

# 2012-13 Big Ten men's basketball previews: Nebraska (premium)

By Brendan Stiles

*HawkeyeDrive.com*

The Big Ten kicks off its 2012-13 men's college basketball season next week, so this week, *HawkeyeDrive.com* will give you rundowns on all 12 conference teams. Today, we'll showcase [Indiana](#), Nebraska and [Purdue](#). The Cornhuskers will play Iowa twice this season – Feb. 21 at the Devaney Center in Lincoln, Neb., and March 9 at Carver-Hawkeye Arena.

A new era has officially begun in Lincoln. Following a disastrous first season as a member of the Big Ten, Nebraska made the decision to part ways with Doc Sadler and bring in Tim Miles, who had previously been the head coach at Colorado State.

Since taking over the Cornhuskers, Miles has become the consummate pitch salesman for his program. His presence in social media has become well-documented to the point where Nebraska is being talked about on a national level for basketball. Add in that the Cornhuskers are playing their final season at the Devaney Center before moving into the new state-of-the-art Pinnacle Bank Arena next year, and there's reason to believe Miles can make Nebraska respectable again.

But as far as this season specifically is concerned, the Cornhuskers are hands down the worst team in the conference. That's not to say Nebraska won't pull a surprise or two in Big Ten play like it did beating Indiana last season, but Miles is literally building this program from scratch. At this moment in time, there's no valid argument that could be made for the

Cornhuskers being better than any one of their Big Ten counterparts.

Nebraska has a revamped roster that features eight new players, two of whom have to redshirt this season due to NCAA transfer rules. One of the Cornhuskers' two junior college transfers – 6-0 guard Deverell Biggs – might be this team's starting point guard. Biggs was a first-team all-American at the JUCO level, averaging 14.6 points per game. As far as true freshmen are concerned, Shavon Shields is a 6-6 wing player who could see playing time right away and might have the most immediate impact of the four guys Nebraska possesses.

The Cornhuskers lost their top five leading scorers from last season. The player with the most experience of those who did return this year and is the unquestioned leader of this team is senior forward Brandon Ubel, who was one of two players to start every game in 2011-12. Ubel shot the ball better than any Nebraska player did last year and he led the team in rebounding with an average of 5.3 boards per contest.

In addition to Ubel, senior center Andre Almeida will give the Cornhuskers size in their front court. Almeida redshirted last season following a season-ending knee injury. In 2010-11, he blocked 39 shots and shot 56 percent from the floor as Nebraska went on to play in the NIT.

The backcourt will be led heavily by senior guard Dylan Talley. While Talley only started one of the 25 games he appeared in last season, his 44 assists, 26 steals and 37 percent shooting from 3-point range lead all returning players on this year's roster. Unless Biggs, Shields or any of the other freshmen guards Nebraska has can emerge as a consistent contributor night in and night out, teams are going to lock in on Talley this season.

Looking at the Cornhuskers' non-conference portion of their schedule, they play four straight games against teams that are

either from BCS conference or ranked in the top 25. They play Wake Forest for the second year in a row in the Big Ten/ACC Challenge, but this time in Winston-Salem, N.C. USC visits the Devaney Center, as does in-state foe Creighton, who comes into this season ranked 16th and features an all-American in guard Doug McDermott. Nebraska also plays at Oregon, who reached the NIT quarterfinals last season.

As far as Big Ten play is concerned, Nebraska couldn't have a more brutal beginning. Three of the Cornhuskers' first four conference games are on the road. They open at No. 4 Ohio State on Jan. 2, then play No. 23 Wisconsin at home. That's then followed by back-to-back trips to No. 5 Michigan and No. 14 Michigan State. If there is good news, it's that Michigan and No. 1 Indiana are two of Nebraska's single-plays again this season. However, neither game is at the Devaney Center.

The key thing here with Nebraska, and more specifically with Miles, is patience. He has a proven track record of turning teams around and the Cornhuskers made the moves they made at the appropriate time. This season is going to test Nebraska mentally, but it'll be better in the long run for it.