

## Big 12 Notebook

There was some heated debate around the Big 12 Conference on Monday as to whether or not the conference tournament should be moved from Kemper Arena in Kansas City, Mo., after the contract expires following the 2001 season.

Talk ranged from moving the tournament to Dallas and appeasing the old Southwest Conference teams, or rotating the tournament.

The tournament, which took root at Kemper when the Big Eight was still intact, is criticized most openly by coaches of the former SWC.

"There had been some great traditions in the Big Eight," Texas Tech Coach James Dickey said. "But there were also some great traditions in the Southwest Conference. We should at least examine some options for rotating the tournament."

Oklahoma State guard Adrian Peterson was named Big 12 player of the week after notching 20- and 21-point games in Cowboy wins over Nebraska and Missouri.

Peterson now leads the league in scoring with 18.1 points per game.

Clifton Cook, for the second time in three weeks, was named the Big 12 newcomer of the week.

Cook is eighth in the conference in scoring with 15.3 ppg and had 9 points and seven assists in a loss to Colorado and 19 points and nine rebounds in Saturday's loss to Texas.

"You can't really describe what Clifton has meant to our program," Aggie Assistant Coach Tom Billeter said. "Clifton is as good a guard as we've ever played against or coached."

In an early verbal poll of Big 12 coaches, Venson Hamilton's name surfaced as a potential conference player of the year.

"He's a wonderful young man," Dickey said. "He's really improved his face-up game, and that'll help him on the next level."

Some of Hamilton's peers on the court also praised the Cornhusker big man, who is averaging 15.6 points and 10.5 rebounds per game.

"I'd have to go with Venson for player of the year," Colorado forward Jamahl Mosley said. "He's averaging a double-double per game - that's not easy to do - and he gets it done night in and night out."

Kansas Coach Roy Williams notched his 300th career win with the Jayhawks' 60-50 win over Oklahoma on Saturday.

However, with the end of the season approaching, Williams said he hasn't had much time to savor the moment.

"With everything going on, I really haven't been able to think about it," he said. "But it's been a great run, and I hope it continues."

Big 12 notebook compiled by senior staff writer Adam Klinker

## Coaches look toward tournament

BY ADAM KLINKER  
Senior staff writer

It's tournament time ... almost. And as is usually the case in the waning weeks of February, things are starting to come together, compared to weeks before.

Things are no different in the Big 12 Conference, where the scrap is on for seeding in the March 4-7 conference tournament in Kansas City, Mo.

With six teams vying for four first-round byes in the double-elimination contest, the pack leaders have changed considerably from just a week ago, but as coaches around the Big 12 are saying, none of that's going to matter when the tournament season starts.

"This is what's great about tournament play - everybody gets a new

lease on life," Texas Coach Rick Barnes said. "If you can go there and catch some magic in a bottle for three or four days, you get a bid to the NCAA Tournament. You have to expect the unexpected."



Asbury

Missouri to clinch the title, a No. 1 seed in the conference tournament and most likely, an NCAA Tournament bid.

The Longhorns (17-10 overall, 12-2 in the Big 12), who have nearly run away with the Big 12 Conference Championship, need to win just one of their remaining games against Baylor or

"This league is awfully balanced. It's going to make for a great tournament."

JAMES DICKEY  
Texas Tech coach

Thus far, however, only Baylor, at 0-14 in conference play, has come up with a concrete seeding. They will go into Kansas City having to play at the bottom of the heap.

Texas and Baylor aside, the 10 other teams are still controlling their own destinies as two games remain in the season.

And with such parity in the league, many coaches are preparing for a dogfight at the tournament.

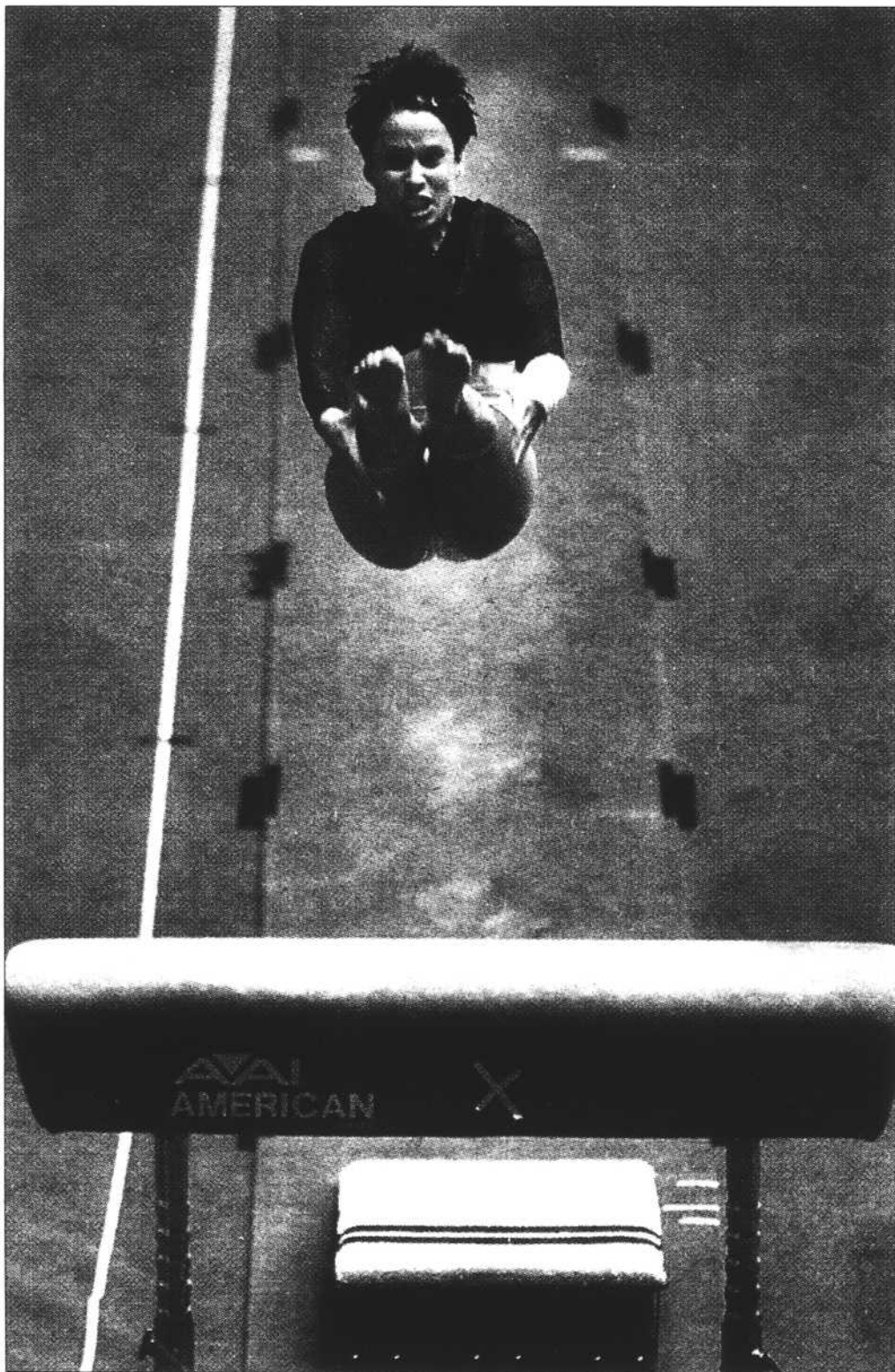
"This league is awfully balanced,"

Texas Tech Coach James Dickey said. "It's going to make for a great tournament, but everyone's going to want to win as many games as they can, and it may come down to a lot of tie-breakers because so many teams are bunched together."

In addition to Texas Tech, Iowa State and Colorado are also 5-9 in the conference and, along with Kansas

Please see **TOURNEY** on 8

## Spring in your step



NU GYMNAST NICOLE WILKINSON vaults during Nebraska's meet with Oregon State and Brigham Young on Monday. Wilkinson, who finished second in the all-around competition to Misty Oxford, helped the Huskers to victory over the Beavers and Cougars as NU had a team score of 196.075. Oregon State had a 194.575. BYU had a 193.4. The score was a team high for the season and the fifth-best score in NU history. It was achieved without the help of NU gymnast Heather Brink, who was out with an injury. The victory marked the 200th win of NU Coach Dan Kendig's career in gymnastics. The meet went much more slowly than normal because of the lack of judges at the meet. Only two judges were able to brave the snow and wind to make it to the Bob Devaney Sports Center. Nebraska is next in competition this weekend for the Masters Classic, which will be hosted by the Huskers.

MATT MILLER/DN

## Wisconsin coach headed back to NU

John Cook, who is a former assistant coach for Nebraska's volleyball squad, was named associate head coach Monday.

From staff reports

The Nebraska volleyball team will be welcoming a familiar face to the coaching staff for the 1999 season.

John Cook, head coach at Wisconsin and former NU assistant coach, was named Monday as the

Cornhuskers' new associate head coach. Cook steps in for assistant coach Cathy Noth, who resigned Jan. 24. His tenure is slated to begin March 1.

"We are fortunate to get a coach familiar with Nebraska, and who has been successful at all levels," NU Coach Terry Pettit said. "In order for Nebraska to remain a national power, it is important to go

out and recruit a person with John's experience." In six seasons at Wisconsin, Cook had a 161-73 record, won a Big Ten title and led the Badgers to post-season play in each year, including the regional finals in 1997 and 1998.

Cook was most recently in Lincoln for UW's five game loss to the Huskers in the NCAA Pacific Regional Championship last December.

While an assistant under Pettit from 1988-91 at NU, Cook saw the Huskers reach the Final Four twice, including a second place finish in 1989.

"I'm excited to be working with Coach Pettit. I think he's the best coach in the profession," Cook said. "The support that Nebraska receives is unparalleled from top to bottom."

Cook's coaching resume also extends into the Olympic ranks, where he was an assistant on the Barcelona 1992 bronze medal-winning U.S. men's national team.

Cook's arrival could signify a possible passing of the torch, should Pettit decide to retire in the future.

But for now, Cook said he is happy just to be back at NU.

"This is an excellent opportunity for my family and I," Cook said. "We are excited about moving back to Lincoln. We always had a saying during my time at Nebraska - 'Once a Husker, always a Husker.'"

"The support that Nebraska receives is unparalleled from top to bottom."

JOHN COOK  
NU associate head coach