

Sports Opinion



Sam McKewon

The Huskies a legion of mediocrity

Mediocrity rules. It does in college football, anyway.

Saturday provided a perfect canvas for which a pretty messy picture was painted of the college football scene.

You had Florida vs. Tennessee, a game in which the Volunteers had a hopelessly inept offense and the Gators had to turn the ball over six times, miss two field goals and get called for just about every penalty known to man in order to lose 20-17 in overtime.

No. 8 Penn State beat Pittsburgh 20-13. No. 10 Virginia squeaked by a poor Clemson team 20-19.

The only team that didn't look mediocre was Kansas State, which continues to find new exciting ways to entice the national media with its performances. (This week's episode: how to stop Ricky Williams like no one has before.)

Then there's No. 9 Washington, the poster child of mediocrity. The Mediocre Eleven just happen to be playing Nebraska this week.

The ninth-ranked team in the country mediocre? You betcha.

The Huskies beat BYU on Saturday 20-10. Six of those points were scored by the Husky offense. The UW starting quarterback, Brock Huard, cringed in pain almost every time he got hit. The Huskies rushed for 100 yards, 48 of which came from the backup quarterback.

This is mediocrity at its finest. Some call it parity. I don't agree. This Husky team was born to be in limbo.

Case in point: While watching the game Saturday, it seemed like the Huskies were perpetually at mid-field. Not pinned in their own end. Not in the red zone. Right at mid-field. The whole game.

More mediocre: On two of UW's touchdowns, the kicker missed the extra point. He didn't just miss them, he pulled them wildly. See, mediocrity.

So Washington comes here to Lincoln to play a Nebraska team that's been better than mediocre, but far below stellar. Personally, I'm looking forward to this.

I predict 20 punts, 10 for each team. I see both teams' quarterbacks (whomever that might be) scampering wildly to avoid the rush. I see a low-scoring, bone-crushing, thoroughly mediocre affair. And that's OK, because there isn't a dominant team in college football. Anybody can beat anybody; North Carolina State badly beating Florida State, then losing to Baylor, proves that.

My prediction for the game? Nebraska, 16-7, by virtue of three Kris Brown field goals the Washington guy won't make.

Brown, you see, isn't mediocre. He's pretty darn good.

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Huskiers pound tired Gators

Nebraska block stops UF attack for entire match

BY SHANNON HEFFELFINGER
Senior staff writer

By the end of their three-game match against the Nebraska volleyball team, several Florida players felt so sick and void of energy that they struggled to walk off the floor at the NU Coliseum.

And Florida Coach Mary Wise couldn't figure out which one of the Gators' symptoms led them to look so ill in a 15-4, 15-8, 15-0 loss to the No. 3 Cornhuskers in the final match of the US Bank Tournament on Saturday night. But Wise said a combination of the flu, a tournament schedule that favored NU and a strong showing by the Huskers doomed the No. 10 Gators.

"(NU's) win could be credited to scheduling," said Wise, whose team battled to beat No. 15 Loyola Marymount (7-2) in a five-game match at 11 a.m. Saturday. "If I have a chance to do it to Nebraska when they come back to our place, I'll do it."

"But I could tell that our jumpers just weren't jumping. And watching Jenny Manz, as sick as she was, I was surprised she was able to get out of bed for the match."

Manz, a right-side hitter who leads Florida with 5.5 kills per game, posted three kills and a minus-.211 hitting percentage. Jenni Keene, who ranks second on the squad with 3.2 kills per game, accounted for two kills and hit -.118. Wise said both suffered from a flu virus that affected most of her team.

The Gators (7-2) hit .011 for the match and recorded eight service errors and just 19 set assists.

Nebraska, which improved to 8-0, could do little wrong in their fifth win over a ranked opponent this season.

Sophomore Nancy Meendering led the Huskers - who hit .359 overall - with 13 kills and a .579 hitting percentage.

NU dominated defensively as well, holding a 20-3 advantage in blocks.

"The score could be misleading

Florida fights tough schedule

Tournament loss attributed to tired team, Huskers' performance

BY BRANDON SCHULTE
Staff writer

The 10th-ranked Florida volleyball team came into the US Bank Invitational as possibly the toughest opponent for the No. 3 Cornhuskers.

In winning 15-4, 15-8, 15-0 Saturday night, Nebraska proved it was worthy of the high ranking.

Coming into the match against NU, Florida had an extremely strenuous schedule. If the prospect of facing Nebraska in the NU Coliseum wasn't daunting enough, Florida defeated No. 11 Texas on Tuesday, Wyoming on Friday night and No. 15 Loyola Marymount earlier in the day.

Florida Coach Mary Wise felt the scheduling by Nebraska was difficult for her team to overcome. She also thought her team was drained after the morning match.

"We came into the game exhausted," Wise said. "Our jumpers just weren't there with two matches in



JUNIOR TONIA TAUKE and sophomore Angie Oxley attempt a block while Florida's Jenny Manz looks on. The Huskers shut down the Gator attack, as they held a 20-3 advantage in blocks.

MIKE WARREN/DN

as to the level that Florida is," NU Coach Terry Pettit said. "Having said that, I like the way we played. We're a very good serving and passing team, and that enabled us to follow our game plan. We just did a good job."

Nebraska, which defeated Loyola Marymount in three games Friday and Wyoming in three games Saturday afternoon, jumped to early leads in the first and third games and never fell behind.

Florida did, however, threaten to take the second game. The Gators built a 6-4 lead in the second game, taking advantage of attack errors by Meendering, Megan Korver, Tonia Tauke and Angie Oxley.

Nebraska regained possession on a Tauke kill. NU setter Fiona Nepo then served four consecutive points and Meendering posted three straight kills as NU took an 8-6 advantage.

After an ace serve by defensive specialist Denise Koziol, NU increased its advantage to 10-6.

"I think when we play really well our people just really understand their roles," Pettit said. "We're even pretty much, and Koziol comes in and just rips that ball and aces a good passer. I don't know what that did to Florida, but I know what it did for us."

The Gators served just five times in the third game and erred on two of the attempts. Florida totaled three kills despite attacking the ball 20 times. Wise gradually pulled her ailing starters out of the match during the final game.

"Game three, we just decided to go to our younger players and get them some experience in a big game," Wise said. "I credit Loyola Marymount for taking us to five

Volleyball				
No. 3	Nebraska	15	15	15
No. 10	Florida	4	8	0
Kills				
Nebraska 32 (Meendering 13)				
Florida 22 (Manz)				
Hit% NU .359 UF .011				

games earlier."

Both Florida and Nebraska begin conference play this weekend. Meendering said the Huskers are happy with where they're at heading into league play.

"Our goal is to never let up," Meendering said. "We want to push on every point like the score is 0-0. In the third game tonight, with the score the way it was, our level of play still stayed high. I think we made a strong statement tonight."

Huskiers shut out USC, fall to the Bruins

BY DARREN IVY
Staff writer

It was a tale of two games this weekend for the Nebraska women's soccer team.

After losing 5-1 to No. 25 UCLA on Friday night, the No. 17 Cornhuskers came back and shutout Southern California 2-0 Sunday in Los Angeles.

"Friday's game was devastating," NU Coach John Walker said. "(Sunday), we really bounced back against a quality team. (Sunday) was as blue collar as you get. The girls showed a lot of character."

Against the Women of Troy, freshman midfielder Meghan Anderson got her first start as a collegiate goalie.

Anderson was forced to start

"Being tired is no excuse. We came out flat; we needed to be more enthusiastic."

JENNI KEENE
Florida outside hitter

well as to Loyola for taking them to the wire.

Wise said she wished the Gators could have given the fans a better game to see. She said she had hoped her team would be more competitive.

With UF down 8-0 in the third game, Wise pulled her starters, giving younger players an opportunity to experience the volleyball atmosphere Nebraska provides.

"Nebraska is one of the most fun places to play in the country," Wise said.

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