

Huskers' title hopes dashed by Huskies

BY JAMIE SUHR

No scoreboard was needed to tell the fate of the Nebraska soccer team.

NU forward Kelly Rheem's teary eyes told the story of the No. 4 seed Huskers' shocking 1-0 loss in the Sweet 16 to the University of Connecticut.

"We never, ever looked past this game, but never in our minds did we think it was going to end here either," Rheem said, sitting at the post-game press conference table.

The Huskies were able to take advantage of an NU mistake at the 38-minute mark. Goalkeeper Karina LeBlanc tried to clear the ball, but UConn's Sarah Popper intercepted the clearance pass and dropped the ball to Alexa Borisjuk, who chipped it over the head of LeBlanc, who was stuck in between the goal line and the 18-yard box.

UConn (17-6-2) could have made the game a lot worse early as two Huskies' shots were deflected off the goal post. One of the shots hit the near post and rolled straight down the goal line to LeBlanc, who couldn't see the ball until the last second.

The Huskers' (22-2) best — and final — chance came in the 85th minute. Midfielder Meghan Anderson sent a corner kick that UConn goalie Maria Yatrakis mishandled, causing a scramble in front of the net.

The play took Yatrakis out of position leaving Huskers Kori Saunders and Danica Carey with two shots, but both were blocked by UConn defenders and cleared out of bounds.

"I knew they weren't going to score by

Nebraska	0
Connecticut	1

the way that we were playing and the attitude that we weren't going to give this game up," said Yatrakis, who made nine saves.

NU Coach John Walker said the difference between this game and the Huskers' 2-0 win at UConn earlier this season was simple.

"In Storrs (Conn.), they never had the lead (in the first game), and here they got the lead and it gave them a little bit of confidence," Walker said.

Another difference, Walker pointed out, was that Connecticut used a fourth defender. Earlier in the season, the Huskies used only three defenders, which UConn Coach Len Tsantiris said was a way to slow down the Husker attack.

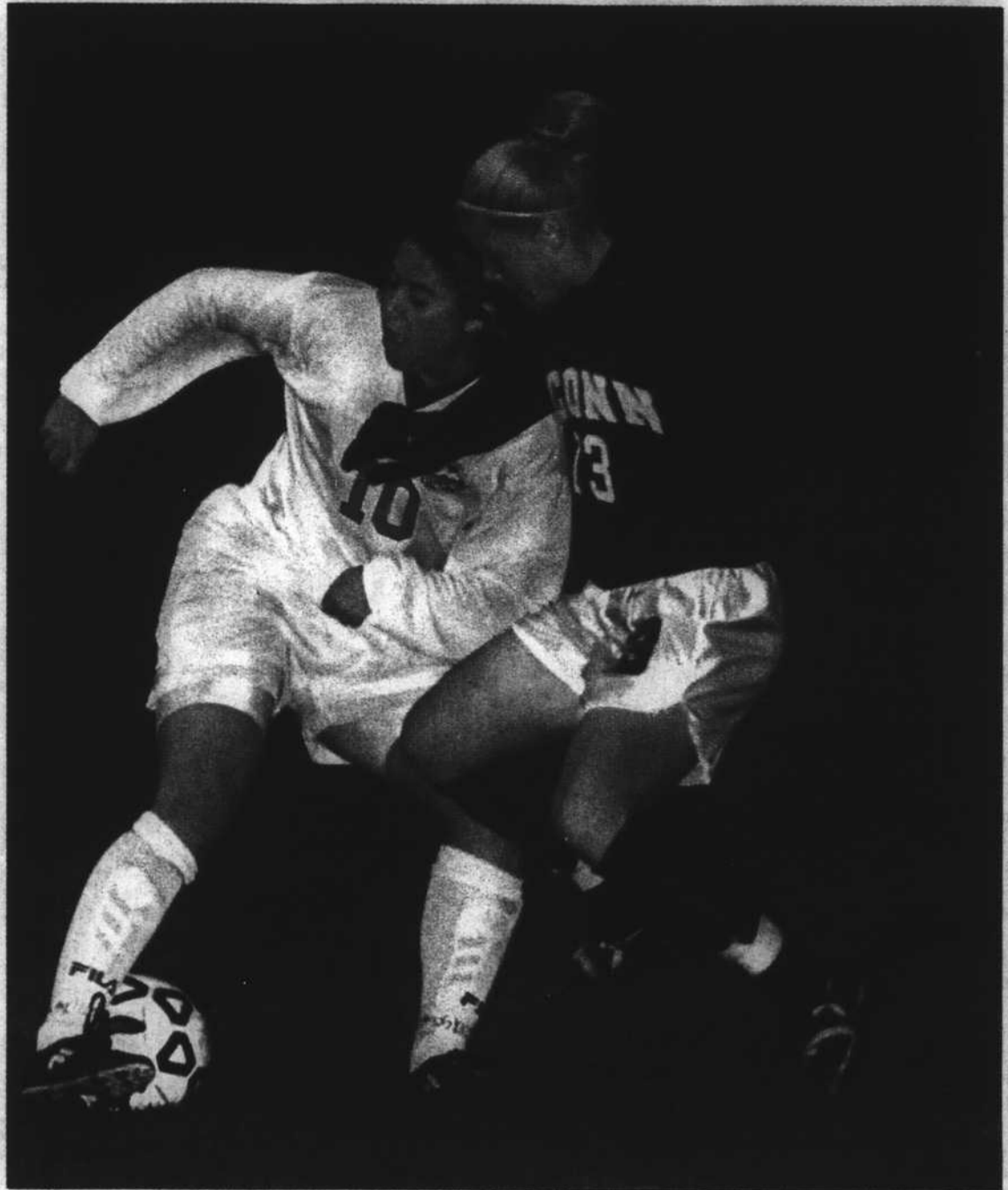
And the new defense worked to perfection as the Huskers were shut out for the first time all year.

NU out-shot the Huskies 20-16 and 9-4 for shots on goal, but UConn's opportunities were better than the Huskers'.

"Our style worked today," Tsantiris said. "It doesn't matter who we play and where, it's just a game."

The Big Red's early exit from the NCAA Tournament put to waste its home field advantage and a chance to go toe-to-toe with 15-time national champion North Carolina — the elite soccer program in the country.

Instead, the Huskers found themselves watching UConn celebrate on the home field NU fought all year to have.



Mike Warren/DN

Forward Kelly Rheem keeps control of the ball as she gets around Connecticut forward Sarah Popper in the second half of the third round of the NCAA tournament. NU out-shot UConn 20-16 in the game, but failed to capitalize and was defeated 1-0 at the Abbot Sports Complex.

Sanderford's troops win Cable Classic

BY JOHN GASKINS

Rule No. 1 for observers of the 2000-01 Nebraska women's basketball team: Never assume anything.

They may be incredibly young. They may, according to Coach Paul Sanderford, get cases of the "hypers" and "colorblindness" every now and again when handling the basketball. And they may have taken a severe, 23-point beating at the hands of a bunch of 17-and-18 year-old Australians on their home wood in an exhibition game.

But the Huskers have already figured out how to beat a top 25 team two games into what is predicted to be a shaky season.

NU followed a 91-59 romp over Oakland of Michigan on Friday night with a statement-making 69-61 triumph over No. 25 California-Santa Barbara to capture the 2001 Time Warner Cable Classic title.

A crowd of 3,121 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center witnessed the same Husker team that looked like scared puppy dogs last week turn into a bunch of pit bulls.

And their coach took a bite of last week's criticism that the season might be grim after last Sunday's 81-58 loss to the Australian Institute of Sport.

"A week ago, you guys didn't give us a chance," Sanderford said. "So, don't ever write us off."

"Hopefully, we've got those jitters out of the way. I don't think this team is going to be particularly intimidated by anybody," Sanderford said.

Not even Sanderford can assume anything. Case in point: senior forward Monique Whitfield — who had shot a grand total of three, 3-pointers in her 33-game NU career — launching a 3-bomb with three minutes left and the Huskers up by just three points with the shot clock reading six seconds.

"I just looked at the shot clock and heard somebody shout (the time) out," Whitfield said, "and just let it go. I was confident I could make it."

Her coach wasn't. "She was working on 3's this morning in the shoot-around, and I said 'stay in your range,'" Sanderford said. The shot fell and the bucket put NU up, 62-55, a lead it protected by hitting seven of eight free throws in the final 48 seconds.

Those shots were badly needed considering Whitfield (11 points on 5 of 7 shooting) made the only three of NU's 13 shot attempts in the final 10 minutes.

The senior, who sat out last year with a torn right ACL, was one of many fresh NU faces providing

Nebraska	69
Santa Barbara	61



Josh Wolfe/DN

NU guard Margaret Richards puts pressure on a Santa Barbara guard during NU's 69-61 Time Warner Cable Classic championship game win over the Gauchos on Sunday. Richards was named tournament MVP after scoring 14 points in the final.

sparks. The youngsters also had a hand in the team's 19 turnovers and 24 personal fouls.

But NU's tenacious defense forced 22 UCSB turnovers on 35 percent shooting and wore down the Gauchos' nine-deep roster. Katye Christensen led the

team with 22 points but didn't have enough help to overcome NU's savvy.

"In practice, we don't have to face someone who

Please see WOMEN on 9

Collier era begins with loss to ORU

BY JOSHUA CAMENZIND

TULSA, Okla. — Nebraska's season opening 87-83 loss to Oral Roberts on Saturday seemed commonplace.

The Huskers traveled to the state of Oklahoma, committed 18 turnovers and lost to a Sutton-coached team.

Nebraska	83
Oral Roberts	87

The catch was NU wasn't in Stillwater, and the coach was Scott Sutton, Eddie's youngest son. However, the outcome was no different as NU failed to win on the road for the 13th straight time. The Huskers, without the suspended Kimani Ffriend and Rodney Fields, were also unable to start Barry Collier's debut season on the right foot.

"It would have been big," said Cookie Belcher, who scored a career-high 27 points and had six assists to lead the Huskers. "We haven't really dug ourselves a hole yet, but we are starting to dig."

It was the Golden Eagles, not the Huskers, who dug themselves a hole early in front of 3,459 fans at the Mabee Center as NU jumped out to a 6-0 lead behind three ORU turnovers. Nebraska extended its lead to 18-6 with 12:38 remaining and would gain a 12-point advantage twice more before Oral Roberts mounted its comeback.

NU held a nine-point lead with 4:32 left in the first half after a Cary Cochran 3-pointer, but ORU would go on to outscore the Cornhuskers 16-4 from that point to take a 41-38 advantage into halftime.

"Human nature says, 'Hey, we're in control here and we were not,'" Collier said.

ORU's Markius Barnes scored 19 of his career-high 24 points in the first half. The Golden Eagles made 16 of 18 free throws and shot 47.8 percent to keep from getting blown out early.

"They attacked better in the first half and we settled for perimeter shots," said Collier, whose team shot 4-17 on 3-pointers.

The second 20 minutes saw Oral Roberts gain eight point leads twice — the latest coming at 3:14 left in the game. NU slowly battled back and with 1:19 left, two free throws by Belcher cut the lead to three. Following an ORU turnover, Belcher missed and NU was forced to foul.

ORU's Evan Black made two free throws and it appeared the Husker's fate was sealed. With four seconds remaining, Belcher was able to cut the lead back down to two with a 3-pointer. But Black hit two more, making Oral Roberts 22 of 25 from the

Please see BASKETBALL on 9

Men's cross country to championships after surprise bid

Witter and Carrizales look for high finishes at nationals after successful regular seasons

BY JILL ZEMAN

Nebraska cross country runners Aaron Carrizales and Marcus Witter have the chance today to end their running careers at NU in style.

The pair of seniors, along with five other members of Nebraska's

cross country team, will compete at the NCAA Championships in Ames, Iowa for the first time since 1997.

The men's team squeaked into the 31-team roster after a fifth-place finish at last week's NCAA Midwest Region meet in Waterloo, Iowa.

To qualify for the event, teams across the nation are divided into nine regions, and the top two finishers of each region automatically receive a bid for the meet.

The 13 remaining slots are doled out to the rest of the teams, and the Huskers were surprised when they learned last Monday they'd qualified.

But a solid season and high finishes by Carrizales and Witter pushed them to the front of the pack to join the big dance.

Carrizales and Witter will be accompanied by a young, inexperienced team at the competition.

Sophomores Jed Barta, Ian Gray and Mike Kamm and fresh-

men Kyle Wyatt and Eric Rasmussen round out the Husker roster for today's race.

Coach Jay Dirksen said after the regional competition, he didn't think the Huskers would make the cut.

But after looking at the results of the other regions, Dirksen said he was still hopeful the team would make it in.

The competition will likely be dominated by top-ranked Colorado, but either No. 2

Stanford and No. 4 Providence could also take the crown.

While a No. 1 finish probably won't happen for the Huskers, Dirksen said he looked for Witter and Carrizales to end their running careers with a bang.

An individual top-20 finish cinches All-American honors, something Witter has sought after through his running career, he said in an interview in September.

"They definitely have the

potential," Dirksen said.

A finish in the top 20 or 25 would please Dirksen, he said.

Although the Huskers barely made it into the competition, Dirksen said he still thought the runners stand a good chance in the race.

Nebraska has faced 23 of this year's 31 competitors, defeating eight of them.

"I don't want to put any limits on us," he said. "I just want to go out and run our best."