

Huskers have mile-high hopes for CU contest

BY ADAM KLINKER
Senior staff writer

One day at a time.

It's quickly becoming the credo of the Nebraska men's basketball team as they ride high on a three-game Big 12 Conference win streak.

And after Wednesday's victory at Oklahoma, the Cornhuskers have won five of their last six conference games on the road.

Saturday, NU (11-7 overall, 3-2 in the Big 12) brings the tour bus back to Lincoln for a 12:45 p.m. matchup with Colorado (10-8, 1-4), followed by another home game with No. 19 Kansas (13-4, 5-0) that looms large on the horizon.

"Those are huge games for us," Husker Coach Danny Nee said. "But our mentality is 'we came back (and won in the Big 12).' Now we put all our focus and energy on Colorado. On Sunday, we'll start with Kansas."



Nee

The Buffaloes come into Lincoln having lost five of their last six games - the lone bright spot being an 82-63 trouncing of Missouri in Boulder, Colo., on Jan. 16.

CU has been sparked as of late by sophomore guard Tyron Manlove, who, in just eight games, is leading the Buffs with an average

14.6 points per game and is second in rebounding with 4.6 boards a contest.

Manlove, a transfer from Oregon, was ineligible for active duty with the Buffs until after the completion of the first semester. Though Manlove has been a welcome addition, CU's offensive output has dropped slightly over the past eight games, as compared to the 10 games previous.

The Buffs have gone from scoring 78.2 ppg in their first 10 games, in which they won six and lost four, to 73.5 ppg over the last eight in which they are 3-5.

In addition to Manlove, senior guard Kenny Price and freshman guard Nick Mohr also average double-digits in scoring for CU with 11.5 and

10.6 ppg, respectively.

Though the Buffs are struggling, especially against conference foes. Nee said he plans not to have a letdown after the OU game, as each NU game now becomes crucial in determining post-season play.

One way the Huskers have managed to remain focused is with a more active involvement in scouting opposing teams.

Nee said he has been sending assistant coaches out to keep abreast of the quirks in upcoming opponents' offenses and defenses.

And, as signaled by NU's three-game win streak, things may be clicking just in time.

"We're just staying one game ahead of the posse," Nee said.

NU readies for elevated court action

BY JAY SAUNDERS
Staff writer

Considering the No. 23 Nebraska women's basketball team won last Saturday's game against nationally ranked Kansas, it might seem like the Cornhuskers are being unfairly punished for having to run a lot in practice.

The excess sets of stairs and lines has nothing to do with a lack of effort on the part of the Huskers. Because it's not punishment, but preparation.

NU Coach Paul Sanderford is preparing the Huskers to take in the Rocky Mountain air of Boulder, Colo., and a 7:05 p.m. game Saturday against CU.

"Altitude is a factor," Sanderford said. "Anyone that plays there will tell you it's different. Kids get winded really quickly."

Colorado is the first team Nebraska (14-4 overall and 3-2 in the Big 12 Conference) will play a second time this season.

When CU came into Lincoln on Jan. 6, the Buffs left the Bob Devaney Sports Center with a 90-49 loss.

In that game, the Buffaloes made three field goals in the first 15 minutes. NU, on the other hand, had the Midas touch with 52 first-half points.

"We are going to get a mad Colorado team," Sanderford said. "They were humiliated a little bit and they will be out for revenge."

There is probably no better place for the Buffs to get that revenge than the Coors Events Center. NU has not won there since an 85-60 victory in 1985.

This 13-year reminder might not come at the best time for a Nebraska team that hasn't been able to win anywhere but the Bob Devaney Sports Center lately.

Losses at Texas and Kansas State brought out the doubters of the No. 23 Huskers.

But junior Nicole Kubik said the 82-62 win over Kansas has given NU a boost in confidence.

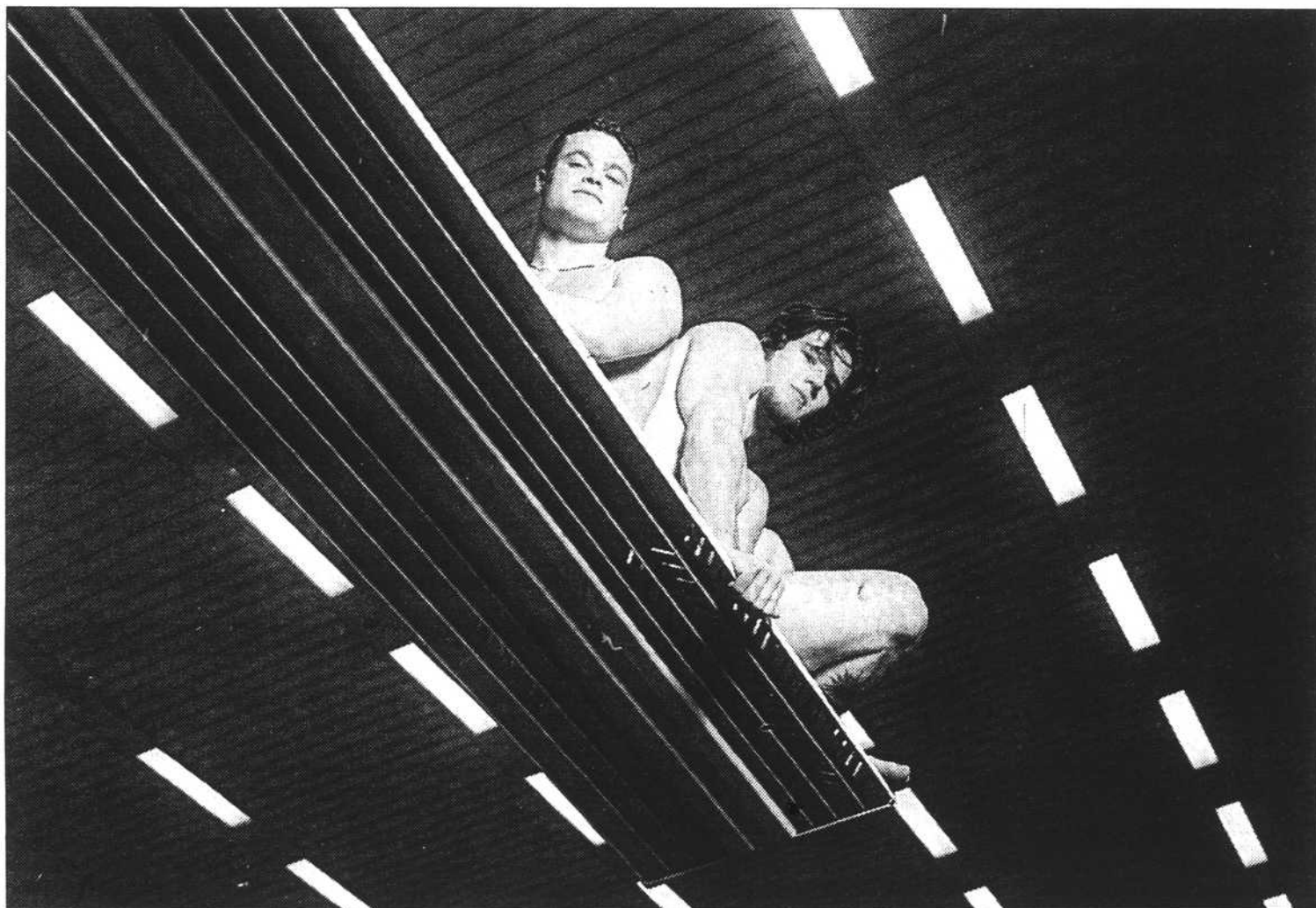
"After having such a successful game against Kansas," Kubik said, "I don't think anyone is going to be thinking 'we are on the road so we're going to lose.'"

Colorado (8-7 and 1-4) is led by freshman guard Linda Lappe. Lappe is the only CU player to average more than 10 points per game.

Lappe and the rest of the Buffaloes are hoping to use the home advantage to rebound from losing four of their last five games. CU's last win came at home Jan. 9, against Oklahoma.

But Kubik, who is averaging 19.6 points per game, said it may be time for the Huskers to break the mile-high jinx.

"It's one of those droughts that will come to an end sooner or later," Kubik said. "The sooner the better."



SANDY SUMMERS/DN

ERIK COOK, LEFT, and Danny Bergman are NU's highest-ranking divers, but their personalities set them far apart. Cook, the more laid-back of the two, said he likes to "relax and kind of go with the flow." Bergman, meanwhile, said he lives for the excitement. "I try not to take things too seriously," Bergman said. "If I'm not having fun, it's no good."

Diving duo push each other to perform

BY BRANDON SCHULTE
Staff writer

Two different personalities, two different styles and two very different stories. Perhaps the only thing NU divers Danny Bergman and Erik Cook have in common is their love for fly fishing.

That, and the fact they may be Nebraska's best two male divers of all time.

Bergman, a senior, and Cook, a junior, are the top performers for the diving team. But each in his own way.

From the beginning these two were different. Bergman followed the lead of his sister, an All-American diver at Brigham Young, and first met Diving Coach Jim Hocking at an early age.

Hocking's first impression of Bergman was that of a little boy in a constant motion.

"He was like a gnat," Hocking said. "Always buzzing around in my ear."

As for Cook, he wanted to attend NU, but as a gymnast.

"I started diving because I blew out my knee in gymnastics," Cook said. "I started thinking about something else so I wasn't decrepit when I got older."

They both came to Nebraska in the fall of 1995. And they just happened to be paired as roommates that first semester.

Bergman feels the reason they could live together was because their personalities clashed.

Cook describes himself as laid back and down to earth. Hocking describes Bergman as outgoing

and wild.

While both are successful at diving, their styles are very different as well.

Coach Hocking describes their styles as savage power vs. smoothness and grace.

"Dan attacks," Hocking said. "He's very reactive, explosive and powerful. 'Erik is slightly less powerful. But his smoothness makes up for it.'"

They are friends, however, both in and out of the water, pushing each other to perform better.

"Danny pushes me a lot," Cook said. "Probably more than he realizes."

Bergman feels the same way.

"He (Cook) definitely pushes me," Bergman said. "It's always helpful to have someone of that level to compete with in practice and meets."

This leads to a healthy competition in the eyes of Hocking.

"It's a battle," Hocking said. "But it's positive. Each one wants to beat the other, but it's very complimentary. They win with grace and lose with dignity."

This was never more evident than this year in a trip to Texas. In a dual against Texas Christian, Cook set a new record in the 3-meter springboard, breaking Bergman's old mark.

The following day against Southern Methodist, Bergman topped Cook in the same event.

The constant competition has led to a respect for each other.

"I've always looked up to Danny and his diving," Cook said. "When I got here he was better than I was, so I tried to emulate him. I knew if I dived like him, I'd be doing good."

They also keep each other at peak performance. "He's wild and full of energy," Cook said. "On days I'm dead he keeps me going."

The same is true for meets.

"(Cook's) good, so I don't want to screw up," Bergman said. "But at the same time if he beats me it's not like I want to kick his ass."

They may compete against each other regularly but above all else they are teammates.

"We're the Big Red Boys," Bergman said. "People recognize us as the players from Nebraska."

Bergman completes his eligibility this spring. Cook will be back next year, due to a redshirt season last year because of frequent injuries.

His sophomore year he was unable to compete at nationals because of an abdominal injury. From that time on, Cook's drive has increased.

"Every time I get hurt, my drive becomes intenser," Cook said. "I thought to myself as soon as I can get back on the board, I'm going to work my ass off."

One thing they both like to do out of the pool is fly fish. On long road trips, Hocking and fellow divers Bert Locklin and Travis Niemeyer join in.

Both cherish the relationship they have with their teammates, coaches and each other while away from the sport. For awhile, they are all just friends.

As for the future, both have an opportunity to compete at the Olympic trials in 2000. But for now, they're just having fun.

Said Bergman: "I figure the day that diving isn't fun anymore and I have to make it a serious thing is where I have to sit there and meditate. It's just not worth it."