

Sports Opinion



Antone Oseka Huskers need to put an end to turnovers

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — If one thing is going to kill the Nebraska basketball team this season, it won't be its schedule or a player walkout. It'll be turnovers.

At Municipal Auditorium in Kansas City on Wednesday night, the Cornhuskers nearly killed themselves against Missouri-Kansas City. Nebraska won 76-64, improving to 6-1, but the game looked a lot closer than the score.

At least it did in the first half, when the Huskers had 15 turnovers to UMKC's seven. But NU still led 35-29.

Nebraska didn't take advantage of its height and tried to play an up-tempo style. That just led to Nebraska turnovers and quick Kangaroo points.

"We won't be a good team until we eliminate the turnovers," Nebraska Coach Danny Nee said.

That's not altogether true. Last year, the National Invitation Tournament champion squad tied the school record for turnovers in a game, committing 30 in a Jan. 3 win over Texas.

Hey, they were postseason champions last year, right? This year's team won't have that luck if it doesn't start watching where the ball is going.

Fortunately, Nebraska turned things around in the second half against the Kangaroos. The Huskers committed only six turnovers after halftime and used their height advantage in the post.

Nee said that was Nebraska's game plan all along. UMKC's tallest player on the floor was 6-foot-7 guard Brad Moulder, but he was only out there for 11 minutes.

Nebraska will have to play smart basketball like it did in the second half to even hope to compete with Big 12 Conference foes like Kansas and Iowa State.

Especially on the turnover end of the game.

"Turnovers are our biggest factor right now," true freshman guard Cookie Belcher said. "We need to cut that down to 10 or less."

Ten or less is a great goal for this team, a goal it should shoot for before its next game, Dec. 21 against 17th-ranked Minnesota at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Nebraska had 27 turnovers in the first round of the Ameritas Classic last weekend against Coppin State. The Huskers followed that performance with 26 turnovers in the finals against Bowling Green.

That's 74 turnovers to three mediocre teams. The Huskers had better find what they did right in the second half of Wednesday night's victory and capitalize on that for the rest of the season.

Or they'll be sorry when they're watching the field of 64 from somewhere in Lincoln.

Oseka is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan nights news editor.

Samuel pleases N.M. State officials

Husker coaches say assistant will be missed at Nebraska.

By **MIKE KLUCK**
Senior Reporter

Tony Samuel was given a chance Thursday, being named New Mexico State's new head football coach at a news conference in Las Cruces, N.M.

Nebraska's outside linebackers coach, who has no previous experience as a head coach, will take over a program that finished 1-10 last season and hasn't had a winning season since 1993.

"I think head-coaching experi-

ence is sometimes overrated," New Mexico State Athletic Director Al Gonzales said at the press conference.

"Every single head coach was an assistant coach at one time. Someone had to give them a chance. He didn't have the title, but the understanding I got was he is a major cog in the mix."

Samuel, a Cornhusker player from 1975 through 1977, has been a Nebraska assistant for 11 seasons. He was an assistant for one season at Western Michigan and Stanford.

Right now, Samuel said his main goal is to organize a staff and start recruiting players.

"The No. 1 thing we need to do right now is create some unity," Samuel said. "Everybody else is in front of us. There are enough play-

ers out there that we will put together a pretty good class this year."

Nebraska Coach Tom Osborne said he wished Samuel well in reviving the NMSU program, which has had only two winning seasons in the past 30 years.

"Tony's just got to be himself," Osborne said. "He's seen enough football that he'll have a good idea of what he wants to do. He'll do fine."

Samuel will stay with the Huskers through the Orange Bowl on Dec. 31, and then take over the Aggie program on Jan. 2.

New Mexico State University President J. Michael Orenduff said one of Samuel's strengths is his relationship with players. During Samuel's interview on Dec. 6, he

made a strong impression on the New Mexico State players, who considered him to be a players' coach, Orenduff said.

"I feel he's going to be a great coach," said NU All-American Grant Wistrom, who was coached by Samuel, "because he can relate to the players well. They will be really happy with who they have selected."

Nebraska Defensive Coordinator Charlie McBride said Samuel will be missed in Lincoln.

"Tony is a common-sense football coach," McBride said. "He had a good understanding of what young people can and can't learn. He's not what I call a guy who tries to be a rocket scientist."

Huskers brace for war

Penn State's depth has improved, but inexperience is a concern.

By **TREVOR PARKS**
Senior Reporter

Nebraska Volleyball Coach Terry Pettit said the Penn State team playing in Lincoln this weekend is the best Lady Lion squad he has ever seen.

According to Wisconsin Coach John Cook, Penn State enters today's 5 p.m. East Regional semifinal match playing as well as any team in the country.

So what does PSU Coach Russ Rose think of those comments about his 30-2 team?

"I think those people are just blowing smoke right now," Rose said. "I don't believe that. Everybody wants to say nice things, the politically correct things right now. They are not telling their teams that."

With all the publicly positive talk surrounding his team, Rose doesn't know how Penn State will react tonight against the Badgers, a team PSU has defeated twice this season and 14 times in school history.

Since sweeping Georgia Tech in the second round of the NCAA Tournament last Sunday, the Penn State players have had final exams and did not practice this week. Half of the team did not arrive in Lincoln until late Thursday afternoon.

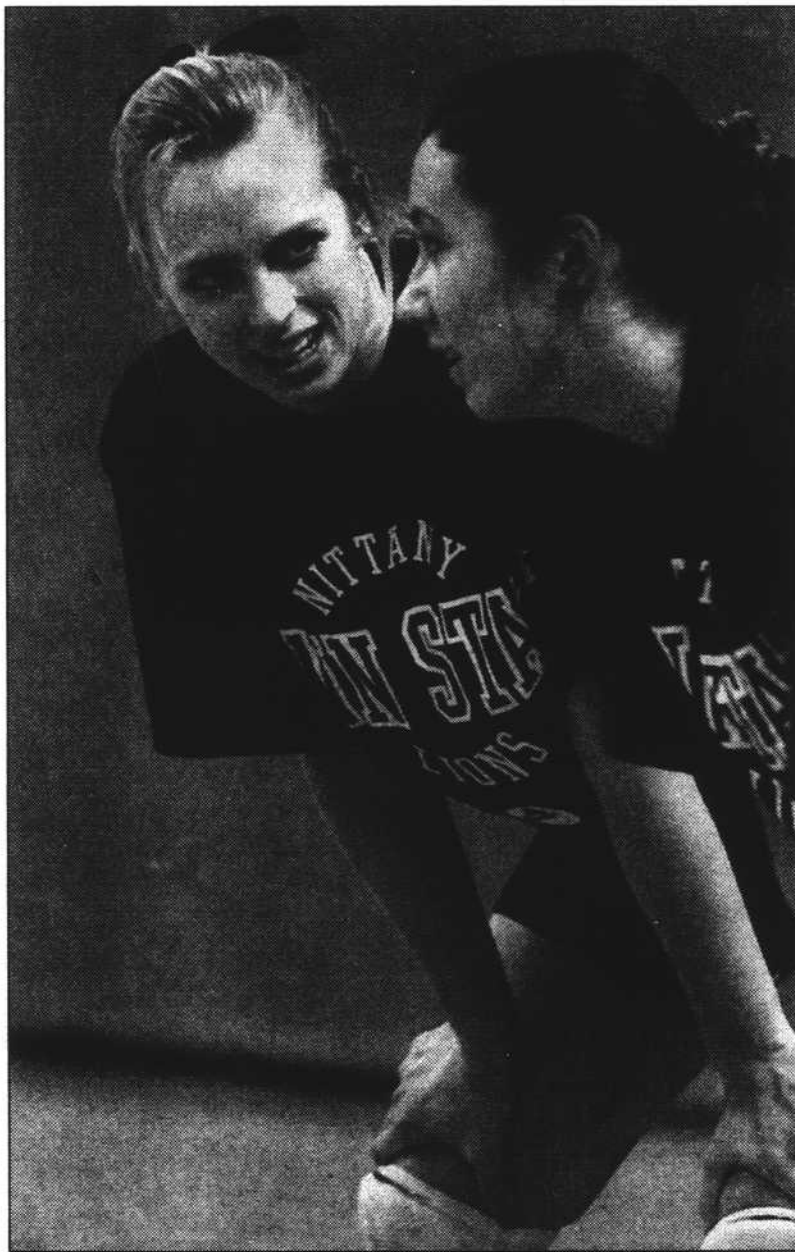
Rose said his team struggled in its win over the Yellow Jackets. The Lions won 15-7, 15-10, 15-13, but allowed Georgia Tech to creep back from a 14-6 deficit in the second game. In the third game, Georgia Tech went on a 10-2 run before the Lions held on for the win.

In addition, an end-of-the-regular-season funk has puzzled Rose.

Penn State's final four regular-season matches went four games and six of its final seven lasted four games.

"We were not playing our best volleyball down the stretch of the Big Ten," Rose said.

On paper, Penn State — which tied Michigan State for the Big Ten crown — is an exceptionally talented but young team. The starting rotation features three freshman and sophomore



TERRI ZEMAITIS (left) and Angie Kammer will lead Penn State into today's 5 p.m. regional semifinal match against Big Ten rival Wisconsin at the NU Coliseum.

Christy Cochran, who had little experience prior to this season.

Freshmen Lauren Cacciamani, Bonnie Bremner and Carrie Schonveld have grown up in a hurry this year — especially Bremner, the Lions' setter. Bremner has started every match this season, averaged 13 assists per game and 2.4 digs per game. She also averages 1.5 kills per game, a high mark for a setter, and finished second in the Big Ten with a .396 hitting percentage.

Cacciamani, a 6-foot-2 middle blocker from Paramus, N.J., is one of PSU's tallest players and averages 3.3 kills and 1.6 blocks per game. Schonveld, a 6-foot outside hitter, has started eight straight matches and averages 2.5 kills and 2.3 digs per game.

The Lady Lions lead the country in blocking, averaging 3.9 per game, while averaging 17.1 digs per game, tops in the Big Ten. Although those numbers are eye-popping, Rose said, his team is not as good defensively as it has been in the past.

"We've got four players starting their first go around in the big leagues," Rose said. "If we play our best, then we'll feel good about how we played."

Nebraska and Penn State have had some classic regional matches in the last two years. NU lost a four-game heart-breaker to the Lions in 1994, denying an unbeaten NU team a trip to the Final Four. Last year in regional

Pettit expects a major challenge tonight from Louisville.

By **MIKE KLUCK**
Senior Reporter

Volleyball has changed. In years past the Nebraska volleyball team rolled through the early rounds of the NCAA Tournament, often unchallenged until the finals of a regional tournament.

However, tonight at the NU Coliseum the fourth-ranked Cornhuskers Pettit (28-3) cannot look past Louisville in the East Regional semifinals. If they do, the Big 12 champions won't need to worry about playing on Saturday night.

Nebraska will face the 26-4 Cardinals 45 minutes after the conclusion of the 5 p.m. match between No. 3 Penn State (30-2) and No. 17 Wisconsin (25-7). The winners will meet Saturday at 7:30 p.m. for a chance to advance to the Final Four, Dec. 19 through 21 in Cleveland.

"Volleyball has arrived," Nebraska Coach Terry Pettit said. "The semifinal pairings in this year's regionals are the strongest since I've been coaching. Not just in this region, but in every region."

But Pettit said he isn't concerned that the defending national champions will look past No. 22 Louisville.

"We never have," Pettit said. "When we tell the players that they are playing a good team and they have to play their best volleyball, I think they believe us."

It's not difficult to convince NU that the Cardinals — who are playing in the tournament for the seventh year — are a worthy opponent.

Louisville, which is fielding its tallest team in school history — eight players stand 6-foot-1 or taller — has won 21 of its last 23 matches.

The Cardinals are led by 6-foot-2 outside hitter Marina Sinichenko, a freshman from Moscow who is averaging a team-leading 3.8 kills per game. Senior outside hitter Beth Kuhnell is averaging 3.6 kills per game and leading the team in digs with 3.1 per game.

Please see **ROSE** on 14

Please see **PETTIT** on 14