

Huskers Join UConn In Women's Basketball Elite

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Huskies, make room for the Huskers.

It could be argued that top-ranked Connecticut, with its 62 straight victories and 30-point winning margins, is so dominant that a wire-to-wire run to a second straight national title is a done deal.

A more intriguing feel-good story is taking place on the Plains, where a Nebraska program with an undistinguished history is running the table, not to mention running over everybody, in the nation's strongest conference.

Cornhuskers coach Connie Yori and her players will tell you that they didn't expect to be 21-0 in February. They'll also tell you that they've been quietly building for a breakthrough year and came into the season believing they could win the Big 12.

"Everywhere I go, people ask me, 'Have you seen Nebraska?' Are they that good?" national TV and radio analyst Debbie Antonelli said. "They can do everything — beat you off the bounce, shoot the 3, they have size, they create space and they defend. Yeah, they're good."

How good? "Nebraska is one of those teams that I really want to see play Connecticut," Antonelli said. "I want to see what they would be capable of doing with Connecticut and if they could take away a piece of something Connecticut does. No one can right now."

Gail Goestenkors' Texas team has lost to both UConn and Nebraska. She said she wouldn't bet against the Huskers in a matchup.

"They have the pieces you need to be really competitive

with Connecticut," she said. The Huskers have never advanced past the second round in eight NCAA tournament appearances, and they haven't won a conference title since taking the Big Eight in 1988. Last year's team, without injured star Kelsey Griffin, went 15-16, and it was no wonder Big 12 coaches picked the Huskers sixth in the preseason poll.

The Huskers didn't crack the Top 25 until after their eighth win, and they were 16-0 when they finally broke into the Top 10.

UConn coach Geno Auriemma said he hasn't seen Nebraska play and only recently took notice of the Huskers after his top assistant, Chris Dailey, gushed about them after seeing them on television.

"They certainly play in a terrific league, and for them to

be doing what they're doing — I don't care who you are, when you play — if you're able to run off the number of wins they've been able to run off, that's unbelievably impressive," Auriemma said.

Yori and her players routinely sidestep questions about their dominance, talking instead about hard work in practice and trotting out the old one-game-at-a-time mantra.

Whatever they're doing is working: The Huskers go into Wednesday's game at Kansas following surprisingly easy wins of 88-67 over then-No. 10 Oklahoma State and 71-60 over then-No. 12 Texas A&M.

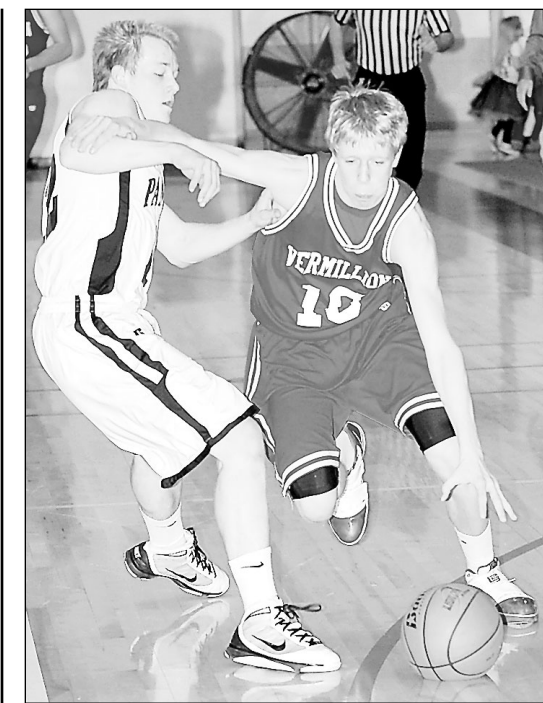
Griffin, averaging 19.4 points and 9.9 rebounds, is well on her way to becoming only the second All-American in program history. But her supporting cast grew and improved from having to play last season

without her. Opponents who devote too many defensive resources to Griffin do so at their peril.

Cory Montgomery plays in Griffin's shadow in the frontcourt, yet she's the second-leading scorer at 13 points a game and is a dangerous perimeter shooter. Yvonne Turner has gone from being a defensive specialist to a capable scorer and one of the Big 12's top 3-point threats.

Dominique Kelley also can shoot the jumper, but she's best at penetrating and getting to the free-throw line. Freshman point guard Lindsey Moore is a rising star with her 2-to-1 assist-to-turnover ratio and her ability to hit the timely 3-pointer.

The Huskers' full-court defense is holding opponents to 55 points and 37 percent shooting each game.



JEREMY HOECK/P&D

Vermillion's Austin Krier (10) clears space around Dakota Valley defender Brock Bergmann in the first quarter of their boys' basketball game Tuesday night in North Sioux City. Dakota Valley won 68-49. Information on the game was not made available by presstime.

Panthers Top Tanager

NORTH SIOUX CITY — Allyssa Wall had a double-double to lead Dakota Valley past Vermillion 49-40 at home Tuesday.

Wall grabbed 14 rebounds, had 12 points and added five blocks.

Taylor Neff led Dakota Valley (10-5) with 14 points. Abbie Huber netted 11 points.

Sierra Allen was Vermillion's (4-12) lone double-digit scorer with 18. Vermillion won the junior varsity 37-23.

Both teams will play at home Friday, with Dakota Valley hosting Pine Ridge and Vermillion playing Harrisburg.

VERMILLION (4-12)	6	19	26	40
DAKOTA VALLEY (10-5)	13	25	34	49

Scotland 61, Platte-Geddes 46

SCOTLAND — The Scotland Lady Highlanders defeated Platte-Geddes 61-46 on Tuesday night in girls' basketball action.

April Winne scored 11 points while posting nine rebounds and seven assists. Haley Brunke scored 20 points to lead all scorers.

Platte-Geddes had three scorers in double-figures. Emily Johnson had a double-double with 11 points and 10 rebounds.

Kendra Knudsen scored 10 points while Alex Hirt added 10 points and nine rebounds.

Scotland travels to Gregory on Friday.

PLATTE-GEDDES (10-9)	10	20	32	46
SCOTLAND (12-4)	19	30	40	61

Viborg 45, Avon 24

AVON — Jessie Lee had a double-double to propel third-ranked Viborg past Avon 45-24 in Avon Tuesday.

Lee finished with 12 points and 10 rebounds. Viborg (14-2) shot 49 percent (18-37) in the win.

Kelley Knudsen led Viborg with 13 points and Sage Knudsen had six assists.

Lanae Vangerpen scored 12 points and grabbed five rebounds for Avon (8-8).

Viborg's next game will be Feb. 15 at Baltic and Avon will host Tripp-Delmont/Armour Friday.

AVON (8-8)	12	20	41	45
VIBORG (14-2)	14	21	41	45

Hartington Cedar Catholic 52, Wayne 30

HARTINGTON, Neb. — Hartington Cedar Catholic defeated Wayne 52-30 on Tuesday night in girls' basketball action.

Tracy Peltz scored 12 points while Jillian Fillmeier added 11 points. Kendra Lammers dished out seven assists while Dana Dickes added seven rebounds.

Katie Hoskins scored 17 points and pulled down 11 rebounds for Wayne. Caitlin Ferringer scored five points and had five assists.

WAYNE	12	18	21	30
HARTINGTON CEDAR CATHOLIC	9	15	35	52

Irene-Wakonda 39, Alcester-Hudson 35

WAKONDA — Irene-Wakonda completed a fourth-quarter comeback to beat Alcester-Hudson 39-35 in Irene Tuesday.

Irene-Wakonda (4-14) trailed Alcester-Hudson (5-10) 29-21 at the end of the third quarter before outscoring the Cubs 18-6 in the fourth quarter.

Mackenzie Huber led the Eagles with 17 points and had three steals and Haley Hinseth grabbed 15 rebounds. Casey Hessman chipped in nine points

IRENE-WAKONDA (4-14)	8	18	29	35
ALCESTER-HUDSON (5-10)	10	16	21	39

Ethan 54, Marion 20

MARION — Ethan defeated Marion 54-20 on Tuesday night in girls' basketball action.

Ethan's Shelby Andersen led all scorers with 19

ETHAN	8	18	29	35
MARION (1-15)	2	10	17	20

Arlington 72, Florence/Henry 48

ARLINGTON — Allie Boeck surpassed 1,000 career points as she helped lead Arlington past Florence/Henry 72-48 at home Tuesday.

Boeck finished with 18 points and also had six

FLORENCE/HENRY (4-13)	14	26	42	54
ARLINGTON (11-6)	20	41	53	72



JEREMY HOECK/P&D

Dakota Valley's Allyssa Wall (40) drives between Vermillion defenders Sierra Allen (33) and Sarah Day for a basket in the second half of Tuesday night's game in North Sioux City. Dakota Valley won 49-40.

and three assists. Alcester-Hudson was led by Emily Schreuer's 13 points and Alice Johnson scored 10 points. Ivy Pearson had seven rebounds in the loss.

Both teams will play again Thursday as Irene-Wakonda hosts Freeman Academy in Irene and Alcester-Hudson will be at home against Baltic.

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points while securing six rebounds, four assists and two steals.

Allison Luke scored seven points and secured 10 rebounds for Marion.

Ethan plays Kimball on Saturday while Marion plays Gayville-Volin on Thursday.

ETHAN (6-10)	14	26	42	54
MARION (1-15)	2	10	17	20

Both teams will play again Friday, with Arlington hosting DeSmet and Florence/Henry will travel to Agency Village to take on Tiospa Zia.

Florence/Henry (4-13) will be at home against Arlington (11-6).

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Well-Rounded Team USA Loaded For Medal Run In Winter Games

BY PHILIP HERSH
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VANCOUVER, British Columbia (MCT) — U.S. Olympic officials have one thing they would like to say to our neighbors from the Great White North.

Whoa, Canada.

The pace at which Canada's "Own the Podium" program has improved the country's winter sports results in anticipation of the Vancouver Olympics will almost certainly halt Team USA's recent rise toward the top of the Winter Games medal count.

But, almost paradoxically, the United States can count on medal possibilities in more sports than ever before.

In fact, ski jumping is the lone discipline among the 15 being contested in which the United States does not have a snowball's chance in this unseasonably warm weather of

winning a medal.

"We expect to have the Canadians in a very strong position," said Mike English, in his first Olympics as USOC director of sport performance.

"(But) breakout results in some sports add a lot of opportunities for Team USA to be in contention."

With three strong Nordic combined athletes, two of whom won individual world titles last year, the U.S. should win its first medal in the sport that combines ski jumping and cross-country skiing.

Team USA also has a chance at its first biathlon medal, a first women's cross-country medal and the first men's bobsled gold medal since 1948.

Of course, the last time the U.S. had a contender in biathlon, Josh Thompson at the 1988 Olympics, Thompson was so undone by expectations he fled the media like a frightened deer after finishing 25th in his

first race.

USA Biathlon executive director Max Cobb saw the latest hope, Tim Burke, falter after he became the first U.S. man to wear the World Cup leader's jersey earlier this season.

"That created a kind of pressure he wasn't accustomed to, and a new dynamic," Cobb said. "He physically is still really fit, and the down time before the Games will get him back at ease."

Because winter sports are not in the DNA of most U.S. sports fans, the external pressure on the athletes generally is minimal. That does not prevent them from feeling great internal stress.

And the U.S. has enjoyed tremendous success in the last two Olympics, spurred by saving the Winter Games at Salt Lake City in 2002.

After finishing sixth in the overall medal count with 13 at Nagano, Japan, in 1998, a per-

formance relatively equal to those of the four preceding Winter Games, the U.S. won 34 in 2002 and 25 in 2006, finishing second to Germany both times.

Canada has made a similar leap, from 13 medals in 1994 to 24 at Turin, Italy, in 2006.

Both countries are strong in many of the same events, meaning they will be fighting for the same medals. That has led to charges that Canadian sports officials were limiting U.S. athletes' training time at Vancouver competition venues, so the home team would have an advantage.

That is especially important on the Whistler slidding track, where repeated experience on the course is critical.

"There certainly is a home-ice advantage, especially on a difficult track like this," said USA Bobsled & Skeleton boss Darrin Steele.

"But it kind of even the playing field when you have a

new track everyone has limited runs on, with the exception of the Canadians, who certainly are going to be pretty tough up there. As for looking at this as an unfair advantage, we really don't."

A Latvian bobsled team (95.08 mph) and German luger Felix Loch (95.68) both posted world-record speeds on the Whistler track last year.

"There is no team in the world that wouldn't have wanted to get additional time," USA Luge executive director Ron Rossi said. "Yes, this was a courtesy granted to the Canadians prior to 2002. No, it was not granted to us."

After he helped USA Speedskating fill a \$300,000 hole in its budget, comedian Stephen Colbert accused the Canadians of being "ice holes" after U.S. speedskaters complained about how little time they got on the Olympic Oval.

Platte-Geddes 57, Todd County 52

PLATTE — Platte-Geddes defeated Todd County 57-52 in boys' basketball action on Tuesday night.

Thead Campbell scored 20 points while pulling down nine rebounds. Shay Nelson added 10 points.

Canku One Star scored 20 points for Todd County.

Todd County hosts Gregory on Tuesday.

TODD COUNTY (6-9)	10	22	40	52
PLATTE-GEDDES (8-6)	12	23	34	57

Mt. Vernon 68, Tripp-Delmont-Armour 45

MOUNT VERNON — Mount Vernon defeated Tripp-Delmont-Armour 68-45 on Tuesday night in boys' basketball action.

Mount Vernon's Brian Kluth was 9-to-11 from the field with 25 points. Kyle Weiss added 22 points and eight rebounds.

TD's Jared Hermanek scored 16 points while Tyler Payer added 14 points.

TRIPP-DELMONT-ARMOUR	15	25	36	45
MOUNT VERNON	11	22	39	58

Marion 41, Ethan 32

MARION — Marion used a major advantage on the boards to power past Ethan 41-32 at home Tuesday.

Marion (6-10) outrebounded Ethan (3-14) 38-24 in the game and also held the Rustlers to 27 percent (12-45) shooting.

Shayne Becker led Marion with 11 points and Seth Hughes netted 10 points. Phil Luke was a monster on the boards with 17 rebounds and scored nine points.

Jordan Connor scored 12 points for Ethan and Jace Connor had 11 points.

Both teams will play again Thursday, as Marion will be at Gayville-Volin and Ethan will host Sanborn Central.

ETHAN (3-14)	2	10	18	32
MARION (6-10)	5	12	24	41

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