

# Lincoln prepares itself for 'one helluva weekend'

By Scott Whitcomb

Players, coaches and officials are not the only ones drawing game plans for the Nebraska boys state basketball tournament in Lincoln today through Saturday.

The Lincoln Police Dept. and hotel, tavern and liquor store managers also are brood for the big weekend.

Dick Childs, Raddison Cornhusker sales director, said engineers in his hotel will remove all furniture in the hall of the hotel, including mirrors, light fixtures, ashtrays, tables and anything else that could be destroyed.

"We literally strip our corridors of everything except fire exit signs which the Lincoln Fire Department code won't allow us to do," Childs said.

He said the Cornhusker hires extra off-duty policemen to patrol from 9 p.m. until 3 a.m. during the tournament.

The Cornhusker has suffered damage during previous tournaments, he said.

"It is one helluva tough situation for hotels," he said. "It's a fun time, but I don't know if I'd let my daughter go off to Lincoln for a weekend like this one."

### Fire alarms

He said high schoolers in the past have pulled the fire alarms several times, thrown ice cubes and soft drinks out the window and down the mail chutes, broken furniture in the halls, and abused the elevators.

"We've had kids send the elevators down to the lobby filled with trash," Childs said. "It is mostly the fans that are the rowdies, not the teams."

Jeane Moran, Airport Ramada Inn desk manager, agreed that visiting fans cause the most trouble.

"We can't really segregate the fans from other hotel guests because 99 per cent of our guests this weekend are here for the tournament," Moran said.

She said the Ramada Inn hires an off-duty policeman to stay until early morning hours. \$75 advance deposit is required for rooms filled with high school students, she added.

"We don't take any chances," Moran said, "If there is any damage we take it out of the \$75 deposit."

The Ramada Inn last year suffered broken glass and lights, holes in the walls, graffiti, and stolen telephones, she said.

"Ninety per cent of the kids are pretty good," Moran said. "The problem comes when you get a party of 18 in one or two rooms."

### No problems

Hilton Hotel manager, Jim Bourne said, "We appreciate tremendously the Boys Basketball tournament. We've never experienced any problems with the tournament except for noise and we whole-heartedly anticipate that this year."

Bourne said the Hilton has never had any destruction in the past and does not anticipate any this year.

"We think the boys are great and we welcome them with open arms," Bourne said.

However, Steve Lungren, Great Plains Motel desk manager, said his motel has had trouble in the past.

"We haven't let boys stay here from the basketball tournament for two years," Lungren said. "Three years ago we had a lot of problems with vandalism such as



broken windows, torn mattresses and other general negligence."

Liquor store owners Herman Strackbein of Herm's, and Richard Stoehr of N Street Drive-in said they will take precautions when the tournament starts.

"I give my employees a \$25 bonus if they catch a minor trying to buy," Stoehr said.

He said if three of four people at the counter are minors, he will ask the minors to go outside and then he will get a sworn statement from the purchaser that the liquor is for himself.

### Three I.D.'s

Strackbein said his employees will require three identification cards of people who look too young.

"My boys watch 'em pretty close," he said. "The police have already been around to warn us about this weekend, but of course we try to watch it pretty close all the time."

Dean Leitner, assistant Lincoln police chief, said officers will be present at every tournament game.

"We'll have between four and eight officers present inside and outside every game plus private duty assignments," Leitner said.

He said his primary concern is before, during and immediately following the games. Special officers will be assigned to various locations to control the traffic and

the crowd and to see that people comply with city ordinances, he said.

However, Leitner said he does not expect any trouble from the crowd which becomes a problem only "when there are emotional feelings connected with the outcome of specific games."

Jerry Irwin, owner of Sandy's Bar and Grill, said he will hire a few more employees for the tournament, but said he does not expect much trouble.

Uncle Sam's bar Assistant Manager, Mike Cochran, said door guards will require two identification cards plus a picture from those that are questionable this weekend.



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