

Sports Opinion



Gregg Madson

School record NU's latest feat under Kendig

When the Nebraska women's gymnastics team knocked off No. 5 Arizona State 196.62-195.6 on Sunday, the seventh-ranked Cornhuskers didn't just demolish the old overall score team record by almost a point and run their record to 11-1.

They proved that Nebraska women's gymnastics has arrived as a legitimate national title contender.

Coach Dan Kendig said the new school record is an important milestone for the Huskers.

"There for a while, like three years ago, we were scoring in the 192s and we wanted to get into the 193s," Kendig said. "It was the same way when we went 195 last year. It's just kind of like a wall you have to break down, and when you do, it's like 'wow, we can do that.'"

How much have the Huskers improved in the past three years? Consider NU's first-place score in the 1995 Master's Classic was a 192.05.

In 1995, the Huskers set a school record of 194.725 at the NCAA Midwest Regional. This season, the team average is 194.837 per meet.

NU has also scored the third and fourth highest team marks in school history this season — a 195.575 at Michigan and a 195.45 at Southeast Missouri State.

Kendig has guided Nebraska to a new level in his four years as coach. He has earned conference coach-of-the-year honors in each of the last three seasons to back that up.

The scary thing is that NU's scores are only going to get better.

The Huskers have reached their lofty scores this season despite injuries that continue to plague key performers.

Senior Kim DeHaan has endured a back injury throughout the season. Despite the pain, DeHaan has consistently scored 9.9 or better on the floor exercise and the uneven bars.

Sophomore Courtney Brown has struggled to recover from a stress fracture in her lower leg.

But one score does not make a national champion, and Kendig is the first to admit that.

"Obviously, scores aren't everything," he said. "All you can do is make your performance improve from week to week."

The Huskers see ASU again at the NCAA Midwest Regional in Salt Lake City on April 5, along with 10-time national champion and current No. 3 Utah.

"We've got to keep working to stay with them and hopefully get to a point where it's above and beyond Arizona State and Utah," Kendig said. "We've got some people ahead of us that are going to keep us fighting and working."

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

KU's other guard rips Huskers apart

Halbleib's 28 points offsets a 23-point effort by DeForge.

By **MIKE KLUCK**
Senior Reporter

LAWRENCE, Kan. — The Nebraska women's basketball team has had success this season containing Kansas All-American point guard Tamecka Dixon.

It's stopping the other Jayhawk player who steps up when Dixon struggles against the Cornhuskers that NU has had the most trouble with.

On Wednesday night in KU's rustic Allen Fieldhouse, Jayhawk senior Angie Halbleib — who said she hasn't

been shooting the ball well recently — scored 28 points to pace No. 8 Kansas (22-4 overall and 13-2 in the Big 12 Conference) to a 66-58 come-from-behind victory over NU.

The win secured the first-ever Big 12 regular season championship for the Jayhawks in front of a sparse crowd of 1,648 fans.

Halbleib's 28 points, one shy of her career-best 29 she scored Nov. 24, 1996, against Cal-Santa Barbara, has been struggling. In the past 12 games, the 5-foot-10 senior guard from

Middleton, Wis., averaged just 7.4 points — three fewer than her average of 10.9 points per game.

In NU's first game against Kansas, a 67-59 loss at the Bob Devaney Sports Center on Feb. 2, freshman guard Lynn Pride stepped up for KU to score a career-high 18 points.

"They are a guard-oriented team," NU Coach Angela Beck said. "Halbleib and Dixon are a big part of their offense. Halbleib has not had a great year shooting, and I knew if she got a couple down, she would get her confidence up, and she did."

Halbleib's 19-point outburst in the second half almost single-handedly brought the Jayhawks back from an 8-point halftime deficit. During a 12-2 run that gave KU its first lead of the second half, Halbleib — who cel-

Nebraska	58
Kansas	66

brated her 22nd birthday in style Wednesday night — scored eight points.

After forging ahead 47-45 with 9:06 left in the game, Kansas never looked back.

"I was really surprised at times that they left me open," Halbleib said. "Then my teammates got me the ball. I knew with Tamecka's knee I would have to step up my offense."

Halbleib started another run that slammed the door shut on any Nebraska comeback hopes.

After Anna DeForge made a basket to cut KU's lead to 52-50 with 6:26

Please see **KANSAS** on 8



ANDY MARKOWSKI defends Oklahoma State's **Adrian Peterson** as the Cowboy guard shoots during Nebraska's 77-68 win Wednesday.

NU erases slow start to win by 9

Piatkowski provides Nebraska with a needed spark off the bench.

By **MITCH SHERMAN**
Senior Reporter

Bruised and battered but still breathing, the Nebraska basketball team emerged victorious from the Bob Devaney Sports Center Wednesday night, clinging to renewed hope and braced for its biggest battle in at least three years.

The Cornhuskers (16-12 overall and 7-8 in the Big 12 Conference) used a ferocious second half to pull away from Oklahoma

Oklahoma St.	68
Nebraska	77

State, out-muscling a physical group of Cowboys in the final 20 minutes.

Nebraska's 77-68 win, its fourth in five games, sets the stage for Sunday, when No. 1 Kansas visits Lincoln with NCAA-Tournament implications hanging in the balance. But for the first 20 minutes Wednesday, NU appeared headed for a meaningless Sunday.

The Pokes (14-13 and 6-9) clawed their way to a 40-30 lead at the break, out-rebounding the much taller Huskers 20-11 and shooting 50 percent from the field, including 4 of 4 from 3-point range.

"We couldn't keep them off the glass," Nebraska Coach Danny Ne said after his team improved to 12-2 at home before a crowd of 11,414. "Oklahoma State did about what we thought they were going to do."

Behind an effective box-and-one

Please see **OSU** on 8

Terry, Tobin use year to mature

By **SAM MCKEWON**
Staff Reporter

Two Nebraska wrestlers have found that sitting out is hard to do.

Three years into their brilliant careers, Ryan Tobin and Temoer Terry both decided to take a year off from NCAA competition and redshirt this season. The reason: to prepare for their senior year and a better-than-average shot at winning the national title in 1998.

Terry and Tobin both finished third at the NCAA championships in 1996. Terry — owner of an 81-22 career record — compiled a 25-3 record at 158 pounds while Tobin — who is 82-45 at NU — went 33-9 wrestling at 190.

After three seasons at NU, Terry and Tobin were both approached about

the idea to redshirt.

Coach Tim Neumann said a redshirt year for Terry and Tobin will make the duo's skills much better.

"Most of all it is just physical maturity," Neumann said. "They both would have been great this year, but next year, they'll be all that much better and strong."

Since redshirting in the fall, Terry and Tobin have taken different paths in the last 10 months.

Tobin, a native of Brandon, S.D., has excelled in his year off.

He has won five open tournaments, including the Sunkist Invitational, a meet against international competition in Arizona. There Tobin also beat the nation's fourth-ranked heavyweight, Jason Lakitis of Edinboro College, 7-2 in Arizona.

"It was easier because you don't have any expectations," Tobin said.

"There was some great competition there."

Tobin said it has been hard at times to just work out with the team and sit out of the meets.

"Sometimes you want to go out there and wrestle," Tobin said, "but it's easier to do knowing you still have a season left."

Terry's redshirt year has been an exact opposite.

Terry, from McPherson, Kan., injured his shoulder at the NCAA Championships last March in his semifinal match against Illinois' Ernest Benion. Terry went on to finish third, but has not wrestled since. He had surgery in August, ending his senior season.

Terry said the rehabilitation hasn't always been easy.

"Initially I wanted to redshirt to progress, but then it became an issue of healing my shoulder," he said.

"Even after I came back I limited for a while. Only recently have I been able to do any real work."

Once the two are back on the mat, their focus turns toward winning an individual NCAA title.

"I think I'm going to win it," Tobin said. "I've put the time in and I'm ready."

"I will be disappointed with anything less," Terry said. "I want a national title."

Note:

The No. 8 Nebraska wrestling team faces Oklahoma in Norman tonight at 7:30. The Huskers (15-4) beat OU 22-12 at the Cliff Keen National Duals in January.

Both teams are hot as NU has won eight straight duals while the Sooners have won five of their last six.