

Huskers begin Big 12 play

BY JAY SAUNDERS
Staff Reporter

Before last weekend's match against Drake, Nebraska Men's Tennis Coach Kerry McDermott stressed the importance of the Cornhuskers' performance in regional matches.



McDermott

"This gives us a big psychological boost," McDermott said. "But for us it is a week-to-week thing. We are just trying to put our thoughts on what a match means either in the region or conference-wise."

The win against Drake accomplished two things for the Huskers. First, upsetting the Bulldogs — ranked fifth in the Midwest region — put Nebraska — ranked ninth — in a position to move up in the regional rankings. The victory also pushes the Huskers' record to 5-5, marking the

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KERRY McDERMOTT
NU men's tennis coach

first time a Nebraska team has been at .500 in three years. NU has now won three straight matches with wins over the Bulldogs, Temple and Weber State.

Despite accomplishing two of their early season goals, McDermott said NU is hardly satisfied.

"We want to show people we are a better team than people think we are," he said. "They feel they need to prove we are better. It just comes down to winning."

If the Huskers want to go above the .500 mark, they need to turn their focus to the start of the Big 12 Conference season.

Nebraska plays host to Baylor — which NU defeated 5-2 last year — on Sunday in a 2 p.m. match at the Cather-Pound varsity tennis courts.

After meeting the Bears (6-5 overall and 0-1 in the Big 12) on Sunday, eight of NU's last 10 meets are against conference teams.

McDermott said Baylor is in a similar situation to the Huskers.

"They are kind of the new kids on the block," McDermott said. "They are trying to come in and show people they have a good team."

McDermott said if Nebraska is to beat the Bears, it will have to improve on some of the things it did wrong in the Drake match. Against the Bulldogs, Nebraska lost all three doubles matches, relying on the singles players to win the meet.

"We will have to play better doubles," McDermott said. "Baylor is much improved. If we play well, things should go our way."

KU run starts in Memphis

From Staff Reports

The road to winning its first national title since 1988 starts today for the Kansas basketball team.

The Jayhawks (32-1) are the top seed in the Southeast region and play Jackson State (14-15) today at 11:25 a.m. at the Pyramid in Memphis, Tenn., in the first round of the NCAA Tournament.

Two other Big 12 Conference schools open tournament play today.

Iowa State (20-8), the fifth seed in the Midwest region, plays Illinois State (24-5) about 30 minutes after the conclusion of the Cincinnati-Butler game, which tips off at 11:30 a.m. at The Palace in Auburn Hills, Mich.

Ninth-seed Colorado (21-9) faces eighth-seed Indiana (22-10) about 30 minutes following the conclusion of the North Carolina-Fairfield game, which starts at 6:40 p.m. in Winston-Salem, N.C.

Other first-round games today include California and Princeton

meeting at 11:15 a.m. at Winston-Salem. Following the conclusion of that game, Villanova plays No. 13-seed Long Island.

In the Southeast region, Purdue meets Rhode Island after the the conclusion of the KU game. Maryland plays College of Charleston, and Arizona meets South Alabama in the night session.

At Auburn Hills, Xavier, Ohio, plays Vanderbilt at 6:40 p.m. with that game followed by UCLA against Charleston Southern.

In the west, Boston College plays Valparaiso and St. Joseph's meets Pacific in the afternoon session at the Huntsman Center in Salt Lake City. Top-seeded Kentucky plays Montana and Iowa meets Virginia in the night session.

Eleventh-seed Oklahoma begins the tournament Friday with a game against sixth-seed Stanford at the McKale Center in Tucson, Ariz. And 10th-seed Texas plays seventh-seed Wisconsin Friday at 11:15 a.m. at the Pittsburgh Civic Arena in Pittsburgh.

Turnovers key in UW loss

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continued the comeback with a slam of his own.

"Two or three times in a row we turned it over to them, and they got a dunk and got the crowd into it," said forward Mark Sanford, a 6-9 junior from Dallas, who led the Huskies with 20 points but only scored six in the second half.

"It then became a total Nebraska effort after that and that's what put us away," Sanford said. "They got a little more game. They just came out and played aggressive ball in the second half and got it done."

Washington took its last lead of the game when MacCulloch put back an offensive miss with 5:44 left. But less than 30 seconds later Moore tipped in his own miss to give the Huskies a lead they would not let go.

UW had a couple of chances at the end, trailing just 61-60 with 2:23 remaining before NU senior Bernard Garner made a 3-pointer. Bender called that 3 a back breaker.

Twice in the last two and a half minutes, Washington missed the front end of one-and-one opportunities, and with 10 seconds left, sophomore Donald Watts missed a 3-pointer that

“Turnovers killed us. We played well enough to win, but turnovers negated that.”

BOB BENDER
UW basketball coach

would have sent the game into overtime.

After the loss, Bender thought Nebraska looked very strong at making a run to win its second straight NIT championship.

"With Lue they've got a guy who will create and control things," Bender said. "They are big, so they can intimidate inside with blocking shots and they can score. Then they rebound the basketball."

"They've got the weapons to be real effective and they also know and have the confidence to get the job done with this tournament and win it."

NU sneaks by Huskies

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the game away at the free-throw line.

"I think it was a quality win," Nee said. "I was pleased with our effort, and the crowd was nice and loud and enthusiastic."

Lue received treatment for his sprained ankle after the game and said he's confident he won't miss any game time. "I was in a lot of pain at first," he said, "but once I got in here, it was OK."

In his 36 minutes on the court, Lue scored 14 points on 5-of-15 shooting, and with 12 minutes to play he suggested to Nee a defensive shift that threw the Huskies out of whack. Trailing 53-48, NU used an 8-0 run sparked by an aggressive trapping defense and took its first lead since late in the first half.

"We were down," Lue said, "and it was time to get a little spark, a little intensity."

Washington, which lost in the first round of the NIT for the second straight year to finish 17-11, regained

a 57-56 lead on a MacCulloch layup, but a bucket by Moore with 5:12 left gave NU the lead for good. The Huskers then out-scored Washington 7-4 — using a Garner 3-pointer to go up 65-61 — before Lue went down.

In the first half, Nebraska led 26-18 at the 6-minute mark before Washington erased the deficit with a 14-2 run. The Huskies led 36-33 at the half, but committed 13 of their 22 turnovers in the second half, when Nebraska turned up the defensive pressure.

Hamilton, who scored 13 points and grabbed 10 rebounds, teamed with Moore to control the UW big men. MacCulloch and 7-1 sophomore Patrick Femerling combined for 21 points and 11 rebounds in 48 minutes.

Sanford led all players with 20 points and 13 rebounds, and Garner, Belcher and Moore scored nine points apiece.

"We just needed some postseason experience," Belcher said. "It's a big win for us because we've got a young team with a lot of players coming back next year."

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