

## Big 12 Notebook

Texas A&M Men's Basketball Coach Tony Barone will be dismissed as the Aggies' coach after this season, A&M Athletic Director Wally Groff said in a statement released Monday.

Barone, who took the head coaching job in 1991, is 75-116 at Texas A&M and has posted just one winning record in seven seasons.

Groff said Barone will be reassigned as his special assistant.

With six teams tied for fourth place in the league and all six battling to qualify for the NCAA Tournament at the end of the season, fifth place for the Big 12 Tournament may be a more desirable position.

"The fifth seed would give us an opportunity to win an extra game," Texas Tech Coach James Dickey said.

"It may help us with how the (NCAA) committee is going to view our lead as far as our strength is concerned."

The Big 12 Tournament will take place March 5-8 at Kemper Arena in Kansas City, Mo. The top teams from the North and South divisions of the conference as well as the next two teams with the best record get a bye in the first round, while the other eight teams play games on the first day.

"I've always said that the fifth seed would be beneficial," Baylor Coach Harry Miller said. "Especially for guys like us who are not four or five games over .500. Any chance for us to play more games give us better position for postseason play."

Many of the Big 12 coaches feel the conference isn't getting national respect.

Only Kansas is ranked in this week's USA/ESPN Coaches Poll and the Jayhawks dropped from third to fourth despite winning both their games last week.

"Nationally, the media has been unfair to the Big 12," Oklahoma State Coach Eddie Sutton said.

Oklahoma first baseman Casey Bookout has had a stellar start to his season.

In Bookout's first 14 at bats he hit five home runs. Currently, Bookout is 14 of 18 at the plate and owns a .778 batting average with six home runs and 14 RBIs.

Suits and ties or turtleneck sweaters?

Oklahoma Coach Kelvin Sampson said he doesn't pay attention to what he wears for games.

"I'm not a real fancy guy," Sampson said. "First year I wore a denim shirt, which wasn't that bad. What was bad was I wore the same shirt for two months. It did get me a deodorant commercial."

Big 12 Notebook compiled by Staff Reporter Mike Kluck.

# Gophers sweep doubleheader

BY ANDREW STRNAD  
Staff Reporter

Baseball	Game 1	Game 2
Nebraska	4	4
Minnesota	11	6

MINNEAPOLIS — Being swept in a three-game series to open the season is not the way first-year Head Coach Dave Van Horn envisioned his Cornhusker debut.



Van Horn

The Nebraska men's baseball team had several opportunities, but were unable to produce as Minnesota swept a double-

header from the Huskers 11-4 and 6-4 before 276 at the Metrodome.

The Huskers (0-3) couldn't hold on to one-run leads throughout the series and in game three, NU just couldn't keep pace with the Gophers.

"I'm used to winning," Van Horn said. "I think right now on this side, Nebraska players need to learn how to win."

NU scored first in game two Monday as shortstop Bryan Schmidt blasted a solo home run to left-center

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DAVE VAN HORN  
NU baseball coach

giving NU an early 1-0 lead.

But the lead didn't last long as Minnesota (3-0) answered with two runs on the bottom of the first.

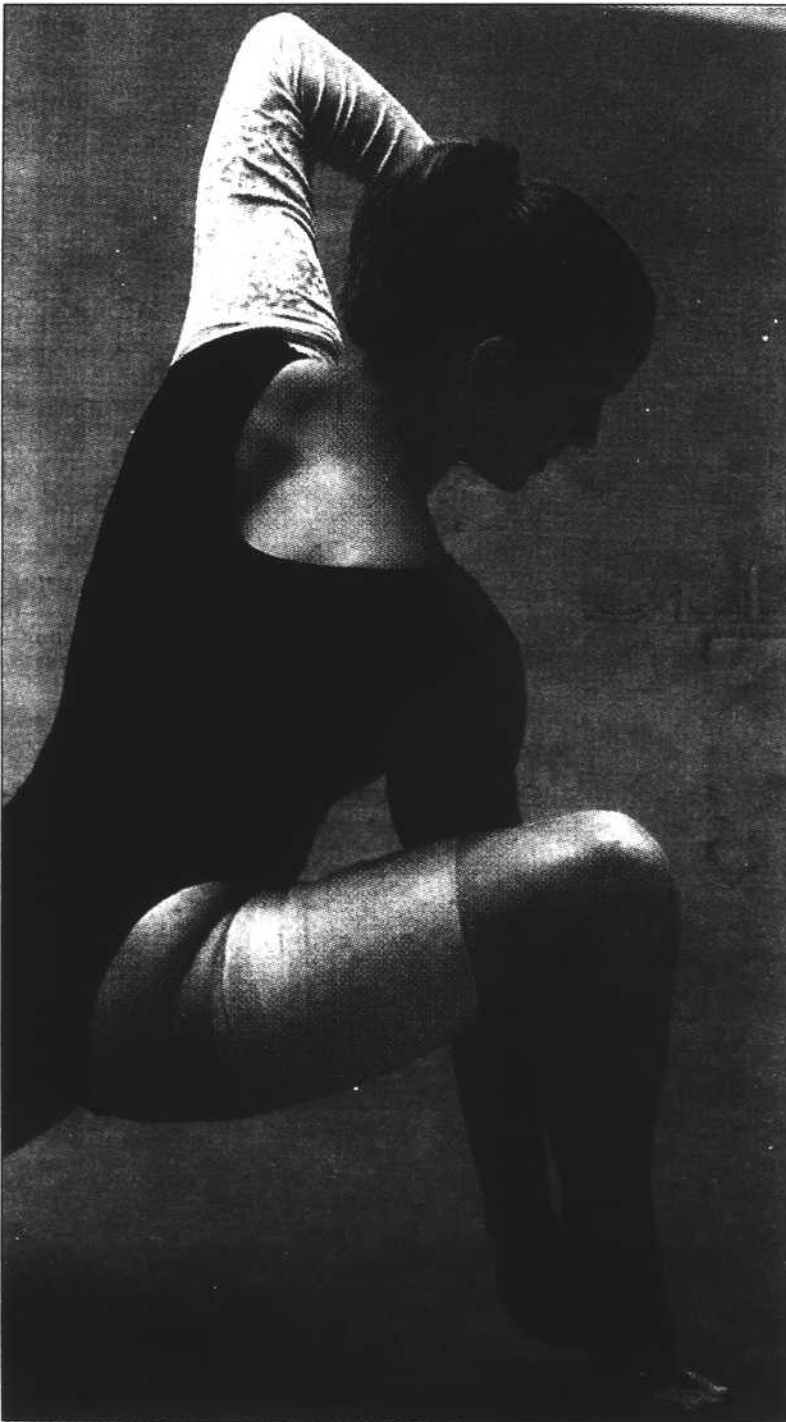
Gopher designated hitter Jim Egan led the charge going 3 for 3 with one RBI.

"I was seeing the pitches well,"

Egan said. "I think we all were. It felt really good to hit the ball well to start the season."

The Gophers were aided in the inning by a throwing error charged to NU third baseman Cliff Durham.

Please see SWEEP on 8



NU'S COURTNEY BROWN scored season highs on the balance beam and floor exercise Sunday despite suffering an injury to her quadriceps in practice last week.

## Brilliance on the beam Season-high score highlighted meet

BY DARREN IVY  
Assignment Reporter

A mere slip or minor lapse of concentration is all it takes to fall off the 4-inch-wide by 16-foot-long balance beam.

But none of Nebraska's six gymnasts had a problem Sunday against Iowa State as NU scored a Bob Devaney Sports Center record 49.150 in the event.

The record-breaking beam score helped No. 20 Nebraska erase a .025 deficit en route to a 194.950-193.775 victory over the 25th-ranked Cyclones.

"When you struggle on your best event (uneven bars) and then come back with a high score on a weaker event, it definitely is the key to the meet," said NU Coach Dan Kendig.

In addition to a record beam score, NU also improved its season-high vault score and several individual scores in its season-high score of 194.950.

For the Huskers, a week made a big difference.

Going into the beam last week against Oklahoma, NU trailed by .575 points. But they fell apart on the beam, scored 46.525 and never could recover.

"(The beam) is what makes or breaks you," said Misty Oxford, who won the all-around against ISU with a career-best 39.30.

So important is the beam that Kendig made his team do two intersquad meets this week to improve.

After poor performances at Wednesday's practice, Kendig gave his gymnasts an ultimatum for Thursday: "You don't leave until you hit seven beam routines in a row."

To Kendig's excitement, the gymnasts passed the test on the first try.

NU carried over its confidence from practice into the meet to score five 9.80 scores or higher on the beams. Laurie McLaughlin tied for first with a 9.875.

The beam wasn't the only event the Huskers improved on.

NU vaulted to a season-high 48.60 score, which bettered the previous high of 48.05 set against Missouri.

Oxford, who tied for first with NU's Heather Brink and Nicole Wilkinson on the vault, said starting well on the first rotation was important for NU.

"When you start well, it gives you momentum for the whole meet," Oxford said.

The vault score possibly could have been higher, but Courtney Brown, a career-best 9.775 vaulter, injured her quad in Thursday's practice and didn't compete in the event.

"With Courtney, we are a 196 team," Kendig said.

Although Brown couldn't compete in the vault, she scored season-highs in the balance beam, 9.85; and floor exercise, 9.85.

Brown wasn't even going to do the floor exercise, but NU's Amy Ringo and Brink, an All-American, fell on their routines.

"I was last on the floor and wasn't going to go unless somebody missed," Brown said. "(The coaches) wanted to have me scratch and save me for next week, but the team needed me."

Brown wasn't the only Husker who provided a needed boost on the floor exercise. Wilkinson and Jess Swift both scored career-best 9.85 marks, while tying for second place.

Brown said having other gymnasts step up helps everyone's confidence.

"It lets us know we can count on everyone — even under pressure."

# Huskers set sights on 20th victory

BY JAY SAUNDERS  
Assignment Reporter

Women's Basketball
Nebraska at Missouri
7:00 p.m., Hearnes Center

Twenty wins is what every college basketball team strives for at the beginning of the season. The 20th win usually ensures a trip to the NCAA Tournament.



Sanderford

After a 101-72 win at Oklahoma on Saturday, the No. 25 Nebraska women's basketball team put itself into position to reach the 20-win

plateau. NU (19-7 overall and 8-4 in the Big 12 Conference) gets its first chance at win No. 20 tonight at 7 at Missouri.

"In basketball, (20 wins) is what coaches think and dream about," NU Coach Paul Sanderford said.

The Cornhuskers travel to Columbia, Mo., to face a Tiger team that has struggled to find conference wins. Missouri (10-12 and 2-10) lost 66-57 to Kansas State on Sunday.

When NU and MU met Feb. 4 in Lincoln, the Tigers did something that

only one other team has done all season: rebound the Huskers.

"I was impressed with Missouri when we played them the first time," Sanderford said. "They just can't seem to get over the hump."

NU is riding a two-game winning streak that has put the Huskers back into the race for a bye in the first round of the conference tournament. But to earn a bye, the Huskers will have to do something they have done only twice this season: win a conference game on the road.

Trips to Oklahoma and Kansas State have resulted in Husker wins this season, but NU has not won two consecutive road games all year.

Sanderford said the Huskers shouldn't focus on the fact that this is a road game.

"We feel we can be successful on the road if we play well," Sanderford said. "I think the road is one of the things that can be looked at as an excuse. I'm not interested in excuses, I am interested in results."

If the Huskers can win a second straight game on the road, Sanderford said it would help NU's cause when the NCAA selection committee picks the 64-team field.

"If there is such a thing as a magic number," Sanderford said, "(20) is one of those numbers for the NCAA committee. It is not automatic, but it would sure help."