

Sports Opinion



Trevor Parks NU deserves regional host over Penn St.

The thunder from University Park, Penn., is rumbling again.

This time, the natives of Happy Valley are unhappy with Nebraska — and the NCAA — because the Penn State volleyball team once again has been sent to Lincoln for an NCAA regional.

This has happened now for three straight years and seven times since 1982. The Lady Lions should be used to it. It seems, however, that some think PSU got the shaft.

In a column published last week in the Collegian, Penn State's student newspaper, assistant night sports editor Cameron McGaughy blames the NCAA's greed and its Ratings Percentage Index, which he calls "a stupid scientific formula comparing schedules," for Penn State's trip to Lincoln.

Penn State is 30-2 and won the Big Ten. But the Lady Lions average 1,647 fans per match at Rec Hall and have never played host to an NCAA Regional.

Nebraska is 28-3, dominated the Big 12 and averages 3,539 fans per match, the nation's second-best average. The Cornhuskers have played host to seven regionals.

But perhaps the biggest reason NU is playing host to a regional is because it didn't blow its biggest road trip of the season — like PSU did.

The Huskers won at Texas and Texas A&M on the final weekend of the season. In the Lady Lions' tell-tale weekend, they lost at Ohio State and at Michigan State.

Hawaii deserved a regional. Florida deserved a regional. Stanford definitely deserved a regional, and Nebraska deserved a regional.

Sorry Penn State. The NCAA knows what it's doing.

And what is there to do in University Park anyway? From what I've heard, it's a gas station, a used car lot and a restaurant. The town is so far away from civilization that it's known to have the world's worst traffic jams on football game days.

University Park is no place for a regional. No one wants to go there, and people at Penn State aren't happy about it.

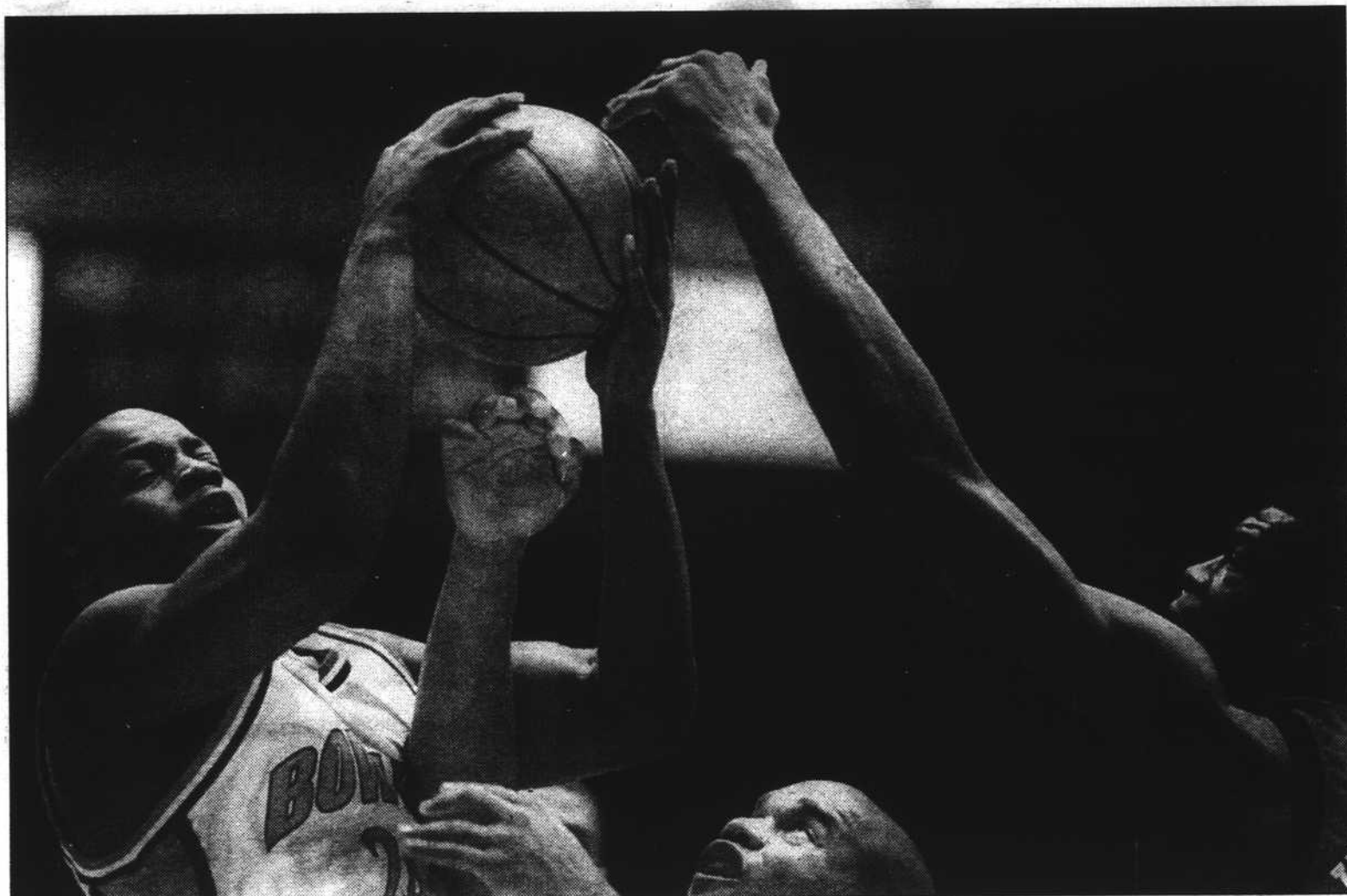
"As pissed off as I am," McGaughy wrote, "I can't even imagine how the team and Coach Russ Rose must really feel."

"I hope they use that to beat the crap out of the Big Red. ... Good luck Nebraska. You'll need it."

Sounds like he's spent too much time in University Park. Sure, Nebraska needs luck, but so does Penn State — and every other team in the tournament.

And according to the history books, the home court is a lucky place for Nebraska.

Parks is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan senior reporter.



JAY CALDERON/DN

VENSON HAMILTON and Bowling Green's Anthony Stacey reach for a rebound Saturday in Nebraska's 73-68 win. NU will play at Missouri-Kansas City tonight.

NU hopes to thwart Kangaroo upset bid

Lue returns to the site of his last high school game.

BY PATRICK WYMAN
Staff Reporter

Tonight's trip to Municipal Auditorium in Kansas City, Mo., will not be a new experience for Nebraska point guard Tyrone Lue.

Lue played his final high school basketball game at the same site in March 1995, scoring 30 points in Raytown High School's double-overtime loss to Kansas City Central in the state quarterfinals.

In tonight's 7:30 game against 2-3 Missouri-Kansas City, Lue, who is averaging a team-high 19.7 points per game for the 5-1 Huskers, hopes

for a similar performance with a different result.

"I'm going to go there prepared, focused and ready to play" said Lue, who was raised in Mexico, Mo., but attended high school at Raytown, a Kansas City-area school.

Tonight's game will also be a homecoming of sorts for true freshman guard Cookie Belcher, who is beginning to turn heads with his play. Belcher, also from Mexico, Mo., was named the Big 12 rookie of the week on Monday and trails only Lue in scoring, averaging 13.2 points per game.

According to Nebraska Coach Danny Nee, UMKC is better than its 2-3 record, and the Kangaroos have a legitimate shot to stop NU's five-game streak.

"Missouri-Kansas City is a solid basketball team," Nee said. "They

lost a couple of tough games on the road. They're a dangerous team and they got a lot of new faces."

Tonight's game will mark the ninth straight season in which NU and Missouri-Kansas City have met. Nebraska has won each of the last eight years, but not without a struggle, Nee said.

"UMKC has been very tough for us in Municipal Auditorium," Nee said. "It's a dangerous game."

Nebraska beat UMKC 87-69 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center last season and downed the Kangaroos 63-60 two years ago in Kansas City. UMKC will be playing tonight without center Tony Berg, who leads the Kangaroos in rebounds, averaging 11.2, and has scored 10.4 points per game.

"They are small and quick, and without Berg, their tallest player is

Basketball Starters

Nebraska 5-1

No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.
13	Devaney Carter	6-7	245	So.
F 5	Larry Florence	6-5	225	So.
G 30	Cookie Belcher	6-3	200	Fr.

UMKC 2-3

No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.
F 33	Vinson Smith	6-2	195	Jr.
G 12	Nick Richmond	6-2	175	So.

6-6," Nee said. "That's small compared to what we've been playing against."

The Huskers' height advantage

Please see UMKC on 11

Pettit: Schedule helped Huskers

BY SHANNON HEFFELFINGER
Staff Reporter

The NCAA Tournament's East Regional field at the NU Coliseum this weekend is the strongest Terry Pettit has seen in his 20 years of coaching volleyball at Nebraska.

But Pettit said Tuesday that the Cornhuskers have at least one advantage over the previous NU teams he has taken to regionals.

"I'm comfortable because of the

"Our whole season, everything that we've worked for comes down to these last two weeks."

JAIME KRONDAK
NU outside hitter

schedule this team has played," Pettit said. "They've shown character at critical times."

The Huskers have played five matches against top 10 opponents and own a 15-2 record against NCAA Tournament teams this season. That

will help 28-3 NU Friday against Louisville (26-4), and possibly on Saturday against 25-7 Wisconsin or 30-2 Penn State.

"The grind of the Big 12 is similar to a regional," Pettit said. "It's a tremendous benefit. When you're play-

ing two nights in a row, you can't just play on emotion. You have to make a decision to play intensely."

Finding intensity will not be a problem for the Huskers, said sophomore Jaime Krondak, who is seeing her first extensive playing time in an NCAA Tournament.

"Our whole season, everything that we've worked for, comes down to these last two weeks," Krondak said. "We have more incentive to come to practice and work hard."

"The intensity is definitely up at the end of the season."

Along with the added intensity, Pettit said he has been pleased with the focus and personal growth of his team

Please see NCAA on 11