

# Sports

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## Sports Opinion



**Mike Kluck**

### Young players a key to success throughout year

There is no such term as true freshman or first-year player when it comes to the March Madness of college basketball.

By this time of the year those terms to describe young players are long gone and the athletes who were stumbling and bumbling for an identity at the beginning of the year have now grown by leaps and bounds.

At this point in the season, the players might be called developmental, prospects, hope for the future or even young, but they all must prove their worth on the court.

"I don't consider myself a freshman," freshman Brooke Schwartz said. "At this point in the year, I think, you're a player. There's no such thing as seniors or freshmen."

This weekend starts a month-long fantasy called March Madness, which every basketball-crazed fan has been looking forward to since November.

This year, surprisingly enough, both the Nebraska men's and women's basketball teams are on the verge of making this particular March memorable for Husker fans.

How long Nebraska's dance card is full in March will largely be determined by the play of freshmen — or as they are called now, players — who stepped onto the Bob Devaney Sports Center floor for the first time four months ago.

Nebraska Coach Angela Beck has played all four of her freshman this year. Schwartz, Charlie Rogers, Nicole Kubik and Cisco Gilmore have played together at the same time growing up and together this season.

The freshmen of the Huskers have been contributing more than 30 percent of the scoring and all but Gilmore has seen a spot in the starting lineup.

Men's coach Danny Nee faced a similar situation this season starting true freshmen Cookie Belcher in every game.

Nee has also used sophomore first-year players Larry Florence, — who has started all but one game — Alvin Mitchell and Troy Piatkowski considerably throughout the season.

And just like the women's team, these young players have produced this season. In December, two free throws by Schwartz iced a win over then-No. 9 Iowa. On Wednesday night, Piatkowski looked like the Polish Rifle scoring career-high 11 points to help the Huskers beat Oklahoma State.

This weekend both teams need wins to help make it into the NCAA Tournament and both teams need these players to make strong contributions.

It's time they show they have passed Basketball 101 this season.

Kluck is a journalism graduate student and a Daily Nebraskan senior reporter.

## Beck happy to end February

After a 2-6 month, Huskers hope March brings a win.

By **MIKE KLUCK**  
Senior Reporter

The Nebraska women's basketball team walked off the court of Hilton Coliseum in Ames, Iowa, with its heads held high after handing Iowa State its worst home loss of the season.

The 76-52 win over the Cyclones on Jan. 30 was the Cornhuskers' 16th of year, ninth

straight and left them one game out of first place in the Big 12 Conference — still in the hunt for the league title and a berth in the NCAA Tournament.

But Nebraska Coach Angela Beck knew what February had in store for her young Huskers — four games against teams ranked in the top 25 and four games on the road.

Beck's fears came true as the

Huskers went 2-6 during February to fall to 18-7 overall and 8-7 in the league. The fall has dropped the Huskers to seventh in the conference race and in a precariously close position to not receiving an NCAA bid.

But that was February and now the calendar turns a new page.

Saturday's regular-season-ending game against Oklahoma State (14-11 and 6-9) at Stillwater, Okla., at 2 p.m. begins a month that Beck believes the Huskers need at least one more win to earn an at-large bid to the NCAA Tournament.

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**Beck**

## Women's Basketball Starters

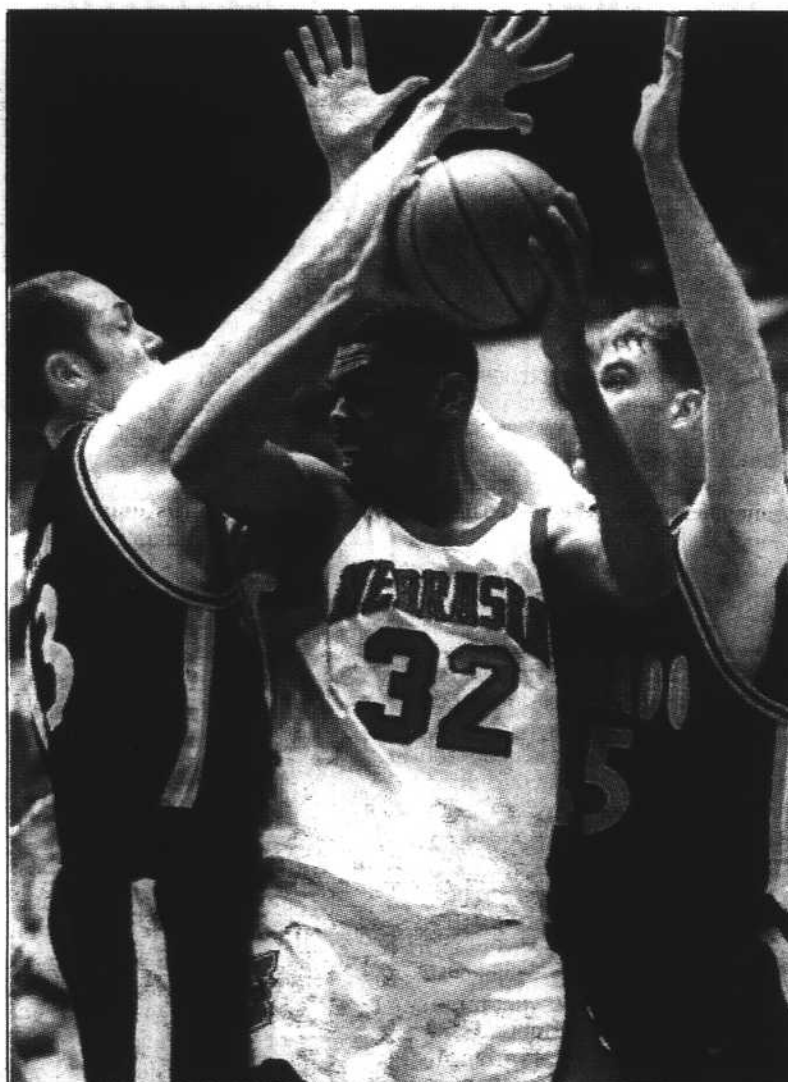
Saturday, 2 p.m.  
Gallagher-Iba Arena  
Stillwater, Okla.

### Nebraska 18-7 (8-7)

Pos	Name	Ht.	Yr.
F	22 Tina McClain	5-10	Sr.
F	30 Anna DeForge	5-11	Jr.
C	33 Charlie Rogers	6-2	Fr.
G	24 Jami Kubik	5-11	Jr.
G	20 LaToya Doage	5-6	Sr.

### Oklahoma St. 14-11 (6-9)

Pos	Name	Ht.	Yr.
F	24 Renee Roberts	5-10	Jr.
F	32 Cheri Edwards	6-2	Jr.
C	50 Kelly Folsom	6-2	Sr.
G	10 Kourtney Bower	5-7	So.
G	12 Sarah Boyd	5-9	Jr.



MATT MILLER/DN

**MIKKI MOORE** battles a pair of Colorado defenders earlier this season. **Moore and Bernard Garner** will be honored before Sunday's 2:47 p.m. meeting with No. 1 Kansas.

## Nee expects 'electric zoo' to greet KU

A win Sunday assures Nebraska of a No. 7 seed in Kansas City.

in the NCAA Tournament. A loss Sunday sends NU to Kansas City likely in need of four wins in four days to crack the NCAA selection committee's top 64.

By **MITCH SHERMAN**  
Senior Reporter

The big one is here. Nebraska lays its basketball season on the line Sunday afternoon at the sold-out Bob Devaney Sports Center, playing host to top-ranked Kansas at 2:47 p.m.

A win earns the Cornhuskers the No. 7 seed in the Big 12 Conference Tournament next week in Kansas City and the inside track to a spot



**Nee**

"There's so many things that could happen," Nebraska Coach Danny Nee said. "But a win over the No. 1 team would pretty well put us up there."

NU enters Sunday's game — perhaps the most important contest at the Devaney Center in three years — playing its best basketball of the season. Winners of four of their last five games, the Huskers (16-12 overall and 7-8 in the Big 12) dominated Oklahoma State in the second half Wednesday, committing a season-low nine turnovers in a 77-68 win.

Turnovers plagued Nebraska in an 82-77 overtime loss at Kansas on Feb. 1. The Huskers lost the ball a season-high 28 times, and point guard Tyrone Lue, despite scoring 26 points, ac-

Please see **KANSAS** on 11

## NU enters dual without two stars

By **GREGG MADSEN**  
Staff Reporter

Just when the Nebraska women's gymnastics team thought things couldn't get any better, things got worse.

After breaking the 196-point barrier last Sunday for the first time in school history at the Master's Classic, the sixth-ranked Cornhuskers (11-1) hit a wall on Thursday when it was determined that freshman Laura Ohlendorf has a broken her right foot.

Nebraska Coach Dan Kendig said the loss of Ohlendorf makes Saturday's 2 p.m. meet with Iowa State at the Bob Devaney Sports Center much more difficult to win.

"It hurts us a lot," Kendig said. "We lose a bar and a beam girl with Laura. And she's not just a bar and beam girl — she's one that's been hitting her routine every week."

Kendig said Ohlendorf — who had been competing on a sore foot the past few weeks — will be out for four to six weeks.

Sophomore Jess Swift will most likely replace Ohlendorf on the balance beam and the uneven bars.

Please see **WOMEN** on 10



**Kendig**

## Homestand comes just in time for NU

By **GREGG MADSEN**  
Staff Reporter

For the first time in a month, the Nebraska men's gymnastics team will compete within the comforts of home at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Saturday at 2 p.m. against third-ranked Iowa, the Cornhuskers begin a four-week homestand. The meet will also feature the Nebraska women's gymnastics team, which will face Iowa State.

Nebraska Coach Francis Allen said NU needs to defend its home turf in the next four meets. After this weekend, Nebraska will face No. 13 Minnesota on March 9 and fourth-ranked Penn State on March 16 before playing host to the Mountain Pacific Championship on March 28-29.

"If we can get those teams here at home that's going to make them think they can't beat us," Allen said. "That's not the way to go into a National Championship, with everybody and their brothers thinking they can beat us."

The Hawkeyes scored a season-high 230.55 last weekend at Illinois. Nebraska's top score, a 229.35, came on Feb. 8 at Ohio State. Allen said the Huskers will have to score higher than their season-best effort to defeat Iowa.



**Allen**

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