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(Neb)-Lady Huskers Rebound To Hand Kansas First Loss

By: John Axtell Posted at: 12/06/2018 12:56 AM

Ashtyn Veerbeek Photo by Scott Bruhn/Nebraska Communications

By NU Athletic Communications

[Final Box Score](#)

Lincoln - Taylor Kissinger notched her second career double-double with 11 points and a career-best 11 rebounds, helping Nebraska to one of the top-five team rebounding totals in school history on its way to a 58-52 women's basketball win over Kansas on Wednesday night at Pinnacle Bank Arena.

The Huskers, who grabbed 64 total rebounds to tie for the fourth-highest total in school history, handed the Jayhawks (6-1) their first loss of the season for the second straight year, while Nebraska improved to 3-5.

Kissinger, a 6-1 sophomore from Minden, Neb., knocked down 3-of-4 three-pointers and dished out a pair of assists while adding a steal to help the Huskers register their second straight home win of the season.

Junior guard Hannah Whitish matched Kissinger with a team-high 11 points, including a pair of three-pointers, while contributing three assists.

Freshmen Ashtyn Veerbeek, Sam Haiby, Kayla Mershon and Leigha Brown also played major roles in the win. Veerbeek pulled down a career-high 11 rebounds to help Nebraska dominate the glass, while adding seven points and a career-high three blocks.

Mershon added a career-high seven rebounds while pitching in two points and an assist, and Haiby finished with eight points, five rebounds, three assists and a steal for the Big Red. Brown rounded out the first-year contributors with four points, two boards and a steal.

In the game, all 10 Huskers scored at least one point and grabbed at least one rebound in a true team effort, including five points, a season-high matching eight rebounds and a career-high four blocked shots for Nicea Eliely. Kate Cain added four points, six rebounds and three blocks, while Maddie Simon managed five points and three boards.

"Our goal coming into tonight's game was to be the hardest working team out on the court. That was our number one objective, and I think our rebounding total and margin and 24 offensive rebounds showed that we were tonight," Nebraska Coach Amy Williams said. "That will continue to be our focus and that is the challenge for us as we move forward this season."

The contributions across the board helped Nebraska overcome 22 turnovers and a minus-11 turnover margin against the Jayhawks, who converted NU's miscues into 19 points. Despite being out-rebounded 64-43, KU also outscored Nebraska 16-12 in second-chance points.

As a team, the Huskers hit 21-of-64 shots from the field (.328), including 6-of-17 (.353) from behind the arc. Nebraska was a season-worst 10-for-18 (.556) at the free throw line.

But Nebraska provided one of its best defensive efforts of the season, holding Kansas to just 25.3 percent

(19-75) shooting from the floor, including a dismal 8-for-37 (.216) from three-point range. KU hit just 6-of-11 free throws.

Kylee Kopatich led Kansas with 14 points, including 4-of-9 three-point shooting, while Mariane De Carvalho added 11 points off the bench with a trio of three-pointers to help KU shoot its way back into the game.

The Huskers took their biggest lead of the night at 38-24 with just under five minutes left in the third quarter. Three straight baskets by Cain, Kissinger and Veerbeek capped a 25-5 Big Red surge that traced to the five-minute mark in the second quarter after the beaks in blue had built a 19-13 edge.

But late three-pointers in the third quarter by Kopatich and De Carvalho trimmed Nebraska's margin to 41-34 heading to the fourth. Kansas got another three from De Carvalho to open the final period and after a free throw from Brianna Osorio, Kansas trailed just 41-38 with 8:34 left. Another De Carvalho three just over a minute later kept the margin at three points (44-41), but KU could not get any closer the rest of the way.

Nebraska used a big finish to the second quarter to take a 28-21 lead to halftime. The Huskers closed the half on a 15-2 surge over the last 4:44, including a pair of three-pointers by Kissinger and the final three of the half from Whitish.

Prior to Nebraska's big run at the end of the half, Kansas built its biggest lead of the half of 19-13. The Huskers took the lead to the half despite losing the first-half turnover battle 15-7, as KU scored 10 of its 21 first-half points off NU's miscues.

Nebraska hit 4-of-10 first-half threes, while the Jayhawks went just 2-for-13 from long range in the half. KU also hit just 8-of-37 field goals (.216) in the half, while going just 3-of-7 at the free throw line. NU hit just 9-of-28 field goals (.321), but did connect on 6-of-8 free throws, all in a 1:45 span in the second quarter during Nebraska's rally.

Although Nebraska lost the first-half turnover battle, the Huskers dominated the boards, 31-21, including 12 offensive rebounds.

Kissinger led the Huskers with nine points on 3-of-3 three-point shooting in the half, while also matching Eliely for the team lead with five rebounds. Nine Huskers scored in the half, with Haiby being the only other Husker to hit more than one first-half field goal, going 2-for-4 for four points in the half.

Jessica Washington led KU with six first-half points but went just 2-for-10 from the field, while Kopatich and Christalah Lyons each pitched in five points. Lyons finished with nine points and a game-high five assists on the night.

Nebraska continues its three-game home stand on Saturday when the Huskers take on San Jose State. Tip-off between the Big Red and the Spartans is set for Noon (CT) with tickets available now at Huskers.com.