sophomore season with the intent of playing for Sampson at Oklahoma his final two seasons.

At Hutchinson, Erdmann led the team in scoring, rebounding and steals as a sophomore before coming to Oklahoma this season.

He was named Big Eight player of the week last week after scoring a career-high 27 points in a 119-88 victory over Colorado on Feb. 17.

Judging from his numbers, Erdmann's performances have had a major impact on the outcome of Oklahoma's games this year. In Oklahoma's 16 wins this season, Erdmann is averaging 14.8 points per game. In the Sooners' 10 losses, he is averaging 9.3 points.

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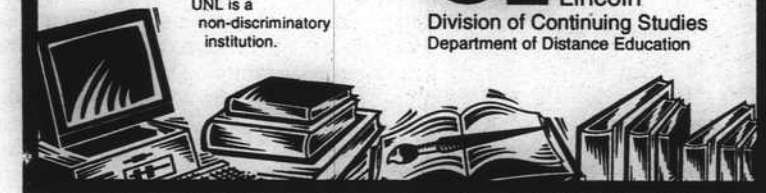
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## Koziol

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In the Huskers' dual with No. 2 New Mexico on Feb. 18, Koziol won the all-around, setting personal bests in floor exercise (9.35), pommel horse (9.7) and rings (9.65). But he said he was slightly disappointed with his career-high 56.6 performance against the Lobos.

"I still have the chance to go for a 57, though," he said. "I just want to keep improving every meet, and I know I have a lot of areas to improve in."

Strength and flexibility are two areas in which Koziol needs to improve, Allen said.

Koziol, who has been Nebraska's most consistent all-arounder this season, said he spent last summer working on those two things.

"I spent a lot of time in the weight room," Koziol said. "It really improved my strength."

The added strength has helped Koziol improve his scoring in almost every meet this season. In last Friday's dual at No. 3 Iowa, he had a career-high 9.75 in the pommel horse and finished third in the all-around with a 56.5.

## Big Eight

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lumbia, Mo. Oklahoma State coach Eddie Sutton, whose team is 15-9 and 5-7, said this year's Big Eight was the best conference in which he had ever coached.

"The bottom half is so strong," Sutton said. "It's a very good league. It's tough especially on the road playing in front of full houses."

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