

NU road loss streak at 14

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and missed some high-percentage shots at times. But I'm proud of the team and how they hung in there. We gave ourselves a chance in the second half."

That chance came as the Huskers were down as much as eight with 7:29 left in the game. NU battled back, as Wortmann scored to cut the lead to two with under two minutes left. Bradford then hit one of two free throws, cutting the Panther lead to one point with 51 seconds remaining.

Pittsburgh then missed on its next possession, but NU was unable to capitalize as the three Huskers couldn't find the hoop in the final seconds.

The Huskers used only a seven-player rotation, while the Panthers rotated nine, which included former Husker Chad Johnson, who went scoreless in 13 minutes of play.

Collier defended his lineup after the game, which saw reserves Craig Wortmann and Brian Conklin combine for 35 minutes.

"Our seven, without foul trouble, is our best group we can put out there," Collier said. "But when you play other teams with great depth, it gives you problems, and it did tonight."

NU was led by Ffriend's 18 points, while Belcher chipped in 14 on four of 14 shooting. The Huskers committed only 12 turnovers, but were out-rebounded by Pitt 29-26. Senior Steffon Bradford led Nebraska with 11 rebounds.

Nebraska's front line limited Pitt's leading scorer Ricardo Greer to just seven points - a positive that Collier noted after the game. But NU's nemesis throughout the game was freshman Julius Page, who came off the bench to lead the Panthers with 15 points, including three of seven shooting, from 3-point range.

The Huskers haven't won on the road since Feb. 10, 1999, when NU defeated Kansas 64-59 at Allen Fieldhouse.

NU's next two games will come at home in the Husker Team Classic before taking the road again on Dec. 16 to face Miami in the Orange Bowl Classic.

NU battles Wildcats in Alamo

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Antonio, which was of no matter, players said.

"Once you're in Texas, you're in Texas," guard Russ Hochstein said. "As players, we're not too picky; we'll play football anywhere."

Citing the Big Red's success at the Alamodome, where NU won the 1997 and 1999 Big 12 championship games, Hochstein had no complaints about heading to a site where NU is undefeated.

"It's always a great atmosphere for football there," he said. "It's a great place to play a bowl game."

Should Nebraska continue its winning ways, the team has a season that isn't bad by any means, rush end Kyle Vanden Bosch said.

"We could finish this thing off 10-2, which is a good record," Vanden Bosch said, "and nothing to hang your head about."

Huskers hold off Gamecocks to advance to regionals

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Christopher said.

Behind Williams, South Carolina found themselves only three points from victory in game four.

"It was an accomplishment just to go five," Christopher said. "It's Nebraska, they're 29-0 and at home - a win would have been big."

It may not have even gone five, had Nebraska's sophomore Laura Pilakowski not gutted out a 15-kill performance while playing only in the last three games.

It was only two weeks ago that the sophomore underwent appendectomy surgery.

Christopher said it seemed as if Pilakowski had forgotten that she was injured as the match progressed.

Pilakowski and team fired a tenacious attack and block at the

Gamecocks with game four on the line, running off a 7-0 run to win 15-12.

The Huskers seemed to feed off of the ground-shaking noise that only NU Coliseum acoustics could manufacture.

"It was amazing," senior outside hitter Kim Behrends said. "I got goosebumps."

Nebraska had surged in game three beyond the red sea, rallying from a 12-2 deficit and cutting it to 14-13 before falling.

"The crowd was so loud that it really didn't affect us," Christopher said. "We were almost trying to use them as our seventh man."

Cook considered the home court an asset when game five rolled around.

Game fives feature rally scoring, which awards a point to teams on every play, not just on a team's service.

"When you're at home and

you got this crowd and you get in a fifth game, you have to feel pretty confident," Cook said.

Nebraska jumped to an 11-5 lead in the final stanza, and seemed primed for the win when the Huskers made it 14-10.

However, Plummer served three-straight points for the Gamecocks to cut it to one, before a South Carolina net violation finally gave Nebraska the win.

"Anytime you put your heart on the line and lose a three hour match, it's disappointing," Plummer said. "But we left it all on the court."

Nebraska, meanwhile, was happy to still be dancing in this year's tournament.

"We didn't play well tonight," Cook said. "We were out of sync, but we hung tough, the crowd kept us in it and we pulled it out."

It may even serve as a good wake-up call for Nebraska, who



Scott McClurg/DN

Nebraska defensive specialist Lindsay Wissmeier lays out for a dig Friday evening against Princeton in the first round of the NCAA volleyball tournament.

will host 26-6 Ohio State next Friday.

"This was good for us, and

there will be a recommitment and refocus for the team and what we need to do," Cook said.

Wrestlers second in Cliff Keen

BY VINCE KUPPIG

Led by its three All-Americans, the Nebraska wrestling team took second place at the Cliff Keen Las Vegas Invitational this weekend.

The No. 6 Cornhuskers finished with 113.5 points, behind only No. 5 Illinois, which dominated the 52-team field with 156 points.

After defeating 12th-ranked Joe Carr of Michigan at 157 pounds in the semifinals, junior Bryan Snyder, ranked second, escaped with a 6-5 victory over third-ranked Kirk White of Boise State in the finals. Snyder went 6-0 in the two-day tournament to up his record to 9-0 on the year.

At 133 pounds, second-

ranked Todd Beckerman cruised to the individual title with his closest match a 4-2 decision in the final.

NCAA Champion Brad Vering narrowly came away with a victory in the finals. His match against fifth-ranked Pat Quirk of Illinois went to the 30-second tiebreaker. Vering chose the down position and escaped six seconds in for the individual title.

Nebraska's most pleasant surprise came from redshirt freshman Jason Powell. The 18th-ranked 125-pounder started the tournament with two pins on Friday morning. Then Powell got two major decisions against the eighth and 10th-ranked wrestlers to advance to the semifinals on Saturday

morning.

In his next matches, Powell fell to the first and fourth-ranked wrestlers before earning a pin in the fifth-place match. Overall, Powell went 5-2 at the invitational to improve to 7-3 on the year.

Jason Powell performed at a very high level," NU Coach Mark Manning said. "He came in unseeded, which probably wasn't right, but we don't care. We wrestle to be our very best, and he did a good job of that."

Nebraska returns to the mat next Saturday when it plays host to No. 19 Oregon State at 1 p.m. and No. 14 Ohio State at 7 p.m. The two duals will be at Lincoln Northeast High School.

Pilakowski sparks NU

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on," Christopher said.

Pilakowski herself said she felt great on the floor.

"I just wanted to go out there and play with a passion and work hard," she said.

But still, Pilakowski isn't in prime shape. Any hard contact with the floor is prohibited, so Coach John Cook substituted freshman Anna Schrad into the lineup during Pilakowski's rotations in the back row.

Pilakowski couldn't disagree with the decision.

"It's really hard, but in the front row you don't have to deal with that," she said.

But Pilakowski made the most of her time at the net. Cook said

she was the "spark" that helped turn the game around. He said there wasn't one specific turning point in the game, just that Nebraska began playing better, and a lot of that play involved Pilakowski.

"As long as she was successful and doing well," Cook said, "we were going to go with her."

That meant utilizing Pilakowski the majority of the last three games, games that could have been the last three games of NU's season had the Huskers not turned the match into their favor.

They did, and in the eyes of the opposition, win No. 30 for NU had a lot to do with another number, Christopher said.

"That No. 9 was the difference in the match," she said.

Swimmers struggle at Texas Invite

FROM STAFF REPORTS

UCLA took home the women's title with a score of 553.5. Home-team Texas blew away the competition on the men's side with a score of 751.

NU freshman Jerilyn Drummond, claiming fourth-place on the one-meter dive. Senior Bert Locklin claimed a sixth-place finish on the men's three-meter springboard.

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NU rifle team wins home invitational

BY VINCE KUPPIG

Competing in its only home match of the season, the Nebraska rifle team dominated Wyoming on Saturday, defeating the Cowboys 6,134 to 5,600.

With the victory, NU now has six match victories on the year, with its only blemish a fourth-place finish at the Walsh Invitational.

Competing in their second match ever at the Nebraska Indoor Rifle Range, the Cornhuskers shattered many range records. The team's smallbore total of 4,593 and air rifle total of 1,541 each eclipsed range records.

NU Coach Karen Anthony said being able to host a home meet is helpful.

"It's real nice to be able to have one here," she said. "I actually wish we could shoot at least one more match at home per year. Shooting at your home facility is always an advantage."

Sophomore Amanda Trujillo used that advantage to her benefit, leading the way individually for

the Huskers.

She fired a personal-best smallbore score of 1,173 to finish in a tie for first with fellow teammate junior Nicole Allaire. Trujillo also led the air rifle team with a score of 389.

"I've been trying to put good scores in all positions, which has been my biggest challenge this year," Trujillo said. "It still didn't come together the way I wanted it to, but it came together just enough."

Anthony said Trujillo's consistency has improved this year.

"She is actually shooting near her capability level now. She is a very good shooter," Anthony said. "Last year, she was probably not shooting at her capability. Amanda is doing very well this year."

The Huskers will next be competing in El Paso, Texas, on Jan. 13, 2001 against UTEP. Nebraska will take on defending national champion Alaska-Fairbanks on Jan. 14.

Small-school Jays triumph over big NU

BY LINCOLN ARNEAL

quality team," Spanheimer said.

With Creighton's 66-57 win they earned the imaginary title of best women's team in Nebraska.

But, Creighton Coach Connie Yori isn't quite ready to claim that title quite yet.

She said, "Each game is important. This just gives us bragging rights for one year."

The Huskers (4-2) had beaten Creighton (3-1) for the past five years, much of their success coming because of in-state players that chose NU over Creighton among others.

"I was looking out on the court before the game today and I talked to five different Nebraska players," Yori said, "all

kids that we recruited and all kids that chose Nebraska over Creighton."

Even though Creighton has fallen short of Nebraska in the recruiting department recently, Yori thinks that this win may help.

"You understand (the choices of recruits) in our situation. But you hope that maybe this helps us a little bit to get an inroad with the quality of Nebraska kids."

Despite his team's loss, NU Coach Paul Sanderford said that nothing but positives can come out of an in-state rivalry.

"It is good for the state of Nebraska and high school basketball in the state," he said.



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