

Big 12 Tournament Notebook

Tuesday's results from the Women's Big 12 Conference Basketball Tournament in Kansas City, Mo.:

Colorado 71, Oklahoma 66

Colorado shot a perfect 100 percent from behind the 3-point arc in the first half and held off an Oklahoma comeback in the second half to advance to the second round.

The Buffaloes (11-15 overall) hit all five 3-pointers in the first half while building a 38-29 halftime lead. CU finished the game connecting on 8 of 13 3-point attempts.

OU (8-19) cut the lead to three with 27 seconds remaining, but was never able to overtake the Buffaloes.

"We didn't expect them to shoot 61 percent from the 3-point line," Oklahoma Coach Sherri Coale said. "That was the difference in the game."

Colorado, which won its 10th consecutive conference tournament game, will now face top-seeded and No. 5 Texas Tech (22-4) at noon today.

Oklahoma State 67, Missouri 48

The Cowgirls outscored Missouri 44-20 in the second half including an 18-4 run in the middle of the period to seal the victory.

Oklahoma State sophomore guard Sara Jackson scored all of her 18 career-high points in the second half - including seven during the Cowgirls' run.

"Once every three weeks she gets a feel," Oklahoma State Coach Dick Halterman said.

Jackson, who averaged 4.3 points per game during the regular season, said she didn't know what got in her Tuesday night.

"My big thing I thought was when Jackson took it in her hand," Missouri Coach Joann Rutherford said. "To me, their guards took over the game. Their guards just stepped up and took over and we didn't react."

Oklahoma State (18-9) advances to the second round to face Nebraska (22-8) today at 2:20 p.m.

Texas A&M 98, Texas 74

Tenth-seeded Texas A&M scored a season-high 98 points in its pasting of seventh-seeded Texas in the first upset of the women's tournament.

The Aggies (9-18) jumped out to a 48-34 halftime lead and never looked back as A&M defeated the Longhorn (12-15) for just the ninth time in school history. The 24-point victory also was Texas A&M's largest victory ever over Texas.

"This was a great team win," said A&M Coach Candi Harvey. "This is the first time we have not gone home after the first game. It is just a great feeling."

For Texas, it was the earliest exit ever from a conference tournament.

"That was quite an impressive performance A&M put on tonight," Texas Coach Jody Conradt said. "Every hustle play, they came away with a win."

A&M moves on to face second-seeded Iowa State (23-6) today at 6 p.m.

Kansas State 75, Baylor 66 (OT)

The nightcap game provided the most excitement and the biggest upset as 11th-seeded Kansas State - behind a 70 percent shooting performance in the first half - upset sixth-seeded Baylor.

"Kansas State deserves an awful lot of credit," Baylor Coach Sonja Hogg said. "They shot lights-out in the first half."

After trailing 24-9 with less than 10 minutes remaining in the first half, the Bears mounted a comeback and opened up a six-point lead in the second half.

Baylor (17-10) held on to its lead until the Wildcats (11-16) went on a 10-2 run to take a 62-60 lead with 1:52 remaining.

The Bears tied the game, and both teams missed opportunities to win the game in regulation.

In overtime, Kansas State opened up an 8-2 run and outscored Baylor 13-4 to get the victory.

"We kind of ran out of gas," Hogg said. "We dug ourselves a hole early and when we got even, it took a lot out of us."

Kansas State will play third-seeded Kansas (19-7) tonight at 8:20.

Big 12 Conference Basketball Tournament Notebook compiled by Special Projects Reporter Mike Kluck.

Lue selected first-team All-Big 12

BY SAM MCKEOWN
Senior Reporter

With six players vying for five spots, the selections for The Associated Press's first-team All-Big 12 became a game of odd man out.

Nebraska point guard Tyrone Lue was not that guy.

Lue, who averaged 21.3 points and 4.9 assists per game for the Cornhuskers, was selected to the first team, along with Kansas forwards Paul Pierce and Raef LaFrentz, Oklahoma guard Corey Brewer and Texas Tech guard Cory Carr.

The odd man out was Baylor center Brian

Skinner, who was on the second team after averaging 18 points and 9.5 rebounds per game.

The team was selected by 25 basketball writers throughout the Big 12 Conference.



Lue

"Making the team is a big step for me," Lue said. "But if I hadn't made it, I wouldn't have been disappointed with what we did as a team."

Lue credited his teammates in helping him reach the all-conference plateau.

"My teammates got me involved," Lue said. "They had me take charge, got me open and got me shots down the stretch."

Along with Lue, three other Huskers were named to all-conference teams of some kind. Sophomore guard Cookie Belcher and junior forward Venson Hamilton were both named to the Big 12's All-Defense Team.

"I was happy," Hamilton said of the selection. "My defense gets my offense going."

Hamilton was also named Honorable Mention All-Big 12 by the AP.

NU junior forward Troy Piatkowski was named to the Big 12's All-Bench Team.

One year makes a big difference for Cornhusker

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Overall, Johnson won five gold medals and was named co-outstanding female swimmer and Big 12 Newcomer of the Year.

"I didn't think I would make that big of an impact," Johnson said. "I am glad I could come in and help the team and represent Nebraska."

Johnson gives Nebraska a shot to finish in the top five at the NCAA Championships, March 19-21 in Minneapolis. NU has 16 automatic qualifying times. Johnson has three of those times.

In addition to the 500- and 200-yard freestyle, she is part of the 800-yard freestyle relay. She also is currently ranked first in the country in the 500 freestyle.

In the 200 backstroke and as part of the 400-yard medley relay team, Johnson has NCAA provisional times. Johnson said she is hoping she can turn her success in the Big 12 meet into better swims at the NCAA Championships.

"I am very happy with how I swam at Big 12s," Johnson said. "Now we have the NCAAAs and hopefully we'll do well there. Maybe I can turn around and drop a little bit more off my times."

Johnson's recent success has caused NU Coach Cal Bentz to compare her to Penny Heyns, one of Nebraska's all-time greatest swimmers. Heyns, a two-time Olympic gold medalist for South Africa, was the first Husker to win a national championship.

"(Johnson) is about at the level that Penny was when she came here," Bentz said. "She is probably the top high school swimmer to ever come out of Nebraska. We are really pleased she is here."

Heyns and the Olympics are two things that Johnson said she knows a lot about. In her junior year of high school, Johnson skipped her high school season in hopes of qualifying for the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta.

She didn't make it in '96, but Johnson said she is happy that Bentz would compare her to Heyns, considering all the success she has had in the Olympics.

"It's really cool that he said that," Johnson said. "(Heyns) is one of the people I look up to. Hopefully, I will be in the Olympics someday."

Gymnasts escape with close dual win

BY DARREN IVY
Assignment Reporter

The Cyclones showed they may be a contender for the Big 12 Conference gymnastics title, but the Nebraska women's gymnastics team showed why the Cornhuskers are still the team to beat.

NU defeated Iowa State Tuesday night in Ames, Iowa, 194.625-194.55.

"Iowa State is a good team and they compete very well at home," Kendig said. "I feel like they'll give us a run for the Big 12 title."

Falls on bar and beam routines cost the Huskers a shot at scoring over 195 points, but freshman Amy Ringo's season-high vault score provided bright spots for the Huskers.

The narrow win for NU marked the second time in three days that the Huskers had won by less than .10 points.

Before the meet Kendig said NU couldn't miss the little things and expect to win. But both teams took turns falling Tuesday.

Cowgirls hope to handle Husker transition game

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remaining in the game, but outscored the Tigers 37-13 to get the win.

"Roberts is playing well," Sanderford said. "She's a good player. I had her on my all-conference team. She's an outstanding defensive player and she can also put the ball in the basket."

Roberts said her play in the Big 12 Tournament isn't a commentary on her snub in the all-conference balloting, but more on her trying to find a way to get the Cowgirls into the NCAA Tournament.

"You just have to put that behind you and play the best you can now," Roberts said. "I just want our team to do better. I know I can play with anybody in this conference."

In the January game against Nebraska, Halterman said, the Cowgirls played as poorly as they had all season.

Halterman said Oklahoma State will have to do a better job handling Nebraska's press if the Cowgirls are to have success

today. In the previous game against the Huskers, OSU had 26 turnovers, which turned into fast-break layups for NU.

"I really believe Nebraska is one of the better teams in our conference," Halterman said. "They are the best running team in the conference and in transition, they are better than anybody else in the league. We sure don't want to be in a footrace with them."

"The key for us is we got to make it a semi-half-court game where they have to set up and run an offense every time down."

Notes:

■ Sanderford said sophomore guard Brook Schwartz is ready to play. Schwartz had been hampered by tight leg muscles the last three games. Sanderford also said he expected sophomore Charlie Rogers to play about half the game.

■ Nebraska is 7-2 against Oklahoma State in conference tournament play.

OU and Mizzou players earn league honors

From Staff Reports

Oklahoma third baseman Jose Montenegro earned Big 12 Conference Player of the Week honors after going 8 for 12 with three homers and 10 RBIs in a three-game series with Baylor last weekend.

The Sooners were one of eight Big 12 teams to open conference play last weekend. The other three league teams will begin conference play this weekend.

Montenegro, a senior who typically bats eighth in the lineup, helped the Sooners take two of three games from the Bears. OU snapped a 12-game winning streak with a 10-9 loss to BU Sunday.

The loss dropped the fourth-ranked Sooners to 12-1 overall and 2-1 in the conference. With a win over Southwest Texas Tuesday, Baylor moved to 11-5 and 1-2.

Missouri lefty Justin Stine was named the

Big 12 Pitcher of the Week after allowing just one run through eight innings Friday at Kansas State.

The junior surrendered seven hits and struck out five in a 3-1 win over the Wildcats.

The Tigers proceeded to defeat KSU Saturday and Sunday before losing to Wichita State Tuesday to move their record to 8-2 and 3-0 in the league. Kansas State fell to 5-8 and 0-3.

In other Big 12 action, 13th-ranked Texas A&M (13-4 and 2-1) took two out of three games from Texas Tech (11-7 and 1-2) in College Station, Texas, capping the series with an 11-2 victory Sunday.

Oklahoma State (8-6 and 2-1) won two out of three games last weekend against Kansas (4-6 and 1-2) in Stillwater, Okla.

Nebraska (7-5 and 0-0), Iowa State (3-5 and 0-0), and 22nd-ranked Texas (8-8-1 and 0-0) will open conference play this weekend. The Huskers travel to Baylor, Iowa State will visit Oklahoma, and Texas Tech will play host to Texas.

Two of NU's top gymnasts, Heather Brink and Nicole Wilkinson missed on routines, but still finished second and third in the all-around. Brink scored 38.725 and Wilkinson had a 38.70. Jessie Smith of Iowa State won with a 38.75.

Kendig said although things didn't go the way he had hoped, the team competed well.

"The team stuck together and rallied around one another," Kendig said. "It was a tough meet all the way through."

Since it was a close meet, the season-high vault score pleased Kendig.

The Huskers vaulted to a season high 48.725 score, which bettered their previous high of 48.65 - two weeks ago at Arizona State.

Brink led the charge by winning the vault with a 9.85 and Wilkinson finished second with 9.80. Ringo also posted a career-best 9.65.

Ringo also scored a career-best 9.875 on the balance beam finishing third behind Kayo Merritt and Kelli Moore of Iowa State.

Laurie McLaughlin won the won the uneven bars with a 9.85 and Jess Swift finished third with 9.825.

"I was happy we got big performances from Jess Swift on uneven bars and Amy Ringo on beam," Kendig said.

Kendig was upset that NU missed some routines and had to count falls because he said he thought the Huskers were better than that.

But he said he was confident Huskers will get it together.

"We had some mistakes here and there," Kendig said. "We're looking forward to putting everything together soon."

The Huskers hope to have things together when they face Brigham Young Monday at 7 p.m. at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Kendig said the Huskers will use the Iowa State meet and a good week of practice to prepare.

"(The girls) have been able to handle some pressure," Kendig said. "That will be good for us down the road."