

## NU seeks respect with win at Kansas

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**DANNY NEE**  
NU coach

By LISA VONNAHME  
Staff writer

One hurdle lies in the way of the Nebraska men's basketball team winning one of its most coveted prizes — respect.



Nee

While the Huskers have earned respect in the Big 12 Conference this season with wins over three ranked league opponents, one hurdle has stood in the way of NU for 16 years — a win over Kansas at Allen Fieldhouse.

The Huskers will get a shot to record their first win at KU since the 1982-83 season in an 8:05 tip off tonight in Lawrence, Kan. — the only site in the conference where Danny Nee stands winless as NU's head coach.

“In Lawrence, Kan. over the years, they've been basically invincible,” Nee said. “But there's no question in my mind that we can go anywhere in this conference and play and win.”

With the Cornhuskers (15-8 overall and 7-3 in the Big 12 Conference) winning seven of their last eight games, Nee expects a competitive game with KU and knows respect for the Huskers will “take care of itself” if they are able to continue winning.

“I don't think we've earned (a top 25 ranking) yet,” Nee said. “But we're getting there. We're marching toward it.”

The Jayhawks (16-6 and 8-2) will be ready for a rematch with the Cornhuskers, who earned an 84-69 win over KU in Lincoln on Jan. 27. In the previous meeting, Venson Hamilton recorded one of his 12 double-doubles this season and led NU with 20 points and 12 rebounds.

With the help of Hamilton, Nee said the key to a win over Kansas is balance between NU's starters and those who come off the bench.

“They're all buying into team success,” Nee

said. “It's not about who starts the game and who ends the game. It's about finding a way to win.”

Finding a way to win, especially over No. 22 Kansas, may have seemed like a lofty goal for Nebraska after the Huskers had a shaky start to the season. However, the improvement the Huskers have made has drawn praise from other coaches.

“This year, to start out 0-2 in this league and to be where he is now ... I just have a great deal of respect for Danny and the job he has done,” KU Coach Roy Williams said.

For NU, a win at Kansas would be more than an end to a long streak of frustration. It would mark a step toward a Big 12 championship, Nee said.

With so much riding on tonight's game, Nee has stressed its significance to the Huskers.

“We're still alive,” Nee said. “I explained to the players that this game and a win would be a giant step. It would be another ranked team that we have beaten, which will help at the end of the season.”



BECKY BEACHLER, left, and Erin Wibbels hope to follow in the footsteps of former All-Americans Tressa Thompson and Paulette Mitchell.

MATT MILLER/DN

## Throwing Stones

*Beachler, Wibbels look to follow NU thrower tradition*

By SAM MCKEON  
Senior editor

It'd be excusable if Becky Beachler and Erin Wibbels felt the pressure of owning the title of the next group of Nebraska throwers. That title takes some living up to.

The list of national titles, All-American awards, meet records and conference records set by the Nebraska women throwers could pass for a short novel.

Names like Tressa Thompson, Paulette Mitchell and Doreen Heldt speak to the prowess of the program, which is easily one of the top three in the nation.

In a sense, both Beachler and Wibbels do feel the pressure, but in a good way. It's less of a shroud of uncertainty as it is a desire to achieve.

“It's not a pressure thing at all,” said Wibbels, her hair tied back in pigtails. “We're here because our coach has faith in us. He recruits people who he believes are going to be good throwers and I have

honestly placed 100 percent of myself into his hands. He and our strength coach are making me good.

“There's not that kind of pressure. We're the ones making it good.”

Both Wibbels, a sophomore, and Beachler, a redshirt freshman, bring different talents and experiences to the table. Beachler's specialty is the shot put. Wibbels is more of an all-around thrower with an emphasis in hammer. Beachler was a high All-American at Fremont. And she also had to pass through a difficult injury.

After posting a personal best 52-foot, 9-inch mark in the shot put in high school, Beachler suffered a knee injury that kept her out last season.

For six months, Beachler couldn't throw. Couldn't lift. Couldn't do what she'd been doing since sixth grade.

“I'd been doing track since I was 11,” Beachler said. “To take a year off, it was just so hard. Track to me was like waking up in the morning. It's just something you do.”

NU throws coach Mark Colligan said that the

time off set Beachler back, as any injury would. But Colligan said Beachler was on her way back after finishing second last weekend at the Frank Sevigne Husker Invitational. Beachler got a NCAA provisional qualifying mark on a throw of 50-11.

It wasn't the 52-9 she threw in high school, but it's a start. A good one.

“For one day in high school, Becky lived at the 50-plus area,” Colligan said. “She didn't live there on a consistent basis. I think now if she hits it on a consistent basis, she's doing better. Last week, she showed signs of what she was before her injury.”

Colligan said that the next goal for Beachler is the 55-foot mark. She might be far from it. Thompson, who holds the NU shot put record with a throw of 60-7 3/4, didn't hit the 55-foot plateau until her third year.

Beachler just wants to see improvement and points for the team. She might get to 55 feet much faster if Wibbels continues to push like she has.

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## Assistant big boost to NU women

By JOHN GASKINS  
Staff writer

When you're a collegiate gymnast and well into the daily grind of vigorous practice, some days are rougher than others.

It was obvious to Nebraska Women's Assistant Coach Rhonda Faehn-Tetreault that one of her balance beam performers, senior Laurie McLaughlin, was having one of those days.

“Keep pushing! You'll make it! That's better!” Faehn-Tetreault shouted, then turned to talk about how to coach a discouraged gymnast along.

“These girls have lives, and for some reason or another they'll come in here having rough days,” Faehn-Tetreault said.

“They're tougher on themselves than us coaches are, and sometimes our job involves helping them see they're not as bad as they think.”

Faehn-Tetreault should know how to approach her athletes. She's been there before.

She was there in her childhood, during private gym days when she was pushed by demanding coaches after every jump and tumble.

She was there from 1985-88 on the U.S. National Team, competing for icon and fiery motivator Bela Karolyi, when the team was under the pressure of following the legend of Mary Lou Retton and the 1984 Olympics.

Fortunately for Faehn-Tetreault, she had her own peace of mind and the help and motivation of world-class coach after world-class coach to keep her on solid ground.

Like the ground where she stuck her landing on the vault at the 1987 and 1988 U.S. Championships, where she scored a perfect 10 both times.

“I almost quit. I got tired,” Faehn-Tetreault said, “but (at the U.S. Championships) when Bela picked me up and hugged me and the crowd gave me a standing ovation, I knew it was all worthwhile.”

Faehn-Tetreault went on to compete as an alternate for the 1988 Olympic team in Seoul, Korea, and in college at UCLA where she said she learned the power of positive motivation from Head Coach Valerie Kondos.

Faehn-Tetreault is now using that

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