

Sports Opinion



Mike Kluck

Big 12 win makes up for lost time

To the surprise of almost no one, Nebraska Football Coach Tom Osborne complained last week about the Big 12 championship game.

Those who have followed Nebraska football the past couple of years already knew about Osborne's dislike for the Big 12 championship game well before last week's remarks.

The dean of Big 12 football coaches has often commented on how the game forced the players to miss more class and increased the length of the season.

He has reminded the media that the coaches of the Big 12 didn't want the game, but the presidents of the conference schools voted for it, providing the league with more money.

But last week Osborne pointed out a new problem with the game, saying that it prevented the coaches who were involved with it from recruiting on the road.

The NCAA allows coaches to meet prospective recruits in person beginning Dec. 1, and now is the main time of the year coaches can get into the homes of athletes and talk to them about coming to the coaches' universities.

Osborne said having to prepare for a Big 12 championship game prevented Nebraska coaches from getting out on the road recruiting and entering the homes of the top athletes in the nation.

Well, I'm sorry coach. Although some of your other points about the downfall of a championship game are valid, this one isn't.

Yes, you may be losing valuable times inside these athletes' homes, but playing a football game on the first Saturday of December, when no other games are competing with you on TV, and playing for a conference championship gets into more homes than all the coaches you can send on the road.

Then to have players like freshman Bobby Newcombe return a punt 40 yards or sophomore Ralph Brown, who has played since he was a freshman, intercept a pass and return it five yards does more to show a recruit that a freshman can come in and play at Nebraska than any coach sitting on a sofa and talking about possibilities.

Don't forget the plugs the television announcers give about Nebraska's graduation rate, success in the '90s and about how the Huskers are the best team in the country despite what the polls say. It's a better sell for a program than a used-car salesman can pitch. Let alone a coach.

And don't forget the best selling technique of all - a 54-15 dismantling of the Big 12 South Division champion.

Kluck is a journalism graduate student and the Daily Nebraskan sports editor.

Win over MSU sends Huskers west

BY SHANNON HEFFELFINGER
Assignment Reporter

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| Volleyball NCAA Tournament | |
| Nebraska | 15 15 15 |
| Michigan St. | 7 12 4 |



Prior to the Nebraska volleyball team's second-round NCAA tournament match against Michigan State, Coach Terry Pettit cautioned his team of the dangers involved with tournament play.



Nepo

Whether the Cornhuskers listened to his warning remained a mystery after Nebraska defeated the Spartans 15-7, 15-12, 15-4 Saturday night at the NU Coliseum in front of 2,009.

"It was a strange match," Pettit said. "We never really got in sync. Maybe it was just the excitement of the NCAA Tournament, but we had an awful lot of unforced errors."

Unforced errors nearly cost the No. 9 Huskers (26-6) a second-game victory over the Spartans, who defeated Butler in three games Friday night at the coliseum in the first round of the tournament.

After piecing together an 8-0 run to top MSU (23-12) in the first game, Nebraska committed an error on each of its first three possessions of the second game. Michigan State jumped to

a 4-0 lead before NU scored on an ace serve by Megan Korver.

The Spartans regained possession after a kill by Veronica Morales before Jessica Sanborn served six straight points to give MSU a 10-1 lead.

The Huskers, however, turned the tables and took a 13-10 lead on the strength of a 12-0 run. MSU fought back with two kills by Morales but a kill by Nebraska's Mandy Monson moved NU to game point.

Husker setter Fiona Nepo ended the second game at 15-12 with a solo block of MSU's Jenna Wrobel.

NU carried its momentum through the third game, easily winning behind a 9-0 run with Nepo at the serving line.

Jenna Wrobel led MSU with 14 kills.

"The second game was ugly," Pettit said. "We basically served the ball in the net and hit the ball out. We almost did ourselves in."

"We were fortunate, but it's a win, and we'll take it. It isn't that we haven't worked hard, because we have. I think it was just nervous energy. We were trying too hard."

Pettit attributed the Huskers' lack of focus to the youth of five important contributors. Prior to Saturday's match, Nikki Henk, Angie Oxley, Kim Behrends, Katie Jahnke and Nancy Meendering had no tournament experience.

Meendering and Jahnke played little and Behrends did not suit up because of an NCAA rule that allows

Please see VOLLEY on 11



LANE HICKENBOTTOM/DN

HUSKER GUARD Cookie Belcher dunks the basketball during the Huskers' Ameritas Classic first-round victory.

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| Men's Basketball | |
| Nebraska | 85 |
| Grambling St. | 48 |

Huskers roll to two wins, Ameritas title

BY SAM MCKEWIN
Staff Reporter

It took 20 minutes, but when the Nebraska men's basketball team knocked down Grambling State in the championship game of the Ameritas Classic Saturday night, the Tigers never got up.

The Cornhuskers used a 22-6 run at the end of the first half to open a 15-point halftime lead and never looked back as NU captured its 10th straight Ameritas Classic championship with a 85-48 victory over Grambling State in front of 7,405 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

The Huskers defeated North Carolina-Wilmington 85-68 on Friday night to get to the championship game.

"We got accomplished what we wanted to get accomplished," Nebraska Coach Danny Nee said. "I was pleased with our attitude and our overall effort."

The Huskers had their most balanced offensive performance of the season, with seven players scoring in double figures. Junior point guard Tyrone Lue, junior forward Venson Hamilton and sophomore guard Cookie Belcher led the way with 13 points apiece. All three were named to the all-tournament team, with Lue winning most-valuable-player honors.

Please see AMERITAS on 11

Young baseball coach wants Nebraska spot

BY ANDREW STRNAD
Staff Reporter

Three days removed from the dismissal of Nebraska Baseball Coach John Sanders, NU has already received an inquiry about the position.

Cal-State Northridge Coach Mike Batesole told the Daily Nebraskan that he is "definitely interested" in replacing Sanders.

Sources said Sanders was relieved of his duties as baseball coach by NU

Athletic Director Bill Byrne Thursday. Byrne wants to fill the vacancy by mid-January, sources said.

Batesole said he found out about the opening in a California newspaper and immediately sent Nebraska a letter of inquiry over the weekend.

"I have not been contacted by Nebraska yet, but I hope that I get a chance at the coaching job," Batesole said.

Batesole has been the coach at Cal

Please see BASEBALL on 11

Arizona cools down NU in tourney championship

BY TED TAYLOR
Senior Reporter

TUCSON, Ariz. - The temperature outside the McKale Center Sunday during the championship game of the Insight Classic was unseasonably cold but not nearly as cold as the Nebraska women's basketball team's shooting inside.

Coming off a lukewarm 44 percent shooting night in the Huskers' victory against Wichita State on Friday, No. 12 NU got downright

chilly against 11th-ranked Arizona, shooting just 32 percent from the field - including zero of 19 from 3-point range in NU's 68-56 loss.

The 1,615 fans saw the Huskers lose only their second game of the season while the Wildcats improved to 4-0 and earned the possibility of a top-10 ranking after No. 8 Georgia and No. 9 Virginia lost over the weekend.

"We did some nice things against a very good Arizona basket-

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