

# Sports

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## NU blasts Tigers, improves to 11-5

By MITCH SHERMAN  
Senior Reporter

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ESPN.

If only they all could be this easy. The Nebraska basketball team slaughtered Missouri 76-53 Saturday night, finishing a perfect four-game home-stand in which the Cornhuskers hope they set the tone for an imposing portion of the Big 12 Conference season on the horizon.

"We thought if we were going to have a decent year, we were going to have to win some home games," NU Coach Danny Nee said after the Huskers handed the Tigers their worst loss of the season before a crowd of 13,159 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center and a national-television audience on

"Two weeks ago, we were looking at four big games, and we didn't take any of them for granted. But I felt we got stronger as we went along."

Saturday night, Nee said, Nebraska (11-5 and 3-1 in the Big 12) turned in its strongest performance of the season, out-scoring MU 53-19 during one stretch and holding the Tigers to a 27.4 field-goal percentage.

Suddenly, the Huskers appear poised to make their presence felt in a league turned upside down by Colorado, which handed Nebraska its only

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SCOTT BRUHN/DN

LARRY FLORENCE goes up for a tip as Missouri's Tyron Lee defends in NU's 76-53 win on Saturday.

## DeForge's big day propels Huskers

By MIKE KLUCK  
Senior Reporter

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secutive game.

COLUMBIA, Mo. — Nebraska used a slumping Missouri women's basketball team to help pull some of its players out of a midseason funk.

Four Cornhuskers got on track with a combination of season, career and school-best performances in the 82-66 win over the Tigers before a crowd of 1,400 at the Hearn Center.

NU improved to 13-1 overall and 3-1 in the Big 12 Conference. The Huskers are tied for the North Division lead with Colorado, and will play Missouri again Wednesday night at the Bob Devaney Sports Center. The Tigers (6-11, 0-5) lost their seventh con-

Forward Anna DeForge scored a career-best 31 points to lead the Huskers to their fourth straight win.

Although suffering from a cold, DeForge, a 5-foot-11 junior from Niagara, Wis., scored 21 of the Huskers' 45 first-half points.

Her previous high was 29 points earlier this season against Southwest Texas State. DeForge scored her 30th and 31st point on a layup with 1:04 left in the game.

"I have to credit my points to my teammates because they were laying

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## Texas line coach joins NU's staff

Nelson Barnes is hired as the Nebraska's rush ends coach.

By MIKE KLUCK  
Senior Reporter

Ever since Turner Gill returned to Nebraska five years ago as full-time assistant coach he has looked forward to the opportunity to work with Nelson Barnes again.

They will get the chance after Barnes was hired to coach NU's rush ends Friday afternoon. Barnes, who spent three seasons as the defensive line coach at Texas, fills the vacancy left by Tony Samuel's departure to New Mexico State.

Gill and Barnes became friends while they were both coaching at North Texas in 1989. After that season Gill returned to Nebraska as a graduate assistant and eventually became the quarterbacks coach in 1992.

"We've been good friends ever since we worked together at North Texas," Gill said. "Our faith and Christianity have kept us close friends. We kept in contact with each other throughout the years."

During the past few years Gill said he and Barnes have talked about Barnes possibly coaching at Nebraska. But since Barnes, a native of Alvin, Texas, became the Longhorns' defensive line he kept telling Gill he would probably stay at Texas.

"We even talked at the beginning of this year and I told him you never know what will happen," Gill said. "But he said he would probably remain at UT because he was close to his family."

After Samuel's departure, Gill said Nebraska interviewed three candidates who didn't work out. He talked with Barnes again and this time the 38-year-old said he was interested.

"Nebraska, from his perspective, is a step to one of the best programs in the country," Gill said. "He has always admired Nebraska and couldn't pass up on the opportunity to coach with one of the best coaches around the country. At this particular time in his career, as a coach, this is the right move for him to do."



DANIEL LUEDERT/DN

NEBRASKA 118-POUNDER Darin Giese wrestles Iowa's Jessie Whitmer Saturday during the National Duals.

## NU happy with seventh

### Husker wrestlers go 3-2 over the weekend at National Duals.

By SAM MCKEON  
Staff Reporter

It was an up and down weekend for the Nebraska wrestling team as the Cornhuskers finished seventh in the Cliff Keen National Duals.

NU, ranked 13th in the nation, defeated Big 12 Conference rival Oklahoma 22-12 in the seventh-place match Sunday afternoon at the NU Coliseum to finish 3-2 for the weekend. Oklahoma State won the duals with a 21-13 victory over top-rated Iowa.

Minnesota finished third, Penn State fourth, Michigan State fifth and Iowa State finished sixth in the final duals in Lincoln.

Coach Tim Neumann said he was pleased with how NU responded throughout the weekend.

"We wrestled a lot sharper in our last matches than we did in our first few," Neumann said. "I think we made some improvement as the tournament went on."

The duals were filled with numerous highs and lows for NU.

High: Nebraska winning its opening dual against 21st-ranked North Carolina. Heavyweight Tolly Thompson, ranked fourth in the country, defeated rival and No. 2 Justin Hartly to help NU win the dual 19-16. Thompson will likely move ahead of Hartly — who beat Thompson at last year's NCAA's — in the rankings.

Low: A 40-3 pasting at the hands of Iowa, in which three NU wrestlers got pinned, and Nebraska went into the heavyweight match before winning any points.

"We should never lose by 37 points," Thompson said. "They just completely took the wind out of our sails."

High: Eliminating 16th-ranked Fresno State with a 24-12 victory Saturday. The Huskers won five of the last six matches to beat the Bulldogs.

Low: NU lost its fourth dual 22-10 to No. 4 Penn State, but the dual was more significant for Thompson. He lost 3-1 to the nation's top-ranked heavyweight Kerry McCoy in overtime.

"I relaxed a little bit at the edge of the mat, and he got me," Thompson said. "I actually think we're pretty even."

High: Sunday, against Oklahoma, the Huskers fell behind 12-6, but rallied with 16 points in the last four matches — including a forfeit at 190 — to win 22-12.

"I thought we fought back well against Oklahoma," Neumann said. "Sophomore Monte Christensen at 167, and freshman Charles McCorty at 177 really arrived and did a great job."

Nebraska (9-4) has a distant chance to move into the top 10 after the weekend, but 134-pound junior Brad Canoyer said the Huskers are not at the level of Iowa or Oklahoma State yet.

"We're getting a lot better," he said, "but there's still one more step to go, and we've got to take it."

## Oklahoma lineman commits

By DAVID WILSON  
Staff Reporter

Jon Rutherford, a lineman from Midwest City, Okla., has become the 19th player to accept a scholarship to play football at Nebraska.

The 6-foot-4, 265-pounder helped Midwest City High School win two state championships in Oklahoma's largest class.

Midwest City went undefeated in 1994 and 1995 before losing in the championship game to Jenks High School 28-17 last season.

Rutherford, who has qualified academically, finished with a 39-3 record in his high school career — experiencing all three losses last season — two of which he missed with a stress fracture in his right knee.

Rutherford visited Nebraska on Jan. 10. He was impressed.

"It was 100 times better than I thought it would be, and I heard it was real good," Rutherford said.

A visit to the Rutherford home by Coach Tom Osborne last Tuesday played a major role in his decision. He chose NU over Colorado, Oklahoma, Baylor and Miami.

Midwest City Coach Brian Vaverka said Rutherford, who runs a 4.9-second 40-yard dash, is agile for his size. But he controls his opponents with raw power, his coach said.

"He's very physical," Vaverka said. "If he gets on you, he's got you."

Rutherford was one of three players from his school recruited by NU.

Offensive lineman DeVane Robinson said he committed to Kansas State on Friday. Running Back Eric Gooden was unavailable for comment Sunday night.

In other recruiting news, defensive back Brandon Harrison may be close to a decision. Harrison, from Gainesville, Texas, played in 1995 at Blinn (Texas) Junior College. The 5-11, 180-pounder, is also considering Texas A&M, and currently attends Garden City (Kan.) Community College.

He visited Lincoln last weekend, and Osborne, along with Assistant Turner Gill, will visit his parents in Gainesville this afternoon, Harrison's mother, Deloris Harrison, said Sunday.