

Rec trips offer study relief

Students who already have become disenchanted with textbooks and musty classrooms may find relief in the UNL Recreation Dept.

This semester students have the chance to take to the hills for rock-climbing seminars that will prepare students for mountaineering trips planned. Seminars this month will teach students the basic art of backpacking and climbing.

The Recreation Dept. also has scheduled a canoeing trip on the Niobrara and a backpacking trip to Mexico.

The department, which offered about 14 trips last year, expects each participant to be in excellent shape before beginning a trip, according to Mark Ebel, department coordinator.

Conditioning is more important than experience on most trips, Ebel said.

Ebel traveled with students on four trips this summer, two canoe and two mountaineering trips.

The biggest problems encountered on the trips happen because students are not

prepared for the physical demands of the trip, he said.

"We recommend that each student begins preparing a month in advance with a self-determined daily exercise routine," he said. Jogging, running, swimming and cycling on a daily basis are excellent conditioners, he said.

Good physical condition is especially important on mountaineering trips, Ebel said, because it makes adjusting to altitude change easier, Ebel said.

Ebel is working on plans for a trip that would combine recreational experience with university credit hours.

Learning while on a trip is like learning in a classroom, he added.

Rock-climbing seminars have been scheduled for September to prepare students for upcoming mountaineering trips.

There also will be a canoeing trip on the Niobrara, a rock climbing trip to South Dakota and a backpacking trip to Mexico this semester.



Photo courtesy of the UNL Recreation Dept. It sure beats sitting at a desk. The UNL Recreation Dept. offers relief to the student tired of musty classrooms.

Eyebrows go up when winners lose their jobs

In an era in which losing coaches are fired without causing the slightest stir, it is suspicious when a winner is given his walking papers.

George Nicodemus' dismissal as UNL women's basketball and softball coach earlier this summer raised such suspicions.

However, as in many cases, the whole story may never be told. Although such seemingly unsubstantial reasons as "disorganization" and "players complaining about not playing" were given for the firing, the problem apparently ran much deeper.

Nicodemus first gained recognition at John F. Kennedy College in Wahoo where he produced national champion Amateur Athletic Union teams in 1972 and 1973 and the national runner-up in 1974. J.F.K. folded, and Nicodemus came to UNL two years ago to coach the women's basketball team without pay.

That team finished with a 23-9 record, prompting fellow coaches to select him as the *Daily Nebraskan* Women's Coach of the Year. Last year he was officially hired as both basketball and softball coach. The basketball squad dipped to 21-16; the softball record was 12-15,

although the team did win the state championship.

Five reasons

Nicodemus said Jay Davis, UNL women's athletic director, gave him five reasons for his dismissal: disorganization, he was hard to locate, he didn't submit

said she doubted the seriousness of the in-state recruiting problems and added she knew of only one high school coach who encouraged players to go elsewhere.

"I think most of the coaches around the state respect the guy," she said.



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travel times for road games soon enough, players complained about not playing and some Nebraska high school coaches would not send their players to UNL.

One could argue all year over whether such reasons should be sufficient, but it seems the players might provide a moderate view on the subject.

But five players contacted were as strongly divided as Davis and Nicodemus on the issue.

Junior Jan Crouch, the leading scorer on last year's basketball team, is an adamant Nicodemus supporter. She

Sophomore Anita Bahe, who played basketball and softball last year, tells a different story. She alleged that Lincolnton Barb Hart and Deb Van Dusen, two of the better high school players in the state last year, enrolled at UNO rather than play for Nicodemus. Bahe said she and some other players would not have played for Nicodemus this year.

Nicodemus said that when he asked Davis for the names of high school coaches who wouldn't send their players to him, she refused to give them.

Never lost one

"Every player I went after in Nebraska whom I had financial aid to offer, I got," he said. "I never lost a one."

The players don't dispute that Nicodemus is knowledgeable, in basketball. Crouch said she has talked to Julie Simpson, a former player at J.F.K. and co-captain of the 1976 U.S. women's Olympic team, who called Nicodemus one of the most intelligent basketball coaches she has had. What some players complain about are his methods of imparting that knowledge.

One basketball player, who wished to remain anonymous said Nicodemus failed to work enough on fundamentals and suggested that he might have been looking too far ahead to a national championship rather than developing the present team.

"He let things get out of hand," she said. "He took for granted that we knew a lot of things we didn't."

Bahe said the situation was worse in softball. Nicodemus showed a lack of interest in practice, she said, and often based his starting team on game performances rather than rewarding good practice efforts. She said this made starters complacent, knowing their starting spots were sewn up as long as they performed adequately in games.

Softball sideline

Betsy Anderson, a senior on last year's softball team, said Nicodemus considered softball only a sideline. "I think the girls ran the practices more than he did," she said.

Senior Jan Bartels, the top pitcher on last year's team, called his organization "poor to terrible." She told of one incident where he moved up the starting time of a game to accommodate a visiting team but failed to notify all of his players.

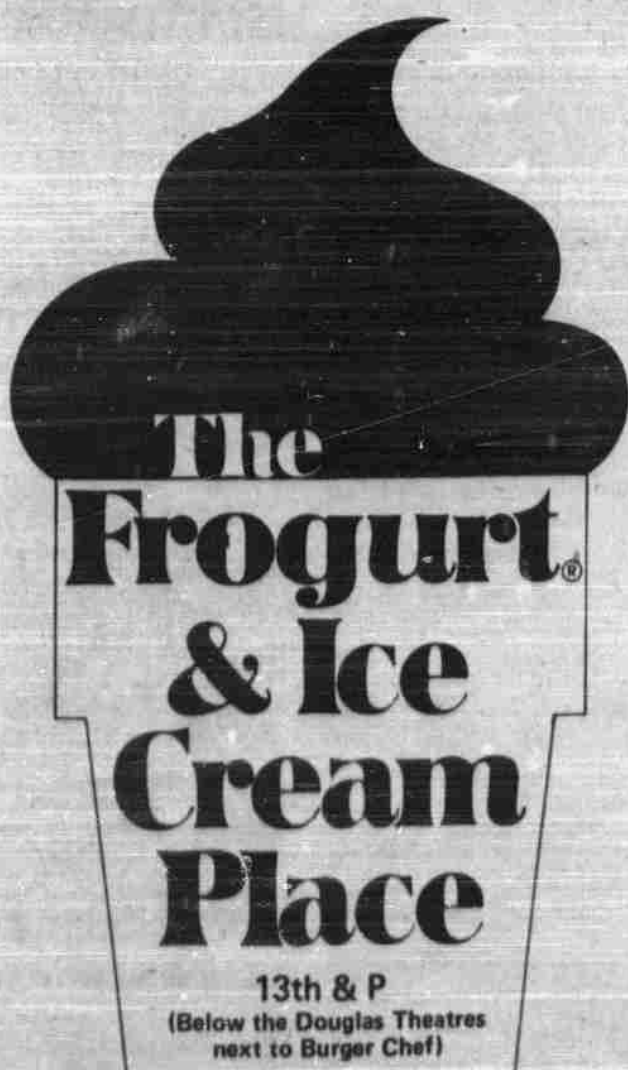
Although complaints from players not playing are heard on virtually every team, Bahe said sour grapes aren't the whole story here. "I didn't mind not playing," she said. "It was not knowing why."

Nicodemus admitted that some of his athletes didn't play, but said, "I think you have that problem in any sport. Everybody can't play."

"I really don't know what the big gripe was," Crouch added. "You can't fire a coach because he doesn't play everybody, and I don't feel any of the reasons were substantial at all."

Nicodemus' dismissal apparently was handled unprofessionally, no matter how valid the reasons for the dismissal. The players said they took their complaints to both Nicodemus and Davis last year, but according to Nicodemus, Davis never asked him to change his coaching before his dismissal. "I was completely surprised by her announcement," he said.

A better solution would have been for Davis to stipulate exactly what was required of Nicodemus and give him another year to make the changes. It's undoubtedly too late for such a suggestion now, but in the future perhaps Davis can make more of an effort to reconcile differences with a coach before sending him to the unemployment lines.



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