

**NIT**

Continued from Page 9

The Rams, who finished fourth in the Western Athletic Conference with an 11-7 record, are making their fourth NIT appearance and first since 1988.

Colorado State lost to 71-69 to 25-6 Utah — a fourth-seed in the NCAA Tournament's Midwest Region — in the semifinals of WAC Tournament. In the Rams' other two games against the No. 10 Utes, Colorado State lost by a total of nine points.

Nee said the Huskers were glad to have the opportunity to extend their season.

"That's the attitude we've had for over a week or two," Nee said. "The kids wanted a chance, so there's a silver lining at the end of the tunnel and we're trying to find it."

If Nebraska beats the Rams, it will play the winner of the Gonzaga-Washington State game. That second-round game will be played March 19 with the site to be determined.

On Friday in Kansas City, Iowa State's Kelvin Cato ended any dreams the Huskers had of making the NCAA Tournament. The Cyclones slipped by Nebraska 62-60 Friday night at Kemper Arena in front of a second session record crowd of 17,876 fans.

Cato made three key plays in the final two minutes. He had two blocked shots and pulled down a rebound with 40 seconds remaining to lift Iowa State.

Cato scored a career-high 16 points and pulled down 10 rebounds along with five blocked shots. Detric Willoughby added 16 and Kenny Pratt scored 14 for Iowa State.

Nebraska was led by junior Mikki Moore's 15-points, seven rebounds and four blocked shots. Senior Jaron Boone scored 14 points and freshman Tyrone Lue added 10 points.

With the win, the No. 23 Cyclones advanced to beat Missouri Saturday and won their first-ever conference tournament title by downing Kansas 56-55 in the championship game Sunday afternoon.

The wins improved Iowa State's record to 23-8. The Cyclones are the fifth seed in the NCAA Tournament's Midwest Region. They will play California in the first round.

"We should have won," Nebraska

senior Erick Strickland said, "and if things would have went our way, we would have won. Even if things would have been a little bit balanced out we would have won, but it went all their way."

After Pratt was called for an offensive foul with 1:57 remaining, Nebraska had a chance to take its first lead since owning a 39-38 advantage in the second half.

It was then that Cato made the first of his big plays. Boone drove the lane with the Huskers trailing 59-58, but as his shot was about to hit the glass, Cato pinned the ball to the backboard.

Boone said the shot hit the glass before Cato touched the ball. Goaltending have been called, Boone said.

"I thought it was goaltending. All the coaches thought it was goaltending," Boone. "They saw it differently, so that's the way the ball bounces."

Iowa State hurried down the court following the block and Willoughby converted a fast-break layup to give the Cyclones a 61-58 lead with 1:37 left.

Cato then blocked a Strickland shot from the lane and Iowa State got the ball back.

With the shot clock winding down, Pratt missed a 3-point attempt with 40 seconds left, but Cato grabbed the rebound and passed to Shawn Bankhead. Bankhead was fouled and missed the first shot of a one-and-one opportunity.

But on Nebraska's next possession, Boone was long on a 3-point attempt with 20 seconds to play.

Iowa State took a 62-58 lead on a Pratt free throw and Boone made a layup with two seconds left to end the scoring.

"We felt we played hard," Nee said. "We felt we had a solid game plan and we executed it to a point, but we just couldn't get over the hump. There were numerous plays in the game that we just didn't finish."

The Huskers rallied from a 54-46 deficit with 9:35 remaining after Willoughby made two free throws. That was Iowa State's largest lead of the game and ended a 19-7 run that brought the Cyclones back after trailing 39-35.

**Finishes disappoint Huskers**

By Andrew Strnad  
Staff Reporter

INDIANAPOLIS—After 12 years of domination, the Arkansas men's track and field team reluctantly stepped down as NCAA indoor track and field champions Saturday.

Hoping to fill the void was Nebraska, but the Cornhuskers could only tally 31.5 points, finishing just behind George Mason.

After the championships, Nebraska coach Gary Pepin said he couldn't help but wonder what might have been if some of his Huskers had performed as they did during the regular season.

Going into the meet, Pepin said he had big expectations from his two long jumpers, Joe Laster and Robert Thomas.

But the two combined for only two team points. Thomas finished seventh, and Laster failed to make the finals.

Pepin said he was disappointed that his two jumpers, who had the No. 1 and No. 3 jumps in the nation this season, finished so far back in the event.

"Having two great long jumpers like we have," Pepin said, "and those two guys, in essence falling flat on their face really, really hurt us."

Pepin said he also was disappointed with the women's 1,600-meter relay team, and their eighth-place finish in the event. The Husker women finished tied for fourth overall.

"They're just better than that," he said. "You can't go into a meet like this and have people at the top of their rankings and not do well."

**Titles**

Continued from Page 9

Henry's number was called in the long jump. The junior from Omaha won the event Friday with a jump of 20-11 1/4. Henry's jump was almost a foot better than her closest competitor, Nicole Devonish of Texas.

After finishing fourth in the long jump a year ago, Henry now joins former Husker Angela Thacker, who won the event in 1984, as the only indoor long jump national champions in Husker history.

Henry also competed in the finals of the 55-meter dash, finishing eighth. Now a five-time All-American, Henry also competed in the triple jump, but didn't place.

"I am in so many events," she said, "and my legs are so sore. I've had such a busy day."

On the men's side, four Huskers came home national champions as the men's distance medley relay team of Alex Lammel, Miklos Roth, Jonah Kiptarus and Balazs Tolgyesi set a new school and Big Eight record with a time of 9 minutes, 32.13 seconds, breaking their own record set earlier this month.

After finishing second in the mile run, Kiptarus led the charge in the distance relay. Pepin said Kiptarus was the key in leading the men to a second-place finish in the meet.

"The distance medley relay was just super, and little Jonah had a terrific day for us," Pepin said.

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