

Husker women start 'boot camp' preseason training

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think we're not going to see the improvement right now, but in the future we'll see what it has done for us."

The spring break getaway will be twice as sweet for Cepero. It will serve as a homecoming for the freshman who is from the town of Dorado on the island.

Cepero, who will also play basketball for NU next winter, said it is just a coincidence that the trip will be back to her home.

"It was Coach Cook's idea," she said. "I know they usually go somewhere. They just decided to go to Puerto Rico this year."

The Huskers will train at

American University on the island in preparation for the match vs. the Puerto Rican national team at the end of their stay.

Though she said she didn't know a lot about the national team, Cepero said the Huskers should fare well against them.

"We're more prepared in every area of the game than they are," Cepero said.

While the team will use every opportunity to enjoy its spring break shopping or spending time at the beach, Cepero said that the games will be taken seriously.

"We're going to work hard there so we're ready for next season," Cepero said. "And we want to win, that's for sure."

Nee: Coaching tough

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Instead, Nee has gone the junior college route, which has not produced gleaming results.

"If we can get that steady flow of players coming in and keep it consistent, we build to that," Nee said. "Now I can't get a five-year player. We are trying to build that. That is how we stayed competitive."

"That's why I say it is bad recruiting because we have not been able to find role players to come in and fill those spots."

Nee referred to Stanford as not having to worry about their players leaving early for the draft because they don't have that mentality. The current No. 1 team in the nation draws athletes with its strong academics.

"Those guys don't recruit, they reload," Nee said.

Nebraska currently has four junior college players on this year's team, compared to four scholarship

recruits who came here as freshmen and contribute major minutes.

But Nee said it is hard to find those players these days.

"It is just very hard to find players who can play this level, who can take you to the top and keep you there and keep enough of them," Nee said. "So we go the juco route, and the first time they go down to Lawrence, Kan., the four guys on the floor don't know who Phog Allen is."

Nee said redshirt freshman Brian Conklin is that type of player. The experience he has gained this season will help him and the team, Nee said.

As far as finding the right combination and reaching the plateau like Duke, Nee said it is like "winning the lottery."

Nee asked those in attendance at one point, "Why would you come in this business?"

One response was money.

Nee replied: "I can make just as much money on the stock market."

In what might have been a hint to the future, Nee said that seeing cur-

"I can make just as much money on the stock market."

Danny Nee

NU basketball coach, on coaches' salaries

rent Georgia Tech Coach Bobby Cremins, who is resigning at the end of the season, is "like looking in the mirror."

But Nee defended his friend from GT and himself soon after.

"It doesn't make Bobby Cremins or Danny Nee a lesser guy," Nee said. "But when you don't win and don't succeed and don't meet expectations ... there is life afterwards."

"Changing coaches at Nebraska or Georgia Tech doesn't mean it is fixing the problem."

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Hansen: Huskers can't quit season

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Close, hard-fought home losses to Iowa State, Missouri and Oklahoma prove the Huskers have it in them to play with the big boys. In those games, NU competed like crazy before succumbing to inexperience and pressure in the final minutes.

In a backhanded way, it's encouraging. Experience can be gained and is being gained with every game that the Huskers play. Pressure can be overcome and will be with added experience.

There's other reason for hope. His name is Kimani Ffriend, and his talent still largely is untapped. Ffriend has shown flashes of brilliance this year. There have also been stretches when he would've had a hard time scoring against Lincoln High.

You're starting to rub your hands

together now. NU will have an improved Ffriend, who is capable of dominating the Big 12's slow trees consistently. Then there's the return of the proven Belcher, provided he doesn't lose his medical redshirt because of Nee's utter irresponsibility.

Add to that mix New Mexico transfer John Robinson, who becomes eligible in January. He averaged double figures in points for a Sweet-16 team last season.

Steffon Bradford is a good rebounder. Cary Cochran and Danny Walker will be able to come off the bench and display their offensive talents. Louis Truscott shows promise. Redshirt Brian Conklin will add depth and talent down low ...

Stop it. This isn't a fantasy league team. An NCAA tournament bid and (gasp) a win in the Big Dance require more than just talent on paper.

With scrappy play down the stretch, Nebraska can hope to emulate Iowa State. A year ago, the Cyclones went 15-15. At times, they were downright bad.

But Iowa State Coach Larry Eustachy always had ISU playing hard. They turned games into ugliness but clawed for every last point and win.

This season, with the addition of Jamal Tinsley, a guard not as good as Belcher, the Cyclones are 22-4 and tied for the Big 12 lead.

And what if NU goes the other way, which increasingly seems likely after the OSU debacle? What if they throw in the towel and issue a "wait until next year" edict?

Well ...

Matthew Hansen is a sophomore news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan staff writer.

BIG 12 NOTEBOOK

For the second time this year, Colorado guard Jaquay Walls was named the Big 12 player of the week. Walls lit up Iowa State in an overtime thriller, scoring 42 points against the No. 17 Cyclones. Walls previously had won the award the week of Jan. 24.

The women's Big 12 rookie of the week was Colorado's Sabrina Scott. Scott tallied 15.5 points, 8 rebounds and 3.5 blocks in two games. She leads all Big 12 freshmen in double-doubles with six for the season.

Freshman sensation Kareem Rush of Missouri was named the Big 12 rookie of the week for the second time in three weeks. In two games, the freshman guard averaged 25 points, hitting 68 percent from the field. Rush scored a career-high 31 points against Texas Tech.

After having a .583 (7 for 12) batting average, nine RBIs and a home run in three games, Roy York of Oklahoma State was named this week's Big 12 baseball player of the week. York hit a three-run home run in the first inning against conference foe Kansas State in the San Diego baseball showcase.

The Big 12 once again boasts five teams in the AP top 25 men's basketball poll. The Cowboys of Oklahoma State head the list, as they slid two spots to No. 10 this week. Texas moved up three places to No. 14. After the loss to Colorado, Iowa State fell three spots to No. 17. Oklahoma remained idle in the poll at No. 20. Kansas was able to move up a spot to No. 23.

Missouri pitcher Logan Dale used a two-hit win over upstart Northwestern State to win this week's Big 12 pitcher of the week. Dale registered seven strikeouts, four walks and one unearned run in eight innings against NSU.

Keitha Dickerson of Texas Tech was named this week's Big 12 women's basketball player of the week. The senior forward averaged 17.5 points and 9 rebounds in two games last week.

Perfection was dropped by Texas A&M leftfielder Brooke Boyer as pitcher Amy Vinning settled for her first career no-hitter against Colorado State at the GTE Aggie Softball Invitational. Vinning struck out seven batters in the 14-0 win. The game was called after five innings due to the eight-run mercy rule in softball.

Notebook compiled by staff writer Jason Merrihew.



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