

**BIG 12 NOTEBOOK**

Think, the ACC is a basketball powerhouse, or maybe the Pac-10?

Try the Big 12 conference this year. With Iowa State moving into the coaches poll at No. 23 last week and staying in there at No. 24 this week, the Big 12 has five teams in top 25 — the first time in conference history that has happened.

Joining Iowa State is No. 13 Texas, No. 14 Oklahoma State, No. 15 Kansas and Oklahoma, in at a tie for 17th.

But even with five teams ranked, many Big 12 coaches still aren't happy, pointing to a hot Missouri squad that they say should be ranked also.

In regards to Mizzou, the Tigers have won five in a row including recent blowouts of Kansas and Texas A&M, in which they had an average margin of victory of 26.5 points. They should only get better now that Kareem Rush is back from a nine-game NCAA suspension. Rush

returned vs. A&M to tie a career-high sixteen points.

But Missouri has a big roadblock ahead of its winning ways. The Tigers play at Colorado on Wednesday and Missouri hasn't won in Boulder since 1994.

Looking for a ticket to the Big 12 conference tournament? It might not be so easy: League officials are saying that the tournament games, which take place in Kansas City on March 12-15, have been sold out for the second time ever. However, they are saying that only conference tickets have been sold out, and that a few tickets may remain through individual retailers.

Texas Junior Chris Mihm is the Big 12 conference player of the week. The junior forward averaged 21 points a game and 11 boards. He tied his season high of 28 points, and his career

high of 17 boards in Texas' win over Colorado.

Kansas freshman Nick Collison got the rookie of the week honors, averaging 15 points and 10 rebounds while shooting a shade under 67 percent from the floor.

Nebraska guard Matt Davison just might be a little more than a novelty act for the 10-10 Huskers. Best known as a wide receiver who made the most immaculate catch in football history, Davison also made his first start for the men's basketball team vs. Kansas State.

The junior walk-on scored two points and had an assist and a steal while playing stellar defense. Not to mention he helped get Coach Danny Nee win No. 253, which tied Nee with Joe Cipriano for the most in school history.

**Big 12 Notebook is compiled by staff writer Trevor Johnson.**

**Ratings strong for Bowl**

■ The game garnered a 43.2 rating, 19th best in Super Bowl history.

NEW YORK (AP) — Small markets don't hurt Super Bowl ratings — especially when the game comes down to the final play.

St. Louis' stirring 23-16 victory over Tennessee on Sunday night drew a 43.2 rating and a 62 share on ABC, up 7 percent from last year. That makes it the 19th-highest rated among the 34 Super Bowls.

Last year's game, Denver's 34-19 win over Atlanta, received a 40.2 rating and 61 share, the lowest rating since the 1990 game registered a 39.0 rating.

ABC estimated 130,745,000 people watched the game, making it the fifth most-watched telecast in U.S. history, trailing four other Super Bowls. Last year's game, broadcast by Fox, was watched by 127.5 million.

The No. 1 program was the 1996 Super Bowl between Dallas and Pittsburgh, watched by 138.5 million.

With two small markets, ABC said last week it hoped for a 42.0 rating, but the close games caused ratings to grow throughout the night.

When the game began at 5:26 p.m. CST, it had a 39.0 rating and 61 share, which grew to 41.4/64 from 5:30-6 p.m., 42.7/64 from 7-7:30 p.m. and 43.5/64 from 6:30-7 p.m.

The halftime show got a 40.8/48, and the second half began with a 43.9/62 from 7:30-8 p.m. That was followed by a 44.2/62 and a 46.9/65 for the final half hour, which included Kurt Warner's 73-yard touchdown pass to Isaac Bruce and Mike Jones' tackle of Kevin Dyson at the 1-yard line as time ran out.

The rating for the final half hour was up 21 percent from the 38.9 for the final half hour last year.

In St. Louis, the game produced a 55.6 rating and 78 share, and in Nashville, Tenn., it drew a 50.3/67.

In Houston, the Titans' home when the team was the Oilers, the game got a 47.0 rating and 67 share. In Los Angeles, the former home of the Rams, it got a 38.7/64.

In New York, the game got a 39.6 rating and 54 share.

The rating is the percentage of television households watching a telecast, and each point represents 1,008,000 homes. The share is the percentage tuned in among those televisions on at the time.

*Kansas State struggles in month of January*

KSU from page 16

during a trip to the thin air of Boulder, Colo. The Buffaloes beat K-State, 78-70.

The Wildcats then returned home only to find another loss. The Cowboys of Oklahoma State tamed the Cats with a 71-56 score.

This past weekend, Kansas State blew a three-point halftime lead. Nebraska took revenge on K-State, winning 81-72.

"Our problems are very fixable," Kansas State Coach Tom Asbury

said. "We're going to get a little help sometime."

But no relief is in sight for the struggling Wildcats. The strength and depth of the conference will place a difficult task in front of KSU.

Iowa State, Colorado, Oklahoma, Kansas and Missouri are in the near future.

"We have to look at the positives and negatives and move on," Asbury said.

Kansas State will try to turn the season around Wednesday against Iowa State.

*Small town holds onto old stage gym*

■ Hay Springs offers a different way of watching the game, like a movie.

HAY SPRINGS, Neb. (AP) — A bit of high school sports history continues at Hay Springs High School.

The school is one of the last in the state with a basketball court that doubles as a stage.

The gym was built with the main classroom building about 1940, according to Hay Springs School Superintendent Gayla Fredrickson.

"There may be another gym like this in the eastern part of the state, but I'm not sure if it's still being used," she said.

Hay Springs is a city of about 790 people in northwest Nebraska. Crawford, also in the northwest, played its indoor sports in a similar stage-court style gym until completion of a new gymnasium in 1996.

The stage-style gym was state-of-the-art at the time it was built, combining a stage and orchestra pit with an athletic facility.

"It's like sitting in a movie theater," said Hay Springs Girl's Basketball Coach Gene "Mo" Hanks.

The gymnasium's court, which is small compared to modern facilities, was bigger than the old "crackerbox" style gyms of the 1920s and 1930s.

Gyms in many small towns had baskets at various heights, depending on ceiling height, and some even had pillars in the middle of the court. Players often dressed in furnace rooms.

A team with three tall players could stretch fingertip-to-fingertip and defend the width of a floor.

The Hay Springs gym is smaller than today's standard court. The 3-

point arc intersects the sideline boundary, and the center jump circle is closer to the top of each free-throw circle.

"You can't shoot a 3-pointer from the corner here," said Hanks, who came to Hay Springs three years ago after coaching in Crawford and Oelrichs, S.D.

Fredrickson said the Hay Springs gym seating area has been modified to accommodate a concession stand and a platform for the school's pep band. Seating capacity, though, still is about 400.

"We're always crowded to overflowing for graduation," she said.

Principal Aaron Carr said the theater-style seating gives spectators a unique viewing experience for sporting events.

"There's an interesting dynamic for spectators since they're all sitting together on the same side of the court," he said. "There's more sportsmanship since they can't yell back and forth at each other."

"A lot of people prefer having folding seats with backs to sit on instead of narrow bleacher seats," Fredrickson said.

The pep band has a small platform to provide music. The orchestra pit is occupied by the scorer's table and cheerleaders.

Players have the first row of seats on either side of the auditorium. Players check in, then hop up a short flight of stairs to reach the court.

The orchestra pit makes some players hesitant about chasing a loose ball out of bounds.

"I think every Hay Springs player has slid off the stage at one time or another," said Janet Dorshorst, whose sons Joe and Nate played for the Hawks.



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