

UCSB ends Nebraska's run at final four

BY JOHN GASKINS
Staff writer

UCSB	15	7	15	15
Nebraska	5	15	8	3

This time, there was no miracle comeback.

Down two games to one, the 10th-ranked Nebraska volleyball team tried to dig deep into its usually well-stocked barrel of grit and guts in Thursday night's NCAA Pacific Regional semifinal against No. 7 UC-Santa Barbara.

But the barrel was empty. The Gauchos (29-5) recovered from a furious second game NU

attack and a scrappy third game comeback to overpower the Huskers in four games, 15-5, 7-15, 15-8, 15-3, in front of 1,154 at Stanford's Maples Pavillion in Palo Alto, Calif.

UCSB, which advanced to today's regional final, ended Nebraska's 12-match winning streak and prevented NU — which finished its season 27-6 — from making its fourth final four trip in five years.

And in the end of a season full of

early growing pains and heroic late-season triumphs, all the Huskers were left with were plenty of tears to shed in the locker room.

"There were, there are and there will be," Associate Head Coach John Cook said when asked if the players and coaches shed tears. "It was a difficult loss for everybody."

But the real question in the aftermath of 1999's last match: Was this indeed the last match of 23-year NU Head Coach Pettit's career?

"That's the last thing on our minds right now," said Cook, the former Wisconsin Head Coach who Pettit

"There's always a desire to play well. I thought tonight we tried so hard we outplayed ourselves."

NANCY MEENDERING
NU All-American candidate

hired last spring under high speculation that he would be Pettit's heir-apparent, possibly after this season. There was no word from Pettit after the match about his retirement

decision. If it was Pettit's last match, however, it might leave a bitter taste in his

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NU runs out of gas in loss

BY MATTHEW HANSEN
Staff writer

OMAHA — Cookie Belcher and the Nebraska men's basketball team weathered the storm of a Creighton sellout crowd and a Bluejay offensive onslaught for a half.

The final 20 minutes were a different story. Feeding off the Omaha Civic Auditorium crowd, Creighton broke open the close game early in the second half en route to an 89-72 victory over the Huskers.

"Creighton played at an extremely high level tonight, both offensively and defensively."

DANNY NEE
NU coach

Belcher, who scored 16 points on 7-10 shooting despite a near-useless right wrist, said the difference was the intensity both teams brought out of the locker room after intermission.

"We came out in the first half fired up and ready to play, and so did they," Belcher said.

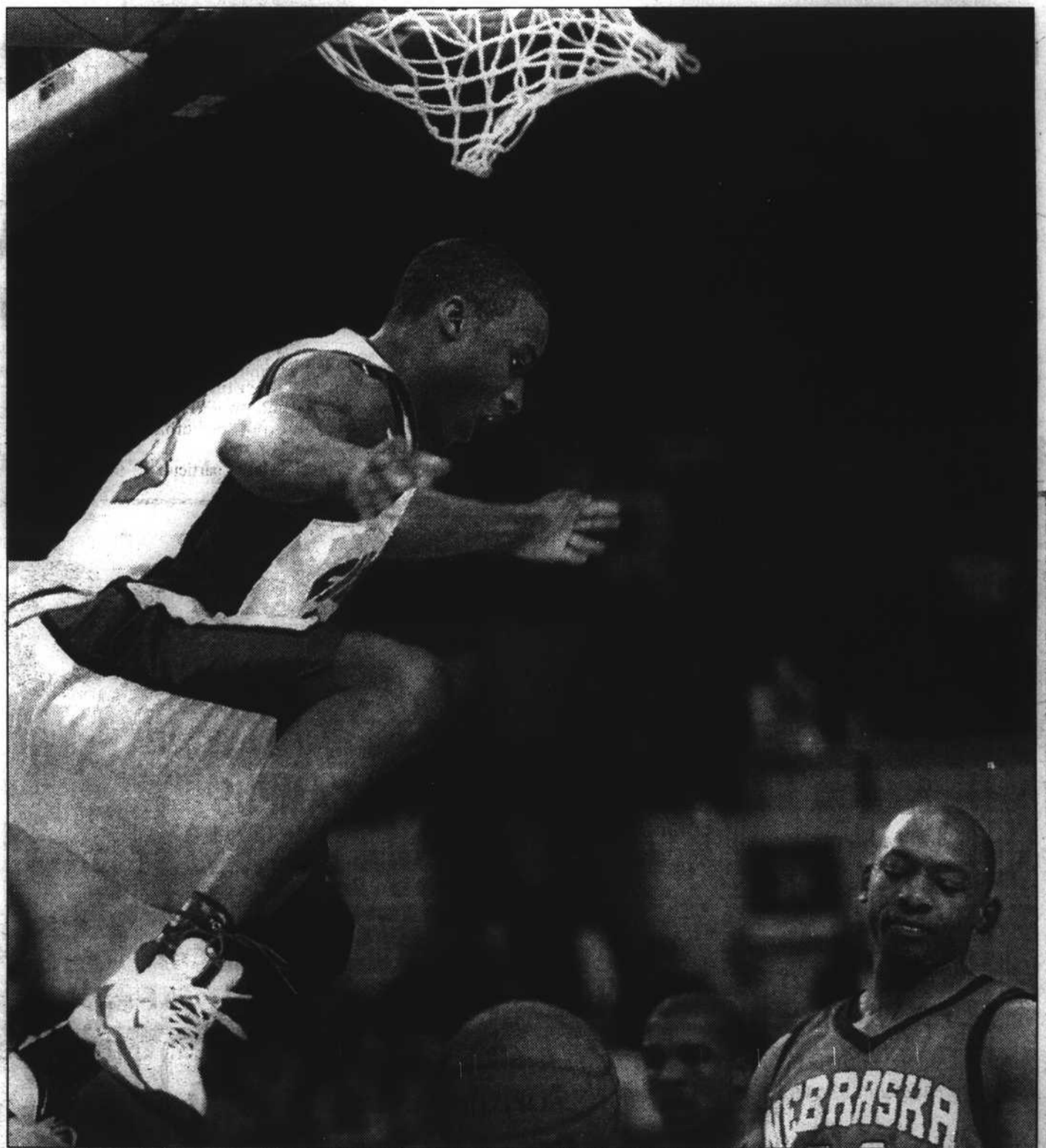
"In the second half, we

lost some of that intensity and started to hang our heads a little bit. It came down to heart. Creighton played harder than we did."

With just three minutes left in the first half, it looked like NU would go into intermission with the lead. The Huskers led by seven after two straight alley-oops to Belcher and a jumper by Larry Florence. The Bluejays stormed back, though, using a 10-1 run to end the half and take a 40-38 lead into the locker room despite a perfect 5-5 half from the field by Belcher.

Nebraska Head Coach Danny Nee said Belcher played courageously and gave the team a lift. He also said that the senior guard would definitely use his medical redshirt.

"I thought Cookie did the best job he could do under the circumstances of playing with one hand. I can't ask him to do more than that. For the record, I'll tell you that he's going



NEBRASKA'S RODNEY FIELDS frowns as Creighton player Terrell Taylor descends from a dunk in the Bluejays' 89-72 victory over the Huskers on Thursday night in Omaha.

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Injured senior, talented freshman key CU's victory

BY JOSHUA CAMENZIND
Staff writer

As time expired on Creighton's 89-72 victory over Nebraska, Donnie Johnson applauded with a grin a mile wide.

Johnson, a senior forward from Omaha Central, brought intensity to the Bluejays when they needed it the most to avenge last year's 76-60 Husker win in Lincoln.

With about one minute, 30 sec-

onds remaining in the first half, Johnson blocked NU forward Louis Truscott and then proceeded to grab the rebound and throw it off guard Cary Cochran in a heads-up play. This all came just after he had ignited the crowd with a one-hand slam the play before.

"At that point and time we were down a bit, and then the energy I brought just got us back into the game," Johnson said.

But CU Coach Dana Altman felt another play Johnson, who is one of

three Nebraskans on the Bluejay roster, made was a bigger key to the win.

"I thought Donnie Johnson made the biggest play of the night when he dove on that loose ball and kicked it to Matt West for a layup," said Altman, who won his 300th career game as a coach. "I thought the team's energy went up after that."

Johnson has been battling back pain all season and played only 16 minutes. But his 10 points, all in the first half, were key. He said afterwards that, "With winning the game, all the

pain is gone now."

The Bluejays were also helped by 24 Nebraska turnovers and by shooting 28 of 31 from the foul line. Altman said he feels his club should be able to shoot that percentage on a consistent basis.

"I think our team has the potential to shoot like that all the time," Altman said. "You look down our team, and we have good shooters."

CU had five players in double figures with Justin Haynes scoring nine, and West adding eight. The Bluejays

knocked down 9 of 20 3-pointers while committing only 13 turnovers.

The biggest factor could have been a player that NU Coach Danny Nee had heard little about before last night — Bluejay freshman Terrell Taylor.

Taylor shot 8 of 10 from the field, including 3 of 3 on 3-pointers, on his way to scoring a game-high 21 points.

Although he is from Bridgeport, Conn., Taylor said it felt good to win the intrastate rivalry.

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