

Fields has best game despite loss

If there ever was a coming out party, Rodney Fields had one on Saturday against Iowa State.

In undoubtedly his best game as a Husker, Fields scored 12 points in 25 minutes and hit the shot that would put his team up one point with 17 seconds left.

"We needed one player to come in off the bench and give us a spark, and he did," said Cookie Belcher, Fields' roommate.

Of course, Nebraska would go on to lose on a last-second basket by the Cyclones, and Fields' effort was all for naught.

The intense pressure he gave Barry Collier on the defensive end against Jamaal Tinsley, the hanging fade-away jumpers he hit in the lane with a hand in his face and the reliable free-throw shooting his team had lacked this season meant nothing.

On paper that is.

But to a player who is looking at his final stretch as a Husker, this game will mean much more to Fields.

Even though it seems Fields is destined to be cursed — his second-best game at Minnesota earlier this year ended in an overtime loss for NU — the Tampa, Fla., native trudges on.

Because Fields doesn't know how to do it any other way.

Last year — Fields' first on the court for NU — he admittedly struggled. With Belcher out, Fields was thrown into the fire a bit too quickly. And coming off a broken leg the previous season, the rush left Fields hurting and his game somewhere else.

He turned it over, missed layups and fouled at times to make up for the step he was missing. The intense, energetic player that fans saw waving a towel on the bench during his redshirt year was gone.

The intensity was there in short spurts, but the ability just hadn't caught up, leaving Fields to shoot just 36.6 percent from the field and a dismal 18.5 percent from outside the arc.

Fields had 57 turnovers in 29 games, and by the end of the season, he was used sparingly by the departed Danny Nee.

But with fresh legs under him and the renewed fever that goes along with one's senior campaign, Fields has come close to the player he knows he can be.

He now shoots 53 percent from the field and 41.7 percent on 3-pointers. Fields is fourth in the team in assists and steals while playing 26 minutes per contest.

But Fields isn't starting anymore — he hasn't since NU's last matchup with Mizzou.

Collier has instead chose to go with the hot-shooting of Cary Cochran when the tip goes up — something that has tested Fields' will, making him grow as a player.

Fields said he had put in his time as a senior and played hard enough to be a starter, but thought mistakes he made in the past hadn't been forgotten by Collier.

The guard missed NU's first three games while serving a suspension for violating a variety of team rules.

"I have done some things in the past that starters shouldn't have done, but I have learned to accept it and moved on," he said.

Fields, who has had four coaches in the last five years, said he had struggled with the coaching change from Nee to Collier. But some of his problems started back when Assistant Coach Jimmy Williams left for Oklahoma State two years ago.

Transition is something Fields has just learned to grow with.

And play through.

"It hasn't taken away from me playing hard," Fields said. "I am going to play how I normally would play any other time."

Fields wouldn't have it any other way — except to win more in the process. He hasn't finished with a winning record in his last three seasons of playing.

He's tired of losing by a mere two, three or four points. Might as well lose by 20 if you're going to lose, he said.

"Because you can't pin that on one specific moment or play," he said.

Without his hustle, desire and emotion on Saturday, Fields just may have gotten his wish against the Cyclones.

Nebraska wouldn't have even had a chance to let it slip away.

NU looks to overcome loss

BY BRIAN CHRISTOPHERSON

The atmosphere is usually quite gloomy in post-game press conferences of teams that have just lost, and things can seem bleaker still in post-game rooms of teams that lose heart-breakers like the last-second dagger Iowa State stabbed Nebraska with on Saturday.

But somewhere through the sinister post-game clouds that hung over Saturday's 60-59 ISU win was the optimistic voice of Nebraska guard Cary Cochran.

Cochran wasn't exactly singing show tunes, but the junior made it quite clear this Cornhusker team was not about to throw in the towel on this season.

"Stuff like this has the potential to devastate a team" Cochran said. "But we're not going to back down. We're the hunters now, obviously, not the hunted."

Now, the 8-9, 1-3 Huskers have their sights set on some Tigers from Missouri, a humbled team coming into tonight's 7:05 game at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

The 12-5, 3-1 Tigers are on a two-game slide after falling on the road to No. 13 Virginia 85-72 on Saturday.

To keep Missouri on the losing path, Nebraska senior guard Rodney Fields said the Huskers needed to stop the explosive Missouri combination of sophomore

forward Kareem Rush and junior guard Clarence Gilbert.

Rush is averaging 21.6 points per outing while Gilbert isn't far behind with 18.1 points per contest.

Rush and Gilbert hooked up for 30 and 16 points respectively when Mizzou beat Nebraska in Columbia 68-66 less than three weeks ago.

"We can't let Gilbert and Rush get off like they did last time," said Fields, who is coming off a 12-point performance against ISU. "We need to play hard-nosed defense and limit their touches and their shots."

Gilbert also seemed to best Nebraska senior Cookie Belcher in the first meeting, frustrating Belcher with physical play and causing the NU guard to turn the ball over seven times while scoring only eight points.

Fields said Nebraska needed to take a different mindset on offense into tonight's rematch with the Tigers.

"We need to go out there and get things done earlier" Fields said. "We need to establish things early inside with Kimani (Ffriend) and then we can take it outside."

Sitting on the outside is Cochran, who has led the Huskers in scoring the past two games, scoring 17 and 15 points against Kansas and Iowa State respectively, mostly on sizzling three-



DN File Photo
Rodney Fields, coming off a 12 point performance against Iowa State, looks to lead Nebraska past Missouri tonight at the Devaney Center.

point shooting.

Cochran is more concerned with erasing the "sting" he said resided after Saturday's close call.

A win has now become of the utmost necessity to Nebraska.

"We're sitting at 8-9 right now ... that's not where we want to be," Fields said. "A couple of points and we have a better record, but we got to win at home. You have to get these games."

Husker tryouts reveal some hidden talent

BY SEAN CALLAHAN

Throw out a big net, and, amidst the moss, you're bound to catch a keeper.

Last Wednesday the Nebraska football team held its annual winter tryout, inviting anyone who thought they were good enough to make the team to try out.

Of the 60 or so athletes that showed up, 17 were asked to go through the full six-week winter conditioning program.

And after the final testing scores were added up, one name stood well above the rest.

Brandon Biodrowski, a 5-foot-10, 186-pound freshman from Fort Calhoun put up impressive performance index numbers.

His 2,318 points ranked him just outside the top five of the team leaders.

Biodrowski's 37 1/2 inch mark in the vertical led the team, while his 40- (4.58) and 10-yard (1.57) dash times ranked second on the team overall.

All this was from a guy who just spent his first semester on the seventh floor of Harper Hall, living the life of a normal University of Nebraska-Lincoln student.

He said he looked forward to the chance to become a Husker all fall.

"I didn't decide to try out just now," Biodrowski said. "I decided to try out last year when I graduated."

Brandon Biodrowski
Husker hopeful

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Nate Wagner/DN
Alecia Ingram, a freshman all-around competitor (specializing in all events) on the Nebraska gymnastics team is one of two all-around gymnasts on the team. Ingram will be the only all-around member competing against Missouri Jan. 28.

Gymnast shines after turbulent start

Coming back from a tragic loss, Ingram has proven her worth

BY JASON MERRIHEW

Coming from an elite gymnastic program that produced the likes of Shannon Miller and former Husker Heather Brink, one would assume Alecia Ingram would become a future star at the University of Nebraska.

And after just three collegiate competitions, Ingram's star is, in fact, shining brightly.

Right out of the gates, Ingram has proven why she was a member of the U.S. Senior National Team for four years (1995-99).

Facing stiff competition in the Maui Invitational, Ingram won the all-around title, edging out last year's NCAA runner-up, Mohini Bhardwaj from UCLA.

"She (Ingram) has a terrific amount of confidence in her abilities," NU Coach Dan Kendig said. "She is tremendously focused and has a great work ethic."

Ingram's winning score of 39.425 in the invitational tied the best freshman mark in school history, which was set by A.J. Lamb last season.

In the dual against Big 12 rival Iowa State, Ingram again took the all-around title, scoring a 39.325 for the Cornhuskers.

Ingram was named this year's first Big 12 Gymnast of the Week after her incredible debut as a Husker.

"It's been awesome here," Ingram said. "It's everything I expected and more. When you get out on the floor and your teammates are screaming their hearts out for you, it's fun."

Her days at Nebraska haven't always been filled with fun. In fact, her first semester at NU was filled with tragedy.

After she moved to Nebraska, Ingram found out her father, Eddie, was diagnosed with cancer.

He died shortly after the cancer was detected.

"At first it was really difficult," Ingram said. "He was the person to help me with all of my problems."

Although she was a newcomer to campus, Ingram's teammates rallied around her to help cope with the loss.

"We didn't care about the gymnastics anymore," senior Amy Ringo said. "We just wanted to make sure she was OK."

According to Kendig, the way Ingram has carried herself shows great willpower.

"Going away for college is traumatic enough for some people," Kendig said. "To have that occur, I think she has been a pillar of strength to handle every thing she had to handle."

Ingram has also dealt with the transition from club level gymnastics to collegiate level gymnastics very smoothly.

"Going away for college is traumatic enough for some people. To have that occur, I think she has been a pillar of strength to handle every thing she had to handle."

Dan Kendig
Gymnastics Head Coach

Before joining the Huskers, Ingram trained under former U.S. Olympic Coach Steve Nunno at the Dynamo Gymnastics Club.

"She came from a club that wasn't exactly based on a team atmosphere," Ringo said. "It was based more on how you did individually."

Although she has become a very effective team player, Kendig said he feels Ingram will continue improving.

"She will do better when she gets the hang of college gymnastics and opens up a lot more," Kendig said. "She is really enjoying her college career."

NU faces bad odds with CU

BY LINCOLN ARNEAL

The powers that be in the Big 12 Conference must have something against the Nebraska women's basketball team.

After three straight games against top-20 teams, NU (9-9, 1-4 in the Big 12) will play at Colorado (13-3, 4-1 in the Big 12) tonight — a place they haven't won at in 15 years.

"The schedule hasn't been very kind to us," Coach Paul Sanderford said.

Nebraska's last win in Boulder, Colo., came in 1985, when starting forward Steph Jones was five-years old.

Jones said it was never easy playing at Colorado.

"It is definitely a challenge, but it is a challenge we need right now," she said.

A win in a tough environment like Colorado might give the young Husker squad the poise it needs for the rest of the year.

"(It would give us) tremendous confidence," Jones said. "We need that right now. We need something out of nowhere."

Meeting the challenge the Buffs provide won't be easy. NU has never had it easy in Boulder, with a 2-19 all-time record. Even times when the Huskers were heavily favored against the Buffaloes, CU pulled out a win on its home court.

Last year's game exemplified NU's jinx at Colorado. The senior-laden Huskers led the rebuilding Buffs by double digits with five minutes left, only to watch helplessly as a late run propelled CU to the upset.

This year's game reverses the roles from last year. It is the Buffaloes that are an experienced group while NU struggles with its youth.

Colorado has won three straight conference road games, while NU has dropped their last three.

"They are the opposite of where we are," Sanderford said. "They are a much better team than last year."

Junior guard Mandy Nightingale is leading the way for the Buffaloes averaging almost 15 points per game. Colorado has plenty of depth to

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