

SPORTS

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Big 12 embraces busy bowl season

■ The six teams will try and improve upon last year's 3-4 Big 12 record.

By JOSHUA CAMENZIND
Staff writer

The Big 12 Conference will find itself bowling six times over in the 1999-2000 college football bowl season.

Oklahoma, Kansas State, Nebraska, Colorado, Texas and Texas A&M all will try and better the 3-4 record compiled by Big 12 teams in bowls last postseason. Texas Tech was the only Big 12 bowl-eligible team that did not get invited to a bowl.

Oklahoma (7-4) will face Mississippi (7-4) in the Independence Bowl on Dec. 31 at 7:30 p.m. The bid marks the first bowl for the Sooners since 1994.

OU Coach Bob Stoops said he is pleased with leading his team to a bowl in his first year as a head coach.

"We realize that being in a bowl is an award for having a solid year," Stoops said. "I am appreciative of our seniors and the leadership on our team in our first year here."

Ole Miss running back Deuce McAllister is looking forward to playing the Sooners.

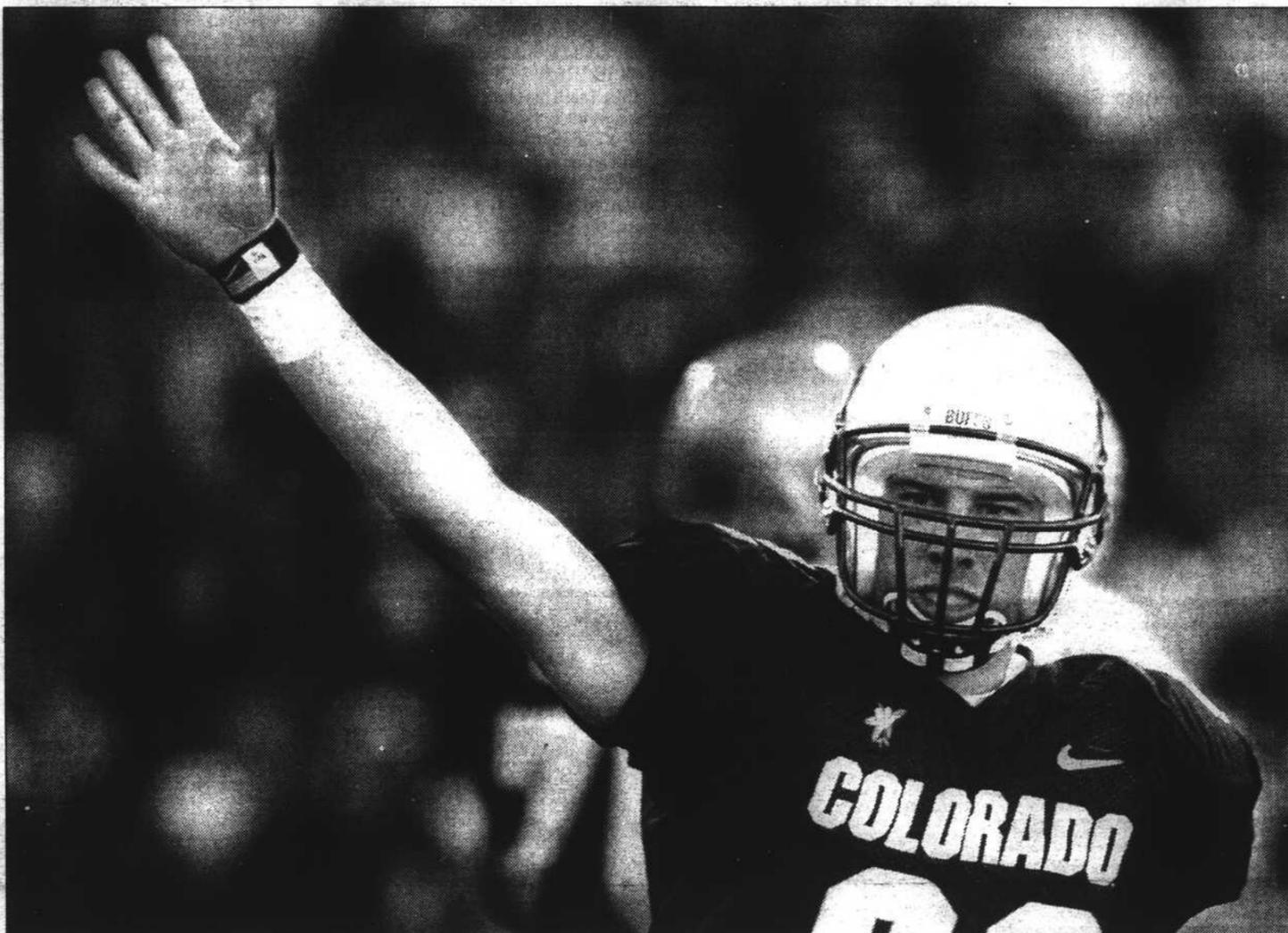
"They have great tradition at Oklahoma," McAllister said. "You usually think of the wishbone offense with them, but they have a great quarterback, and they really like to air it out."

"Their coach (Stoops) knows a lot about defense and has done a great job out there. It is going to be a great challenge for our offense against their defense."

Kansas State (10-1) will play Washington (7-4) in the Holiday Bowl on Dec. 29 at 7 p.m. after being snubbed by the Cotton Bowl.

Wildcat Coach Bill Snyder said his team is looking forward to playing an improved Washington team, coached by former Colorado Coach Rick Neuheisel.

"We have looked at Washington," Snyder said. "I see a team that has made vast improvement throughout the course of the season. That is what you would expect with a new staff



COLORADO WIDE RECEIVER John Minardi and the rest of the Buffaloes will face Boston College in the Insight.com Bowl. Colorado finished with a 6-5 season, including a 33-30 overtime loss to the Huskers. LANE HICKENBOTTOM/DN

and players becoming accustomed to each other."

Snyder's team is a big favorite (11 points) against the Huskies, just as it was against Purdue last year in the Alamo Bowl.

Purdue beat KSU 37-34, but Snyder said he does not see similarities in the two games.

"Last year's ball game is just different from this," Snyder said. "It is a ball game we need to prepare well for. Last year was a little different scenario because we were coming off a loss to Texas A&M. That was a

tremendously punishing loss emotionally for this football team.

"We were not well enough prepared to win the Alamo Bowl. It was an emotional and mental thing because there was so much residue left from the Big 12 Championship game."

Texas (9-4) will meet Arkansas (7-4) in the Cotton Bowl. The game, in Dallas, will be played at 10 a.m. on Jan. 1.

The Longhorns and the Razorbacks will renew a border rivalry that climaxed 30 years ago in the

"Game of the Century," won by Texas 15-14. UT went on to win the national title.

Arkansas won the last matchup in 1991 14-13, but the rivalry ended when UT left the Southwest Conference. The rivalry will be renewed again in 2003 when Arkansas travels to Austin.

Texas Coach Mack Brown said his team will have no problem building emotion for the game.

"When you are coaching at the University of Texas, you need to win your bowl games," Brown said.

"There is not a game that is not important to you. We would like to be a top 10 team."

"Arkansas has beaten Tennessee and Mississippi State. They have had some big wins this year, so it will be a hard game for us. To play the emotional game against Texas A&M, and then the game against Nebraska and this will be an emotional game because it is a renewed series with Arkansas."

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NU ekes out win over Huskies

By BRANDON SCHULTE
Staff writer

Using a "mad dog" like effort, the Nebraska women's basketball team ended a two-game home losing streak against Washington.

By opening the second half in a 1-2-2 "mad dog" press, which was keyed by Stephanie Jones, Brooke Schwartz and Nicole Kubik, NU went on a 25-3 run to take a 67-48 point lead after trailing at halftime 45-42.

But the Cornhuskers proved that no lead is safe, by turning a sure blowout win into a nail-biter as they defeated Washington 89-86 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center on Monday night in front of 3,020 fans.

Coach Paul Sanderford said he was concerned that his team didn't close out the win on their home court when they had a sizable lead.

"I was frustrated because we didn't finish," Sanderford said. "I thought we were in control of the game, and then we couldn't finish. We just couldn't make adjustments."

After Washington took a three-point lead to halftime, the first six minutes of

the second half were controlled by Nebraska.

With Jones as the "mad dog" — the main trapper at the top of the defense — and Schwartz and Kubik in a tandem behind her, NU had several easy baskets off of UW turnovers. On the night the Huskies lost 30 turnovers, but the Huskers weren't much better with 27 of their own.

Kubik said the increased tempo caused by the press was to Nebraska's advantage.

"I think so," said Kubik, who narrowly missed a triple double, finishing with 23 points, 10 assists and nine steals. "Once we got the game sped up, the crowd got into the game. Faster play is what players like to play and what the fans want to watch. When the crowd gets into it, everyone on the team gets hyped up."

A 20-second time out for Washington and a layup by UW's Megan Franza, who finished with a game-high 26 points, ended NU's run.

The Huskies then chipped away at the Huskers' lead, cutting it to four on a jumper by Kellie O'Neil with 43 seconds left. After a free throw by Husker Amanda Went, Franza hit a layup with

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| Nebraska | 89 |
| Washington | 86 |

five seconds left to cut the lead to three.

Husky Coach June Daugherty said the comeback in this game can serve as a learning experience for her young team.

"I'm proud of us being able to get back in the game with us being so young," said Daugherty of her team that doesn't have a senior on the roster. "I told them the way we played during the comeback is the way you have to practice and play for 40 minutes. This game was a great lesson for us."

Washington then fouled freshman Isha Kelley with 1.7 seconds left. She missed two free throws, then UW called a time out with 0.7 seconds remaining. But UW couldn't get a shot off, as Schwartz intercepted a three-quarter court inbound pass.

Kubik said to get a victory in this game is a big relief.

"We're acting almost like we lost the game," Kubik said. "We needed this win for our confidence. We need to get that hunger back at home. Hopefully we'll dominate at home now."

NU examines weaknesses

By MATTHEW HANSEN
Staff writer

Six weeks ago at the season's first press conference, Head Coach Danny Nee talked at length about the depth of the talent on his team. He also cautioned unbridled optimism, saying that much work needed to be done before his inexperienced team could realize its potential.

"That's the biggest question mark of Nebraska basketball," Nee said at the time. "How will the new people blend with the old people? They certainly have the talent, but now can we pull it together in a team-oriented offense and defense?"

Six games into the season, after blowout losses to Southern Mississippi and Rutgers and a shocking defeat at the hands of largely unknown Western Carolina, it's safe to say the problems Nee outlined in October haven't been solved.

Nee doesn't deny it. Neither do his players. After NU's 63-47 win over Monmouth in the consolation game of the Ameritas Classic on Saturday, sophomore Guard Cary Cochran said

he was pleased with his team's performance. He also said they had a long way to go.

"Obviously we didn't patch everything up (in the win)," Cochran said. "I think we made a small step, though. It's evident that we still have about 150 paces left to go, but at least we got one step out of the way."

Nee said the reasons for the Huskers' win Saturday night were the same reasons for their subpar play in the previous five games. He pointed to good foul shooting, better shot selection and only four turnovers in the second half as keys to the win.

The statistics show these things haven't been happening on a regular basis for Nebraska. The team is averaging 20 turnovers a game contrasted with only 10 assists. Through six contests the Huskers are shooting only 25 percent from beyond the 3-point arc and 56 percent from the free-throw line.

The coach recognized the problems and said improvement in the areas would need to continue — and quickly.

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