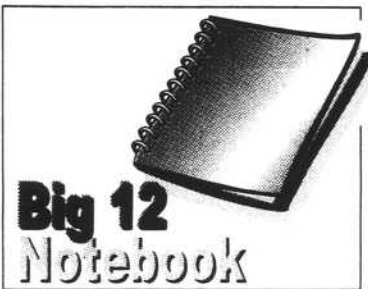


# Sports

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1996

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The Nebraska men's basketball team had a helping hand in the two players who earned Big 12 Conference player-of-the-week honors.

Colorado's Chauncey Billups was named Big 12 player of the week after a career-high 35 points in CU's 79-72 loss at Nebraska Wednesday.

Texas Tech's Rayford Young, who started the first game of his college career against the Cornhuskers Saturday, was named rookie of the week. The Red Raider freshman scored nine points, dished out eight assists and had five steals. Young's five steals were a season-high for Tech this season.

Colorado Coach Ricardo Patton's name has been linked to the coaching vacancy at Memphis. Patton was an assistant coach at Tennessee State in Nashville, Tenn., and Middle Tennessee State in Murfreesboro, Tenn., and is familiar with the Memphis program.

When Patton was asked Monday about being contacted by the Tiger program to fill the spot that opens when Larry Finch leaves at the end of the year, he responded, "no comment."

Tickets for the first-ever Big 12 Conference women's basketball tournament are on sale now. Tickets for the March 4 through 8 tournament at Kansas City's Municipal Auditorium will be sold in all-sessions form with a cost of \$42 and \$30.

Kansas State picked up its first-ever Big 12 Conference win with a 67-63 win over Oklahoma Saturday. KSU had lost 10 straight and nine consecutive conference games until defeating the Sooners.

Nebraska's game with Northern Iowa concludes the Big 12 non-conference basketball schedule. The conference stands at 101-32 in non-conference games this season, good for a winning percentage of 75.9. The Northern Iowa game was rescheduled from December 14th, because the Panthers were trying to play host to a Division I-A football playoff game.

In the men's basketball Associated Press top 25 poll, Kansas (23-1 and 9-1 in the Big 12) remained No. 1 despite losing at Missouri last week. The Jayhawks lost four of their first-place votes to Minnesota, which is ranked third. Iowa State (16-4 and 7-3) fell to ninth following its loss at the Hilton Coliseum to KU Sunday afternoon. Colorado (17-5, 8-2) remained No. 15, while Texas Tech (14-6, 6-4) moved up from 23rd to No. 21.

Big 12 notebook was compiled by staff reporter Peter Marhofer.

## Huskers lose ugly at KSU

NU shoots season-low 33.9 percent in dismal loss to Wildcats.

By MITCH SHERMAN  
Senior Reporter

MANHATTAN, Kan. — Ugh. Little else better describes Nebraska's 61-53 loss to Kansas State Monday night in a basketball game marred by 67 missed shots and 33 turnovers.

"If we would have played up to our potential, I think we could have won pretty easily," NU forward Andy

Markowski said after the game, played before a sparse crowd of 8,132 at Bramlage Coliseum.

"We've got a goal to go the NCAA Tournament, and we thought we had to pick up a win here."

Nebraska's goal and its season appear to be fading quickly. By losing for the sixth time in seven games — and for the 11th straight time in league play on the road — the

Cornhuskers fell to 12-11 overall and 4-7 in the Big 12 Conference.

"I just think it's our attitude coming into the game," Husker guard Cookie Belcher said. "There's a lot of things going on outside the game. We can't bring that on the court."

Two long lapses killed NU on Monday night. Leading 14-8 after a Venson Hamilton dunk eight minutes into the game, the Huskers failed to score for 8 minutes, 26 seconds, surrendering 16 straight KSU points and falling in a 24-14 hole.

"I thought it boiled down to execution," NU Coach Danny Nee said. "Nebraska didn't execute well enough to win. I didn't think we were ready in

Nebraska	53
Kansas St.	61

any aspect of the game."

Despite a 7-of-25 first-half shooting performance, the Huskers trailed only 30-26 at intermission following a 12-6 NU run in the last four minutes.

Kansas State (9-12 and 2-9) won for the second straight time after a 10-game skid, using an effective zone defense to force Nebraska into low-percentage shots.

NU fired a season-high 19 3-point attempts, but sank only three, and the

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Belcher

## Finally, NU cracks rankings

By SHANNON HEFFELFINGER  
Staff Reporter

Late in the season, every victory grows in importance for the Nebraska women's basketball team as it attempts to win the first-ever Big 12 Conference title.

But as the Cornhuskers (17-3 overall and 7-3 in the Big 12) have learned, it takes "quality" wins to gain respect on the national level.

With NU's 62-57 upset over then-No. 14 Texas Tech Sunday at the Bob Devaney Sports Center, the Huskers helped both causes.

Their second win over a "quality" team — the first since the 73-67 win Dec. 8 over then ninth-ranked Iowa — the Huskers have been rewarded Monday with a No. 23 ranking in The Associated Press top 25 poll. Tech dropped two spots to 16th.

It is NU's fifth top 25 appearance in school history, and its second this season. Nebraska was ranked 25th for two weeks in late December.

After watching the Huskers hassle her team into 19 turnovers and 35-percent shooting, Tech Coach Marsha Sharp said NU's position in the poll is justified.

"There isn't any question that they're a top 25 team," Sharp said. "They've proven that all year. I've put them there since November."

Additionally, the Huskers, who previously shared second place in the league with Tech, now stand alone at 7-3, but in fourth place. No. 11 Texas, 14th-ranked Kansas and Colorado share the conference lead at 8-2. The top four teams in the league earn first-round byes in the league tournament.

NU forward Anna DeForge said the Huskers' win over the Red Raiders puts them in position to challenge those three teams for the conference crown.

"It is a huge win for our program to beat a team of that caliber and tradition," DeForge said. "It puts us a step ahead in the conference."

With three teams tied for the top spot, and Nebraska a game out heading into the final two weeks of conference play, a slip-up could cost any team its shot at the title.



MATT MILLER/DN

ANNA DeFORGE drives against Texas Tech's Rene Hanebutt in Sunday's game. After beating the Red Raiders 62-57, NU earned a spot in The Associated Press top 25.

The first season in the Big 12 has been eventful, with upsets frequently occurring. Texas and Colorado have lost to Kansas State and Oklahoma State, and 11th-place Missouri gained only its second league win by defeating the Jayhawks last Wednesday.

Nebraska has lost to co-league leader Colorado twice and lost to Kansas at home last week. NU travels to Kansas and Texas in the next two weeks. The Huskers are capable of defeating both teams, Sharp said.

Sharp, who guided Tech to a 23-point blow out against Texas last week, said NU is on the same level as the league leaders.

"Both teams (Texas and NU) push the ball hard but Nebraska is much better defensively," Sharp said. "They are different types of teams. Defense is where they make their living. They made us do things we don't normally do."

By taking advantage of a successful defensive effort to post its 17th victory, NU put itself on the fast track to a 20-win season. NU Coach Angela Beck said recording 20 wins might be a determining factor in NU earning its fourth-ever NCAA Tournament bid.

Nebraska has had only seven

## Women's AP Top 25

Team	Rec.	Prev.
1. Connecticut (37)	22-0	1
2. Old Dominion (3)	21-1	2
3. Stanford (1)	23-1	3
4. Louisiana Tech	21-2	4
5. North Carolina	20-1	5
6. Georgia	18-4	6
7. Alabama	19-4	7
8. Tennessee	18-7	9
9. Virginia	18-4	10
10. Florida	17-5	13
11. Texas	15-7	8
12. Vanderbilt	16-6	16
13. LSU	19-2	11
14. Kansas	17-4	12
15. Illinois	18-4	18
16. Texas Tech	14-6	14
17. Notre Dame	20-5	15
18. Duke	16-6	20
19. Stephen F. Austin	20-3	21
20. Michigan St.	18-4	24
21. Arkansas	15-7	17
22. Clemson	15-7	19
23. Nebraska	17-3	-
24. George Washington	17-4	-
25. Tulane	19-3	-

20-win seasons since the program began in 1974.

"Seventeen this early is sweet," Beck said. "If we get 20 wins, it's going to be hard to keep us out. A lot depends on the conference race. If we can stay in the top four, I think we have a legitimate shot."

## Fast group strengthens soccer team

Walker says three signees and walk-on are great additions.

By VINCE D'ADAMO  
Staff Reporter

The fruits of a 23-1 season have paid dividends for the Nebraska soccer program.

NU Coach John Walker said after landing three quality recruits and one walk-on that NU has a good chance to continue its newfound winning ways.



Walker

The Cornhuskers inked Karina LeBlanc, a 5-foot-9 goalkeeper from Maple Ridge, British Columbia, Julie Greco, a 5-2 striker/midfielder from Omaha Marian, and Christine Gluck, a 5-5 midfielder from Chino, Calif., last week to national letters of intent. Sara McCrea, a defender from Las Vegas will walk on to the soccer team in the fall.

Walker struck gold with last season's recruiting class of Lindsay Eddleman, Isabelle Morneau, Jenny Benson and Sharolta Nonen, all of whom played vital roles during NU's 23-1 season.

But Walker is quick to point out that last season's class came to NU under a different situation.

"Last year we needed our freshmen to contribute for us to become nationally prominent," Walker said. "We're looking for this year's class to add depth."

LeBlanc was the starting goalkeeper for the Golden Ears Royals, an under-19 club team. Greco helped lead Omaha Marian to the 1996 state championship and was also a player on the Gladiator El Pique club team.

Gluck was one of the top players in California in 1996 during her career at Don Lugo High School and with the Southern California Blues club team. Walker described Gluck as a player with a blue-collar work ethic.

Walker said this year's class is

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