

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

NEBRASKA 79, GOPHERS WOMEN 74 Thursday at Ohio State, 6 p.m. (No TV)

Game slips away in fourth quarter

Gophers suffer their first home loss of the season. By HEATHER RULE Special to the Star Tribune

They held leads at the end of three different quarters — just not the one that means the most.

The fourth quarter was ultimately the difference for the Gophers women's basketball team, and the result was a 79-74 loss to Nebraska in the Big Ten home opener Sunday afternoon in front of an announced 3,284 at Williams Arena.

Finishing out possessions defensively in the first quarter is an area where the Gophers have to be better, according to coach Marlene Stollings.

"It's just transition defense," said sophomore guard Gaele Hubbard, who had 15 points and eight assists. "We weren't really getting our transition defense like we should have."

A 13-1 run by the Cornhuskers (10-3, 1-1) in the fourth quarter set the tone.

Then the Gophers (12-3, 1-1) took a 24-73 lead with 38 seconds left on junior guard Kenisha Bell's steal and layup. But Nebraska's Madeline Simon answered with 24 seconds left and the Gophers couldn't get a couple of three-pointers to fall.

The Gophers lost at home for the first time in eight games this season.

"It's not so much that last series as much as it was the fourth quarter in terms of our intensity level overall," Stollings said. "We needed to rebound better. We needed to go get second shots."

In the fourth quarter, the Gophers made just four of 16 shots and went 1-of-8 from beyond the three-point arc, while Nebraska made seven of 10 shots and eight of nine from the three-line line.

The Gophers got great looks at game long, but offensive rebounds were an issue.

"When we missed that first shot, you've got to go get the second one," Stollings said. "You're not always going to hit the first one, and that's our big takeaway from that game."

Bell won her usual dominating force, putting up 30 points, seven rebounds and seven assists. It's the third time this season she's scored at least 30 points and the second time in the past three games. She's also put up at least 20 points in each of the past six games.

Stollings is most proud of how Bell takes care of the basketball; she had just two turnovers in the game after going into a zone with zero.

"I got the team on my back," Bell said. "They trust me, and that gives me more confidence each game to do that stuff that I do."

The Gophers contained Nebraska's freshman Kate Cain, who finished with eight points and six rebounds. Her two blocks ran her total to 54, tying the freshman school record.

"She didn't really hurt us," Stollings said. "It was really good to see that our big guard drives that really hurt us more than anything."

Simon led the Cornhuskers with 18 points, five assists and eight rebounds.



Above, reserve Taiye Bell felt the defensive pressure in the Gophers' game against Nebraska on Sunday at Williams Arena. Below, teammate Kenisha Bell scored two of her game-high 30 points, avoiding the outstretched arm of 6-6 Kate Cain.



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STANDINGS AND RESULTS

Table with columns for Conference, Team, Conf. W-L, Overall W-L, and Game Results.

ROUNDUP

Oregon's Ionescu sets mark with her eighth triple-double

Sabrina Ionescu set a women's NCAA record with her eighth career triple-double in leading 30th-ranked Oregon to a 94-83 victory over visiting Washington on Sunday.

Ionescu had 24 points, 14 rebounds and 10 assists to help the Ducks (13-2, 2-0 Pac-12) post their 18th consecutive win. She broke the mark in her 48th career game.

Texas State's Steve McConnell and St. Mary's Lovella Tomlinson shared the mark with Ionescu until Sunday. It was Ionescu's fourth triple-double in 15 games this season.

No. 1 Connecticut 97, Memphis 68: Gabby Williams scored 20 points, hit all 10 of her shots, dished out seven assists and had four steals as the Huskies (14-1, 0 American Athletic Conference) routed the Tigers (5-8, 0-1) in Hartford, Conn.

No. 3 Louisville 59, N.C. State 47: The visiting Cardinals (16-0, 2-0 ACC) had the program record with their 36th consecutive victory. The Wolfpack (12-3, 1-1) missed their first 34 shots from the field.

No. 4 South Carolina 61, No. 22 Texas A&M 59: Via Williams hit a tiebreaking shot with 1.3 seconds left for the host Gamecocks (12-1, 1-0 SEC). Freshman Chemistry Carter scored 16 points for Texas A&M (11-4, 0-1), including 19 in the third quarter. South Carolina trailed by 11 points with 17 minutes to go. Williams had 25 points, 11 rebounds, four assists and three blocks.

No. 19 Florida State 103, North Carolina 95: Emma Wright said a school record eight three-pointers and finished with a career-best 39 points to lead the host Seminoles (13-1, 1-0 ACC) past the Tar Heels (10-4, 0-1).

BRIEFLY

Ski jumper gets second Olympic run

Former world champion Sarah Hendrickson made her way back to the Olympics on Sunday, and it's been a long trip.

Hendrickson clinched a spot in the Pyeongchang Olympics by winning the women's competition at the U.S. Olympic trials for ski jumping in Park City, Utah.

Hendrickson, who won with 204.5 total points after two jumps, finished 21st overall in the 2014 Olympics after suffering a major knee injury in a training accident. She has undergone four knee surgeries since participating in the Sochi Games.

Winning the Olympic trials represents a particularly satisfying step for her.

"It's pretty emotional just because the four years have been so tough," Hendrickson said. "This gives me confidence that hard work pays off, and if you keep working for your dream, then you'll get there. That is something that will stick with me for the rest of the life, and that's a really good lesson, too."

Michael Glaser won the men's competition and qualified for his first Olympic after missing the cut in 2010 and 2014, claiming the men's title with 270 points after two jumps.

SOCCER Manchester City streak ends

Manchester City's record 36-game winning streak in the Premier League ended with a 0-0 draw at Crystal Palace. City's unbeaten run remains in play at 25 games.

A 10th straight victory would have matched the record winning streak in Europe's top five leagues, set by Bayern Munich in the Bundesliga. Bayern would have set a Premier League record of 12 straight away wins.

AROUND THE HORN Women's tennis: Australian Samantha Stosur was eliminated from her home state's tournament, the Brisbane International, by seventh seed Anastasiya Pavluchenko, who won 6-1, 6-0.

Mixed-team tennis: Daria Gavrilina and Thanasi Kokkinakis won singles matches against Canada to give Australia a perfect start to its Hopman Cup campaign in Perth, Australia.

Men's tennis: Top-ranked Rafael Nadal will make his return from injury in the Tel Aviv Open event in Melbourne on Jan. 10. Nadal previously withdrew from the Brisbane International and Paris event in Sydney while recovering from a knee injury.

Men's hockey: Kevin Poulin made 36 saves as Canada beat Switzerland 3-0 to win the Spengler Cup in Davos, Switzerland. The six-team competition was the last of five Olympic championship events for the Canadians.

Cross-country skiing: Three-time Olympic champion Dario Cologna won his first World Cup race on home turf in Lenzerheide, Switzerland, rising to second place in the Tour de Ski standings. In the women's 10-kilometer classic, Ingvild Flugstad Ostergren won and extended her Tour de Ski lead by more than 25 seconds over Heidi Weng.

James Duggin of Stillwater stands his ground. Mixed martial arts: Holly Holm goes one-two in the longest fight of her career late Saturday night at UFC 209 in Las Vegas, but Justin retained her featherweight title with a victory by unanimous decision. Holm scored 49-46, 48-47 and 48-47, extending Holm's unbeaten streak to 10 with a victory over a former bantamweight champion who made her name by defeating Ronda Rousey.