

# Wildcats collapse against NU defense

BY SHANNON HEFFELFINGER  
Staff Reporter

Kansas State Coach Tom Asbury said his team prepared for it all week. Aaron Swartzendruber, the Wild-



Asbury

cats' third-leading scorer, was sure the team could handle it.

But when Nebraska applied a 1-3-1 trapping zone defense in the second half of its 87-77 overtime victory over KSU, it was too much for the Wildcats to handle.

"They really did a nice job with their half-court trap," Asbury said. "We lost our poise against it, and we couldn't execute."

"That was the key to the game." The relentless half-court pressure of the Huskers overwhelmed Kansas State in the second half. The Wildcats — who led NU by 18 points at halftime — scored only five points during the first 10 minutes after the break.

Nebraska, on the other hand, took advantage of KSU's confusion, exploding for 22 points during that critical stretch to put itself back in the ball game.

"Their defense really stepped it up," Swartzendruber said. "They were causing turnovers and getting the loose balls. I guess we weren't as ready for the trap as we thought we were." The Huskers' pressure defense left the Wildcats feeling disorganized and frustrated, Asbury said. That frustration led to mental breakdowns by the Wildcats, most notably at the foul line. Kansas State converted on only 52 percent of their free-throw attempts in the second half.

"We just got caught off guard by their defense."

TOM ASBURY  
KSU basketball coach

"If we had made one or two more of our foul shots," Asbury said, "this thing would have been over and done with in regulation."

The Wildcats panicked when they failed to capitalize at the free-throw line and dug themselves into an even deeper hole by committing 29 personal fouls.

KSU also committed 25 turnovers — 16 in the second half — while NU committed just 16. Marcus McCullough had six turnovers for the Wildcats.

Three starters — guard Chris Griffin, Swartzendruber and center Gerald Eaker — along with key reserve McCullough fouled out of the game. Another starter, Shawn Rhodes, played much of the second half and all of overtime with four fouls.

Asbury said the Huskers' defensive pressure indirectly caused his team's foul problems.

"You have to defend and make things happen before the other team gets the ball," Asbury said. "We let them dictate the situation."

"It's a tough loss to swallow, but we played hard. We just got caught off guard by their defense."

KSU lost for the fourth straight time dropping to 7-6 this season.

"The 1-3-1 hurt us," said Rhodes, who had only three points. "There's absolutely no doubt about it. We didn't think they'd do it that much, and it caught us off guard."

# NU women stop K-State

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points per game, said. "My teammates picked it up. We found a way to win at home."

The Huskers came out flat in the games' first 12 minutes as Kansas State jumped out to a 23-14 lead.

Angie Finkes led the Wildcats with 14 points. Missy Decker added 12 and Brit Jacobsen contributed 10 for KSU.

"We could never get into our transition game," DeForge said. "It is a different style of play for us. When that happens, you have to counter and make key plays at key times."

NU made a key 9-2 run in the final five minutes of the first half. DeForge and Tina McClain led the Nebraska charge cutting the deficit to 25-23 at halftime.

"That run changed the game right there," Kansas State Coach Deb Patterson said.

The Wildcats (8-5, 1-2) came back in the second half to take a 41-39 lead with 8:55 remaining, but the Huskers adjusted and took control with a 10-3 run in the next six minutes. KSU made one field goal in the final 6:57.

"We made an adjustment to their 2-3 zone and ran our regular offense," Beck said.

LaToya Doage, who scored 10 points, sealed the game from the free-throw line. Doage, who was shooting 58 percent from the line, hit four straight in the final 1:29 to ice the game.

The 53 points was the Huskers' lowest offensive output this season.

DeForge said even though the offense struggled, the defense came through once again.

"Our defense prevailed," DeForge said. "We forced a lot of turnovers, that is a reflection of our defense. The steals in the second half sealed the game."

# Cats can't match Huskers' spurt

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goals and seven points in the first 10 minutes of the second half, beginning a 22-5 run with Moore's dunk tip off a Lue miss. NU, which trailed 44-24 with 2:13 to play in the first half, trimmed the Kansas State lead to 48-37 two minutes into the second half after a Larry Florence free throw.

"We thought the main thing was to come out and chip it down, one by one, and play good defense," Moore said. "We knew we were going to come out and pick up the intensity."

With 14:11 to play in the game, Cookie Belcher drilled a pair of free throws to pull NU within eight points. The true freshman guard then took a fast break the length of the court, converting an acrobatic layup to close KSU's lead to 53-47 and ignite the Devaney Center crowd.

After a Wildcat timeout, the Huskers scored the next five points, cutting the lead to one. But Kansas State used a four-point run to regain control. The Cats built a six-point advantage at 60-54 with 9:13 left in the game, and the two teams stayed within five points of each other for the rest of regulation.

Nebraska senior Bernard Garner, suspended for four games since Dec. 31, nailed a 3-pointer with 58 seconds left, cutting the KSU lead to 71-69. After a Marcus McCullough free throw, Lue sank a 3 from the top of the key to tie the game at 72 with 37 seconds remaining.

Kansas State then held the ball until the final seconds, but Aaron Swartzendruber misfired, and Lue's 17-footer at the buzzer didn't fall, sending the game to overtime.

Lue, who returned to top form last Saturday against Texas A&M after spraining his left knee on Dec. 31, played the entire 45 minutes Wednesday night. In overtime, he scored Nebraska's first six points and eight of the Huskers' 15.

Following a Chris Griffin foul on the opening tip of the extra period, Lue's free throw gave the Huskers a 73-72 lead, their first since early in the first half. Two more Lue free throws and a Lue 3-pointer assisted by Alvin Mitchell put NU up 78-73. Kansas State never got closer than four points the rest of the game.

"I really didn't get tired too much," Lue said.

"It just shows that we don't give up. This team has heart, and we want to win. We didn't have any doubts."

MIKKI MOORE  
NU center

"except in the first half when they were kicking our butts. I just knew we were going to get back into the game, but I didn't know how we were going to do it."

In the first half, Kansas State used a 20-6 run, capped by a Mark Young 3-pointer 12 minutes into the game, to take a 27-14 lead.

Five minutes later, the Wildcats extended that lead to 15 points on a jumper by McCullough, a 6-5 junior who gave up a redshirt year on Wednesday, playing for the first time this season.

A six-foot jumper and a free throw by Ayome May in the final 10 seconds of the half sent KSU to the locker room with an 18-point lead.

"KSU beat us in every aspect of the game in the first half," Nee said, "and we did the same to them in the second half. I felt Kansas State came in and played at a very high level. I'm really pleased that our kids didn't quit."

Young led the Wildcats with 20 points, and Swartzendruber added 18 for KSU, which shot just 24 percent after the first half.

Venson Hamilton scored 10 points and grabbed 12 rebounds for Nebraska, Florence contributed 12 points, and Belcher and Garner scored 10 apiece.

The Huskers play host to Missouri on Saturday night at 8:30 before facing six of eight foes away from Lincoln.

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