

# one at a time | New coach key to baseball betterment

By Jim Zalewski

A final column is often a place for thanking those who made it possible, answering critics, tying together the loose ends, etc. However, I prefer to go out with a strong editorial statement.

From my game observations and rapport with the players over the past four years, I think UNL if it chooses to seek a competitive athletic program, has no choice but to replace baseball coach Tony Sharpe.

This is no personal vendetta against coach Sharpe. He has been cooperative and accommodating when I talked with him. I respect his knowledge of the game and understand that his idea of playing winning baseball may differ from mine.

But I think that over his 30 years as head coach, he has lost his skill to communicate with his players and the discipline necessary to build a winner.

Let's look at the facts. In his term as baseball mentor, entering this season, Sharpe has compiled a 349-351 235-249 in conference action. This year's team, currently at 17-20-1, must sweep its last two doubleheaders to top the .500 mark in the regular season. Considering the caliber of competition, this record is nothing to write home about.

## Unimpressive record

The Huskers' marks during the 1970s have been less than impressive. Sharpe's teams finished 16-10 in 1970, 10-20 in 1971, 12-17 in 1972, 15-14-1 in 1973, 13-27 in 1974 and 13-20 in 1975. That comes to a cool .422

## sports shorts

The UNL soccer team overcame several adverse factors to finish fourth in the Big 8 Conference meet Saturday and Sunday in Boulder, Colo. It was the team's highest finish ever in the meet.

Saturday, the Huskers lost to the eventual champion, the University of Kansas, 6-0. They then tied Kansas State University 1-1, with Oscar Carcomo scoring the Husker goal.

In the third game Saturday, the Huskers faced the University of Oklahoma needing to win by at least four goals to advance to the third-place game. The contest was tied 1-1, but Tony Roach tallied four goals in the last six minutes for a 5-1 Husker win.

Sunday the Huskers dropped the third-place game to the University of Colorado 4-1, with Dave Egr scoring the lone UNL goal.

Club co-President Jim Fullerton said he and fellow President Mike Bush handled coaching duties since coach Franz Blaha quit two weeks ago. He also said the Huskers had just the 11 starters and one substitute and that the team had to pay its own expenses for the trip.

The women's state college track and field championships, originally scheduled for Tuesday, have been postponed until 2 p.m. Sunday at Ed Weir Stadium.

The UNL women's softball team travels to Omaha today for a doubleheader against the University of Nebraska at Omaha. The team is now 8-11 after splitting a home doubleheader with Concordia Teachers College Monday, losing the opener 5-4 and winning the nightcap 13-4.

The Huskers finished fourth of five teams in the Big 8 Conference tournament Friday through Sunday at Kansas State University (KSU) at Manhattan.

They won their opener in the double elimination meet Friday, beating the University of Kansas (KU) 4-3. Saturday's games were rained out, and Sunday's games were played in KSU's football stadium on the Astroturf.

Sunday, the Huskers lost to Iowa State University 1-0 in a game that had only one hit. Husker Jan Bartels hurled a one-hitter, but was beaten by Cyclone Carol Eich, who tossed a no-hitter. ISU's winning run came on a single in the fourth inning. In another Sunday game, KU eliminated UNL with a 2-1 win.

Bo Green and Roy Schumacher won the year-ending foosball tournament at the Nebraska Union Recreation Area Monday night. They defeated Tom Tismer and Elmer Kinley in the finals, 5-2 and 5-1. Monthly tournaments will resume in the fall.

The Husker baseball team swept a home doubleheader against Dana College Monday, winning 4-0 and 9-6.

Senior pitcher Dave Buehrer had a no-hitter in the opener until the seventh inning. He ended up with a two-hit shutout in raising his record to 3-4. Sophomore Larry Winum was the hitting star with a two-run triple.

In the second game, junior Bobby Thomas led the way with three singles, a double and two runs batted in. Senior pitcher Boyd Batenhorst upped his record to 5-2 after relieving freshman Jeff Costello in the third inning.

The team, now 17-20-1, meets Missouri Western State College in a home doubleheader at 2 p.m. Thursday.

The Foosers team won the All-University bowling roll-offs last Thursday and Friday at the Nebraska Union lanes. The first and second place teams from the eight Union leagues participated.

Foosers team members were Gary Ahmquist, Brad Failer, Bill Grush and Steve Thompson. They had averages of 180, 159, 157 and 157, respectively.

winning percentage, hardly an adequate mark for a major college coach.

Over a long season, a player needs a desire to play for, not in spite of his coach. Husker teams I have seen lacked this mutual respect. On the field, quibbles between player and coach are evident to the discerning fan. And they concern more than the expected complaints from reserves about not playing enough.

I have seen players snickering at Sharpe's advice, just as I have seen Sharpe humiliate players. During a game this season, I heard Sharpe yell to a player at the plate, "Hey, swing the bat up there. You might get lucky and hit one." Now that's a real confidence builder.

Husker players both past and present (who wish to remain anonymous), have told me that Sharpe rarely offers constructive criticism. Instead, I am told, he is a master at derisive, confidence-shattering remarks that do nothing but damage a player's ego and self-determination.

## Quit team

Ron Miltenberger, a junior catcher from Burlington, Iowa, quit the team earlier this year because of his disagreement with Sharpe's training policies and methods of handling the team on a road trip. Miltenberger gave up his scholarship money in an effort to see the baseball program improve through Sharpe's removal.

Miltenberger is not merely a disgruntled reserve who decided to quit. He was the team's leading conference hitter his freshman year. He also has seen how a winning team operates, playing for national high school coach of the year Dick Wagner at Burlington High School.

During his career, Miltenberger was one of the more motivated, conscientious players I met. He had a desire to help make the UNL baseball program a winning one. Apparently, he chose to disengage himself from the negative atmosphere between team and coach. I commend

him for his efforts to seek new leadership and overall improvement of the baseball program.

When swimming coach John Reta recently came under the gun, Athletic Director Bob Devaney said he owed it to Reta to let him coach in the new pool, blaming the old pool for part of his past failures. Well, there are no plans for a new baseball field.

Nebraska will not lure top state and area talent until its baseball program is upgraded, and I believe a major step in the improvement process is the replacement of Tony Sharpe as head baseball coach.

## nebraskan sports

# husker galaxy | Runners clip 3½ seconds off two-mile relay record

By Jim Hunt

Putting it all together at the right time is what Husker middle distance runner Paul McClain tries to do. And McClain, a sophomore pre-medicine major from Bellevue, put it all together Saturday when he ran 1:49:8 in his 880-yard leg of the two-mile relay at the Drake Relays.

McClain, along with teammates Matt Reckmeyer, Keith Whitaker and Ron Fisher, raced to a new school record in the relay with a time of 7:20.95, clipping more than three and a half seconds off the old mark. The record earned Husker athlete-of-the-week honors for the team.

The old mark of 7:24.5 was set in the 1971 Drake Relays by Jim Hawkins, Greg Carlberg, Roger Chadwick and Larry Cinato.

Reckmeyer, a junior from Mt. Morris, Ill., led off for the Huskers and ran his 880-yard leg in 1:51.2. He was followed by Whitaker, a junior from Norwell, Mass., who recorded a time of 1:50.4. McClain ran third and the team was anchored by freshman Ron Fisher from Ottawa, Canada, with a time of 1:49.4.

Fisher was boxed in, however, and the Huskers took third place behind Baylor University and the University of Wisconsin. Just two-tenths of a second separated the three schools.

Although the two-mile relay is not run in the NCAA national championships, Husker track coach Frank Sevine is optimistic about the runners' chances of qualifying in individual events.

"I think that they have a chance of qualifying for nationals if they get a break from the weather," Sevine said.

"I'm going to try my best to qualify for nationals," McClain said. "I'm going to try to put my best foot forward because it (the nationals) is within reach." McClain's performance in the relay Saturday was his career best in the 880.

Javelin thrower Scott Sorchik, a junior from Sussex, N.J., is the only Husker to qualify for nationals thus far.

UNL track fans can see the Huskers in a dual Saturday against the Iowa State University Cyclones (ISU). It will be the Husker's only home dual this year. They will host the Big 8 Conference Championships May 14 and 15.

Other athlete of the week nominees were sophomore golfer Doug Smith of Lincoln; junior baseball pitcher Kirk Eymann of Papillion; freshman tennis player Phil Woog of Rolling Hills, Calif.; sophomore softball pitcher Jan Bartels of Lincoln; junior tennis player Sue Rapp of Lincoln; and sophomore golfer Jane Deeter of Lincoln.



Photo by Steve Rowner  
Ron Fisher, left, and Matt Reckmeyer practice their relay exchange. They were part of the school record-setting two-mile relay team last Saturday at the Drake Relays.