

Sports Opinion



David Wilson

Craziness surrounds Maris chase

ST. LOUIS - A marching band was tooting its way down Market Street Monday morning in front of Busch Stadium when a light came on inside the Gate Five Ticket Office.

Most of the 100 or so baseball fans in the line jumped to their feet and attempted to peer through the blinds that prevented employees from making eye contact with fans.

It was rumored this was the only spot where a limited number of standing-room only tickets would go on sale for Monday's game.

Many of the true enthusiasts had been at the stadium since sunrise. It was now 10:30 a.m. - two hours and 40 minutes before game time.

Thousands of ticket holders already were lined up to get in the stadium.

People were getting antsy. Baseball history was about to happen inside - and you could feel it.

You could see, hear and almost taste the excitement, the anticipation and the love of the game of baseball everywhere.

That atmosphere - a dream for any baseball fan - came thanks to Mark McGwire, who would hit his 61st home run of the season Monday to tie Roger Maris' single-season record.

Unfortunately, not all of the fans who had waited hours in line in front of the ticket office would witness McGwire's solo shot to left field in the first inning.

A large security guard came and broke the news to the ticketless fans that no tickets would go on sale.

After a near riot, the line transformed into hundreds of lost souls desperately waving their fingers in the air in search of tickets.

(Editor's note: Apparently, David couldn't get in either. His sob story that he drove 1,000 miles to see McGwire didn't work on anybody.)

"Listen, man," a scalper said in a convincing voice. "You're going to see baseball history. If that's not worth \$250, I don't know what is."

Tickets went from between \$150 to \$500 apiece. Face-painted, sign-holding and McGwire-jersey-wearing fans just wanted in.

That's \$500 for a regular season game.
That's insane.
That's McGwire Mania.
That's baseball.

David Wilson is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan senior staff writer.

McGwire ties Maris' record

ST. LOUIS (AP) - No. 61 flew off Mark McGwire's bat Monday, matching Roger Maris' home run record and leaving just one question: How soon will it be his alone?

History came quickly. McGwire launched Mike Morgan's pitch 430 feet to left field in the first inning, tying the hallowed mark that has stood for 37 years.

McGwire immediately threw his hands in the air after connecting and then, with a fist thrust high, began his triumphant trip around the bases.

Big Mac got a high five from Cubs first baseman Mark Grace as he rounded the bag and got another high five from former St. Louis teammate Gary Gaetti as he approached third.

The 50,530 roaring fans at Busch Stadium stood all the while, except for those in the midst of a wild scramble for

the ball. Chicago's Sammy Sosa, whose 58 home runs have pushed McGwire down the stretch, joined the celebration by applauding his rival from right field.

McGwire's 10-year-old baby son, Matt, was waiting at home plate where the Cardinals slugger ended his trek with a two-footed hop. McGwire hoisted his boy in a big hug, while groundskeepers rushed onto the field to replace the bases - no doubt headed to the Hall of Fame.

The Cardinals spilled out of the dugout to mob McGwire, and it took him a few moments to make it to the bench. But he didn't stay there long, springing back out to salute Sosa and the Maris family, watching from seats on the first-base side.

In a touching tribute to the man he matched, McGwire acknowledged

Maris' children by pointing his right index finger to the sky, tapping his heart three times and blowing a kiss.

"He tapped his heart, like Dad was in his heart," said Kevin Maris, a son of the former New York Yankees slugger.

McGwire homered in the Cardinals' 144th game and now has 19 left to become the home run champion. And when he does, certainly no asterisk will be needed.

Maris hit No. 61 on the last day of a 162-game schedule in 1961. Toward the end of that season, Commissioner Ford Frick declared that any record would have to carry a "distinctive mark" if it did not beat Babe Ruth's mark of 60 in 154 games.

It also made it a nice day for Mike Davidson, a 28-year-old fan from St. Louis who wound up with a historic

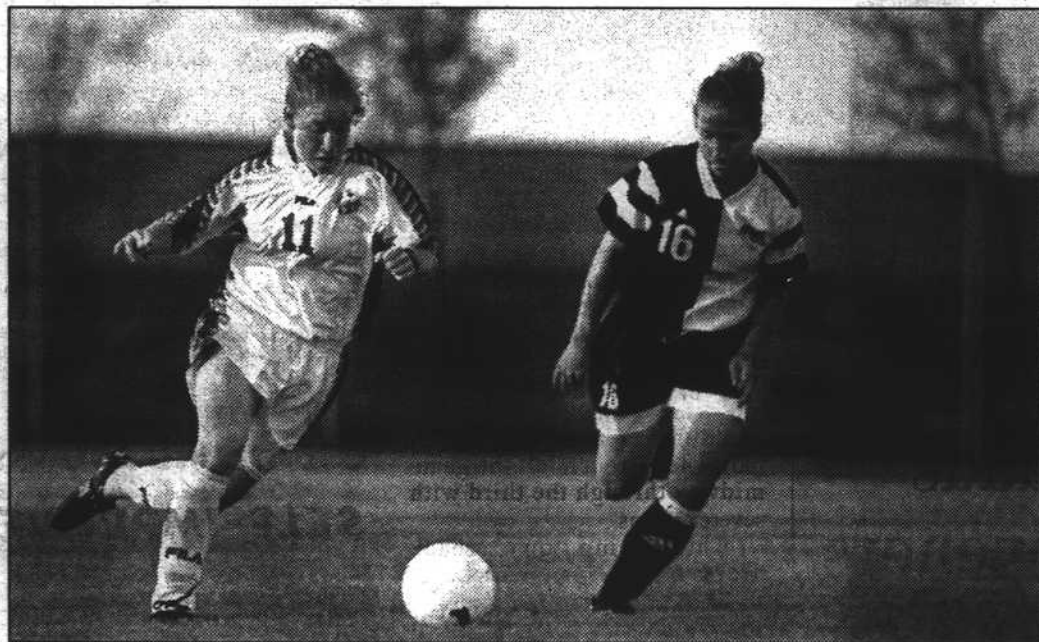
souvenir, which he planned to give to McGwire.

McGwire and Sosa have homered on the same day 20 times this year, twice connecting in the same game.

It's easy to keep track of how they stand, too, by looking at the out-of-town scoreboard in center field. Right below an inning-by-inning listing of the Florida-Colorado game, there's a section where it's posted - McGwire 61, Sosa 58.

McGwire and Sosa, who have become friends throughout their friendly rivalry, spent the early part of the morning holding a news conference together. Sitting bicep to bicep, they took turns praising each other.

"Wouldn't it be great if we just ended up tied," McGwire said. "I think it would be beautiful."



SENIOR NU MIDFIELDER KRISTEN GAY defends the Huskers' goal from a Wisconsin-Milwaukee defender Friday evening during the first soccer game. The Huskers lost 2-1 in double overtime.

Late goal costs Nebraska in loss to UW-Milwaukee

BY DARREN IVY
Staff writer

Within a period of 21 seconds Friday night, the Nebraska women's soccer team went through an emotional roller coaster.

The No. 8 Cornhuskers led 1-0 against Wisconsin-Milwaukee before Panthers' striker Fanta Cooper dribbled around NU goalie Jackie Erdkamp and scored the game-tying goal with 21 seconds remaining in regulation.

On the ensuing kickoff, the Huskers got the ball to freshman Kelly Rheem inside the Panthers' goal box. She hit Kim Engesser with a pass. Engesser then flipped the ball to freshman Shannon Tanaka who score, what appeared to be the game-winning goal as time expired.

But the referees waved it off and said the clock had run out.

"I'm not sure if it went in before or not," Assistant Coach Megan Bechtold said. "With your emotions, you work that hard that you want it to count."

In overtime, the teams went scoreless the first 15 minutes. However, after a two-minute break and switching halves, UW-Milwaukee forward Danielle Alberg beat Erdkamp for the game-winning goal at 1:06:19 before 1,266 fans at the Abbott Sports Complex.

Alberg's goal gave Wisconsin-Milwaukee its first win against a ranked opponent and ended Nebraska's 27-game home-winning streak.

"Losing hurts no matter how it happens," said senior forward Becky Hogan. "It's a little more heart wrenching to lose in overtime."

It also hurt that NU was playing shorthanded. The Huskers had just 15 of their 22 players.

Isabelle Morneau, Amy Walsh and Karina

Soccer Score

Nebraska (9-1) 1 0 0 0
Wisc-Milwaukee (1-0) 0 0 0 1

Goal:
NU - 32:55 Engesser (Smith, Greco)
WUW - 99:39 Cooper (unassisted)
UWU - 106:19 Alberg (unassisted)

Shots on Goal: Nebraska 12
Wisc-Milwaukee 6
Attending: 1,267

LeBlanc were playing in a tournament with the Canadian National team: Lindsey Eddleman, Heather Brown, Jenny Benson and Karla Ledford were out because of injuries.

"We have the opportunity to make a lot of excuses," Bechtold said. "Those excuses don't count for anything."

On the positive side, the Huskers outshot the Panthers 39-17 on the night. Nebraska attempted 12 shots on goal, while Wisconsin-Milwaukee had eight shots and two more that hit the crossbar.

But NU can take no consolation in having more shots than the Panthers.

Bechtold said not winning balls in the air was an area that hurt Nebraska. She said when NU players don't win balls, the Panthers get them and have a chance to bring the ball the other way.

Being complacent with a 1-0 lead also doomed Nebraska.

"In the end it is a tough lesson for us," Bechtold said. "Our team felt confident. When we let them back into the game it was hard to stop them."

Despite the disappointing loss, Hogan said she was proud of the way her teammates played.

"Those 15 players all played really well," Hogan said. "We'll bounce back fine. Some good can come out of bad."

No. 4 Huskers pound through Stanford, SDSU

Volleyball Score

Nebraska (4-0) 15 15 15
San Diego St. (0-4) 11 7 12

Total Kills: Nebraska 52 (Oxley 11)
San Diego St. 54 (Holmquist 12)
Hit Percentage: Nebraska .307
San Diego St. .176

BY ANDREW STRNAD
Staff writer

A long week, which included four matches in five nights, was well worth it for the Nebraska volleyball team.

The fifth-ranked Cornhuskers (4-0) claimed the San Diego State Tournament title in impressive fashion with a three-game sweep over San Diego State on Saturday afternoon (15-11, 15-7, 15-12).

The victory came off the heels of a four-game win over two-time defending champion Stanford (5-15, 15-9, 15-6, 15-11) on Friday.

After dropping the first game to the Cardinal, the Huskers rallied to win game two, with several Huskers stepping up despite the loss of junior outside hitter Mandy Monson and sophomore outside hitter Angie Oxley.

"We showed some toughness," Head Coach Terry Pettit said. "We got beat pretty soundly that first game, and we were able to keep siding out and siding out."

Monson was out with a knee sprain, and Oxley missed the second game because of a bloody nose.

Stepping up for NU in the match was senior middle blocker Megan Korver, who led the team with 21 kills, while sophomore outside hitter Nancy Meendering added 18.

With the absence of Monson on the left side, Pettit used sophomore Kim Behrends and senior Jaime Krondak to fill in.

"We used a lot of people," Pettit said. "Krondak came off the bench and played great. I really thought our three seniors played big in the match. They showed a lot of leadership in that situation."

Behrends started in place of the injured Monson and added a career-high nine kills without a single error against the Aztecs on Saturday.

Krondak, who has been plagued by a sprained left foot for the last two weeks, saw limited action in the front row against Stanford before sitting out Saturday's match.

The Huskers' other senior, setter Fiona Nepo was named the tournament MVP.

Meendering and Korver also were named to the All-Tournament team.

Now the Huskers' focus will be on next weekend's Ohio State Tournament in Columbus, Ohio.

The 13th-ranked Buckeyes knocked off sixth-ranked Florida over the weekend, and Pettit will now look to this week's practices in preparation for OSU.

"Right now I want us to get better defensively," Pettit said. "I want us to understand our system a little better so we're in better position."