

Huskers want solid play against Baylor

By CHRISTOPHER HEINE
Staff writer

The well of confidence the Nebraska women's basketball team built up with blow-out, home-court victories in December sprung a leak in January.

Coach Paul Sanderford's Cornhuskers lost four straight road games last month, which left the team needing to prove that they are a crew of warriors and not just a group of paper tigers coddled by their home crowd.

The failure to win on the road has taken its toll on NU's confidence.

Sanderford said following Sunday's victory over Iowa State that his team's January road trouble "was a big drain."

However, the Cornhuskers will be

able to forget about last month's insecurities if they have a stronger showing in February.

NU has six regular-season games left to get its self-belief back and position itself for an entry into the NCAA tournament.

This crucial stretch begins tonight as the Cornhuskers play host to Baylor (12-10 overall, 4-6 in the Big 12 Conference) in the 7:05 contest. It can't win on the road tonight, but NU can definitely help its cause with strong play and a victory.

Nebraska forward Naciska Gilmore said the game should show

what the Huskers learned Sunday against the Cyclones. The thrill of the down-to-the-buzzer victory has got the Huskers off their heels, she said.

"I just feel like after Sunday's game there isn't any pressure on us," Gilmore said.

"We're no longer the hunted but the hunter. Now we're just going to go out and try to win the last six."

Senior forward Cori McDill contrasted Gilmore's statements about the pressure of winning in February, and more specifically, the contest vs. BU.

"We know if we don't win this game, the other games down the road

won't mean as much," McDill said.

NU is currently 16-7 and is tied for fifth place with Kansas State in the Big 12 conference with a 5-5 record.

The Huskers are considered to be on the NCAA tournament "bubble." However, NU has sturdy credentials over other such "bubble" teams. The Big 12 is perceived as one of the nation's toughest leagues this year and Nebraska has an impressive RPI, standing at No. 24 in the land.

All that stated, the Huskers would feel more confident about their post-season chances if they extend their 27-game home winning streak tonight.

McDill said it is a must-win game. "Things are starting to dwindle down to where these games mean more than the ones earlier this year," McDill said. "It's time to lay it all on the line."

"We're no longer the hunted but the hunter."

NACISKA GILMORE
NU forward

NU throwers follow legacy of success

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Wibbels, who finished fifth in the 20-pound weight throw at the Sevigne, has "nothing to lose" in the shot put. And occasionally, she has a lot to win, like when she beat Beachler a few weeks ago.

"That's motivated me more she knows," Beachler said. "After she gave me a bitter pill of defeat, I had to assess what I was doing and why I wasn't throwing as far."

"Oh, I knew about it bothering her," Wibbels said of beating Beachler. "I just chose not to tell her. But I knew it bothered her. It's like me in the hammer. When you've got an event that's your event, you're going to want to do well in it."

"But we don't get mad each other—we don't get mad at all—if one of us beats somebody else. It's like 'You beat me? Oh cool, now I can come back and beat you.' It's completely positive."

Colligan sees both Beachler and Wibbels as having the potential to make big runs toward conference and national titles in the future. Maybe not this year, although he expects them to do well.

What Colligan appreciates most, though, is the ability to have a strong program year in and year out.

"Expectations get raised for myself and the program. I remember starting here and dreaming about my first 50-foot thrower as a coach. That's still a magical mark for me. I feel like I've got great throwers every year."

And Wibbels hopes that she can add a few numbers to those record boards that sit at the south end of the track. Does she study those numbers? Wibbels put her hand up to her face and smiles. Yes, she knows them. By heart. The records are memorized.

"I read the numbers every day," Wibbels said. "All I think to myself is 'OK, I'm going to get that mark; OK, this what I have to throw.' I do that every day."

"It's not about 'Oh, can I throw that?' It's 'When am I going to throw it?'"

Faehn-Tetreault good influence

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power for Nebraska gymnasts.

"Learning from the way my coaches coached and taking that with me makes me the coach I am," Faehn-Tetreault said.

And according to her associates, she's a pretty darn good one.

"She's been such a great addition to our staff," said Head Coach Dan Kendig, who worked with Faehn-Tetreault in the summer. "I brought her in and am so confident in her because of the experience she has brought here."

"She tells it like it is, and when she sees something she doesn't like, she steps up and says so," junior All-American Heather Brink said.

This is probably a trait Faehn-Tetreault picked up from her coaches. She said they all had different methods of motivation that she uses now.

"I don't beat around the bush, and I think that's the way to go. When they know what's right or what's wrong now, they'll get better quicker."

And right now her beam team continues to do just that. With seniors Nicole Wilkinson and Courtney Brown hitting 9.80s and higher in meets, it seems as though Faehn-Tetreault knows what she's doing.

The coach looked at McLaughlin on the beam, tired, struggling, and saw herself. As Kendig watched, Faehn-Tetreault assured her everything was fine. The three looked at each other, nodded their heads, and smiled, knowing they were on the same page.

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