

Sports Opinion



Gregg Madsen

Future looks brighter for NU gymnasts

Nebraska Women's Gymnastics Coach Dan Kendig didn't expect his team to start out the season like it has.

But Kendig isn't complaining about his team's first showing either.

After getting little respect with a No. 9 preseason ranking, the Cornhuskers jumped to fifth this week — the highest ranking ever for the team this early in the season.

The Huskers' 193.675-point performance at Iowa State is the highest first-meet score in NU history, and it was the exact opposite of what Kendig expected.

"We were trying to shoot for a 192," Kendig said. "Honestly, I thought it was a pleasant surprise."

In last season's opener, also in Ames, Nebraska managed a mediocre 189.775. But by the end of the 1996 season, the Huskers had improved their overall team score by six points to a school-record 195.75.

If NU can manage half of last year's improvement this season, it should be in great shape to qualify for the school's first Super Six appearance at the NCAA's in Gainesville, Fla., April 17.

Kendig said he is optimistic about his team's chances to reach the NCAA finals. In 1996, the Huskers just missed qualifying for the Super Six by .025 of a point.

Assistant Coach Rob Drass said missing the finals last season serves as motivation.

"It's like we're on a quest."

One thing that should help NU attain success is a difficult schedule. Of the 18 teams the Huskers face this season, five were among the 12 qualifiers for the 1996 NCAA Championships.

Nebraska will face Michigan, Oregon State, Arizona and pre-season No. 1 UCLA on the road.

"If we can go and beat an Arizona or an Oregon State, or even push UCLA, then we'll be where we want to be," Drass said.

But the schedule doesn't mean much without talent, and the Huskers have plenty of that.

Seniors Shelly Bartlett and Kim DeHaan will provide consistent leadership and scoring.

Complementing Bartlett and DeHaan will be five sophomores who gained experience last season.

Courtney Brown, Amie Dillman, Laurie McLaughlin, Misty Oxford and Jess Swift will be the backbone of this year's Husker lineup, Drass said.

All the factors add up to a squad that could become the best ever at NU. Only time will tell, but if the first meet of the season is any indication, the Huskers could be headed toward a trip to the Super Six.

Madsen is a junior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan staff reporter.



MATT MILLER/DN

LARRY FLORENCE (left) and Venson Hamilton battle Kansas State's Mark Young for the ball. Florence scored 12 points and Hamilton added 10 in NU's 87-77 come-from-behind overtime win.

Convention finally gets the job done

NCAA Convention

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — For years, the NCAA has taken a beating from critics as well as its own members. Kooky rules, paranoia, cheating. Too much bureaucracy.

Even NCAA Executive Director Cedric Dempsey scolded the members, asking them to get their act together at the 91st NCAA Convention.

By Tuesday, when the convention came to a close, the NCAA's stuffy old image seemed to give way to a wave of optimism, punctuated by several historic decisions — like allowing athletes to work part time and granting a fourth year of eligibility to partial qualifiers.

"Have you ever seen a convention like this?" outgoing NCAA President Gene Corrigan asked. "You never want to think you have a pat hand going into anything. Sure, there was a little contention here, a little contention there, but I think we settled everything."

For once this much maligned group did.

From restructuring the way the NCAA conducts business — no longer will there be a one-school, one-vote mentality when it comes to the big powers — to giving athletes a chance

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Cats can't match NU's second half

Lue hits for 29 in the Huskers' second straight league win.

Kansas St.	77
Nebraska	87

said NU senior Mikki Moore, one of seven players — including three Huskers — to foul out of the contest. "It just shows that we don't give up. This team has heart, and we want to win."

"We didn't have any doubts." All doubts aside, NU's hopes looked grim after the first 20 minutes. Kansas State (7-6 and 0-3) led the Huskers 48-30, shooting 52 percent to NU's 33 and out-rebounding the taller Huskers 26-15.

Nebraska's gigantic comeback began on the defensive end, where the Huskers used a 1-3-1 trapping zone to scramble the Wildcats' offensive game plan.

"Give them credit," said KSU Coach Tom Asbury, whose team had lost its three previous road games by 114 points. "They made a change at halftime that really bothered us. We just couldn't get shots. We were conservative and we stopped attacking."

At the offensive end, Nebraska also stepped up its intensity, looking once again to point guard Tyrone Lue, who delivered 29 points for the second straight game. The 6-foot sophomore also recorded six assists and six steals.

The Huskers held KSU to two field

Please see MEN on 10

BY MITCH SHERMAN
Senior Reporter

Down 18 points at halftime and beaten in every aspect of the game, the Nebraska basketball team could have hardly been blamed for throwing in the towel on Wednesday night.

But the cardiac Cornhuskers refused to lose focus and managed to chip away at Kansas State's seemingly insurmountable advantage in a game as two-faced as any NU Coach Danny Nee can remember.

By the final minute of regulation, Nebraska finally tied the game at 72, forcing overtime and eventually forging an 87-77 win before 10,019 fans at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

"A lot of guys would have folded and went home down 18, 19 points," Nee said. "But my guys never panicked and found a way to win."

Nebraska (10-5 overall and 2-1 in the Big 12 Conference) won its third consecutive game and second straight in the conference, out-scoring Kansas State 57-29 after the first half.

"Basically everybody started balling like they were supposed to ball,"

Nebraska defense smothers Wildcats

BY JAY SAUNDERS
Staff Reporter

Just when it looked as if the Nebraska women's basketball team was going to lose its second straight home conference game, the Cornhuskers relied on its defense to stop Kansas State.

Although being out-rebounded and out-shot NU avoided a disaster beating the Wildcats 53-47 in front of 3,200 fans at the Bob Devaney Sports Center Wednesday night.

The Huskers were out-rebounded 38-32, but the NU defense came through forcing 33 KSU turnovers. The Wildcats, who average 19 turnovers a game had 20 in the second half.

Nebraska turned the ball over 20 times, but forced Kansas State into a season-high for turnovers.

Coach Angela Beck said the defense was the backbone of the victory.

"Our defense was real critical down the stretch," Beck said. "I thought the effort was there and we had a couple of good skills."

Although the Huskers (12-1, 2-1 in the conference) only shot 40 percent from the field, senior Anna DeForge sparked the offense making 6 of 12 shots from the field for a game-high 15 points. DeForge



MATT MILLER/DN

ANNA DeFORGE dribbles around Andria Jones in NU's 53-47 win Wednesday night.

Kansas St.	47
Nebraska	53

also grabbed a game-high 12 rebounds.

Despite her performance, DeForge credited the win to her teammates.

"I didn't have the best game tonight," DeForge who averages 14.5

Please see WOMEN on 11

New rule pleases NU's Allen

NCAA legislation supports Olympic sports.

BY GREGG MADSEN
Staff Reporter

With the approval of legislation that promises the NCAA will financially back all Olympic sports, one Nebraska athletic program can breathe a big sigh of relief.

Tuesday, the final day of the NCAA Convention in Nashville, Tenn., delegates passed a bill that ensures the preservation of several collegiate sports like men's gymnastics, lacrosse and water polo that were on the verge of extinction.

For the Nebraska men's gymnastics team, the legislation means a somewhat secure future for a sport that has won eight national championships.

Nebraska senior men's gymnast Ted Harris, who served as a representative on the Student Athletic Advisory



Allen

Please see NCAA on 10