

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 1998

Sports Opinion Sam McKewon

Break out the funk for Birds

It came creeping in midway hrough the second half in fanhattan, Kan.

The Nebraska's men's basketball am was trying to fight its way back 1to a game against Kansas State. 'hey weren't hitting many shots, but iney were fighting.

Then, KSU hit a 3. And another asket. And another. A 7-0 Wildcat un

For the first time this season, selfoubt emerged in the Huskers' eyes. iven guard Tyronn Lue could not eliver them from the fire.

NU went on to lose 72-49.

No, Nebraska didn't quit, but it ost its fighting spirit. The Huskers let pathy sink in, and it transformed nto a horrific

"It was out oust erfort and a 'ne year," NU Coach Danny Nee said. This newfound apathy is nothing ew to me. Anyone who goes to Jebraska home games knows NU ans are the most apathetic in the Big 2 Conference.

They create an atmosphere at the lob Devaney Sports Center compaable to my Math 106 class: a lot of noozing and cross-talk having noth-1g to do with the subject.

Now, the best team in the Big 12, Lansas, is looking to crash Lincoln n Sunday.

The Jayhawks are on a seek-andestroy mission toward a national hampionship that has somehow luded them for 11 years. They have bliterated their last two opponents exas Tech (88-49) and Baylor (94-7)

They have the best one-two comination in college basketball in Raef Frentz and Paul Pierce. They have



HUSKER PITCHERS Gregg Jones, left, and Chad Wiles shovel snow from the outfield of Buck Beltzer Field. The baseball team practiced outside for the first time this season Thursday afternoon.

Big 12 coaches eye future

been the case several years ago.

Facilities like Texas A&M and Texas

that were in the top five are now bare-

Smith was responding to a recent

BY MIKE KLUCK Senior Reporter

Excitement and anxiety fill the voices of the Big 12 baseball coaches as they prepare to play ball in the second year of the

conference. 1998 The NCAA baseball season officially begins success in 1999 110

Baseball America article that listed the top 15 college baseball stadiums in the country. Texas A&M was ranked ninth and Texas was 12th, while six Southeastern Conference

ly in the top 15."

schools were in the top 15. But that number could be changing in the near future with renovation projects happening at many Big 12 institutions.

First year Nebraska Coach Dave Van Horn said the Cornhuskers are looking to upgrade their facilities and will begin work on one of three different proposals within the next five years

"We might redo the field and move it right next door to the one we have now," Van Horn said. "We might move the field real close to campus and start from the ground up, or we may just redo the stadium."

But Nebraska isn't the only league school making a commitment to its baseball program.

"The No. 1 thing we are going to

the country, which would not have do is build a new stadium," Kansas State Coach Mike Clark said. "We are building a \$3.5 million stadium that will be ready to go in '99. It will help us a great deal - especially fan-attention-wise."

> Kansas should also have a new ballpark opening in 1999 and Missouri Coach Tim Jamieson said the Tigers will likely have a new ballpark by the year 2000.

Oklahoma State, which played host to an NCAA Regional Tournament last year, had the thirdhighest attendance among all eight regionals, but had the smallest ballpark.

That has prompted the Cowboys to make some immediate improvements to Allie Reynolds Stadium. OSU has added seats in right and left center field and moved the outfield wall back.

"Pitchers will come in here and relax a little bit," said second-year Coach Tom Holliday, "and hitters will come in here and start crying."

Oklahoma, which won the national championship in 1994, is adding more restrooms and concession

Please see **BASEBALL** on 7



BY SHANNON HEFFELFINGER Senior Reporter

Monday, Nebraska women's **Basketball Coach Paul Sanderford** alluded to possible changes in his starting lineup after the Cornhuskers' five-point loss at Baylor the week before.

Maybe, he said, it was time to shake things up a little.

But as the Huskers prepare for their second of three straight home games, the lineup remains unchanged, and NU looks as stable as it has all season.

The Huskers used a balance offensive attack while shooting 52 percent from the field and committing only 13 turnovers in an 87-75 win over Texas Wednesday night. NU used much of the same rotations they have all season.

"In our system, it's not who starts so much as who finishes," Sanderford said.

Nebraska (15-6 overall and 4-3 in the Big 12 Conference) hopes for a similar finish Saturday when it plays host to Oklahoma State at the Bob Devaney Sports Center at 1 p.m.

"Oklahoma State is both quick and big," Sanderford said. "They have one of the premier players in the league, and they'll throw a lot of things at us defensively," wolls bluew

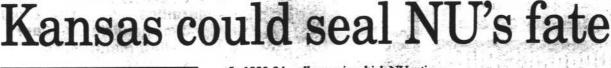
OSU enters tomorrow's game reeling from a loss at Gallager-Iba Arena to No. 5 Texas Tech. With the loss, the Cowgirls fell to 11-6 overall and now own a league record identical to Nebraska's at 4-3.

Oklahoma State is led by Jennifer Crow, a sophomore guard who is averaging 12.1 points per game

OSU also owns a strong presence in the post with 6-foot-2 forward Cheri Edwards and 6-7 center Devon Magness.

Nebraska will counter Magness' height with the combination of centers Charlie Rogers and Emily Thompson, who combined for 12 rebounds and 20 points Wednesday.

NU All-American Anna DeForge also enters Saturday's game on a hot streak. The senior guard has scored 20 or more points in five of the Huskers' last six games and has hit for double



and the next century were also on the minds of the league coaches

as they participated in a teleconference on Thursday.

Van Horn

All 11 of the Big 12 head coaches said stadium improvements and commitment to baseball would help with the success of their programs - even more than moving the start of the season back three weeks.

"More schools are really starting to work at college baseball," Baylor Coach Steve Smith said. "So many new facilities are being built around

ne of the deepest benches. They have ne of the best coaches, Roy Williams. In other words, it's a bad time for 'he Huskers to be in a funk.

So the boys need some help from heir funkiest friends. The fans have 18 hours to muster up enough school pirit to make some noise that rattles he Birds, redeeming themselves in ine game.

Devaney has been deafening sefore, like when NU owned a fourame home winning streak over KU in the early 1990s.

The recipe for crowd craziness is bit dusty, but it still works:

Ingredients: At least 4,000 stulents. Directions: Show up early. come up with a few simple cheers. ick on the dorky Jayhawk (forward JPugh). Get hoarse.

Kansas has lost three times on the oad, so it's not invincible. A little nutness can go a long way.

NU fans have the chance to nsure it does.

Sam McKewon is a sophomore litical science and news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan nior reporter.

BY SAM MCKEWON Senior Reporter

It's happened before. The Nebraska men's basketball team is at a crossroads in its season.

Sitting somewhere in the middle of their conference, the **Cornhuskers** face a must-win situa-

> tion at home. In one direction is a winning conference record and a possible

NCAA Tournament berth. In the other is mediocrity.

The team in Nebraska's way: Kansa

Nee

If history serves as any lesson, the matchup between Nebraska and the No. 5 Jayhawks at 2:35 p.m. in the Bob Devaney Sports Center Sunday will go a long way to determining Nebraska's fate for the postseason.

"We've got to protect our home floor," NU point guard Tyronn Lue said. In 1990-94 - all years in which NU

qualified for the NCAA Tournament -KU at home and were 5-4 against the Jayhawks overall.

Over the last three years - all years in which NU has qualified for the NIT Tournament - the Huskers are 0-3 against the Jayhawks in Lincoln.

But Nebraska (13-7 overall and 4-3 in the Big 12 Conference) will have its hands full Sunday trying to stop the Jayhawks (23-3 and 7-1).

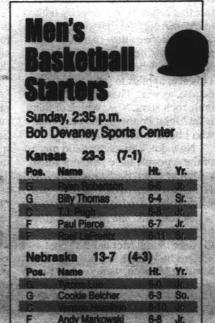
Kansas is led by All-American forward Raef LaFrentz, who is averaging 21.8 points per game. "If LaFrentz is not the best player in

America, he is one of the two or three best," NU Coach Danny Nee said. "He's probably going to be the first pick in the NBA Draft in April."

But the scoring doesn't stop there. Junior forward Paul Pierce enters the contest averaging 20 points per game and Nee said the Huskers are most leery of KU's supporting cast. Beyond the big-game ramifications, Nebraska would like to snap a seven-game losing streak to KU.

Lue is 0-5 against Kansas - and may be playing the Jayhawks for the last

"I hadn't thought about it too the Huskers owned a 4-0 record versus much," Lue said. "But I'm going to start thinking about it. All I want is to get to that NCAA Tournament. Beating Kansas helps us do that."



figures for 43 consecutive games.

DeForge said the game is crucial in terms of conference standings. Nebraska has won all of its 11 home games this season.

"We're undefeated at home and

