

Student manager is unsung hero of behind-scenes football business

By L. Kent Wolgamott

It is a job that involves a lot of work and receives very little credit. You may never make the headlines if you hold it, but you are an integral part of the Husker football team.

The job is student manager.

Mike Frei, a senior agricultural economics major from Grand Island, is in his fourth year as manager and is the head manager this season.

Frei said he became a manager because of his interest in football.

"I just never had the ability to play football, but I liked the sport. It (becoming a manager) was the easiest way to still stay in touch with it," he said.

He said the managers' main duty was to take care of equipment such as the blocking sleds and dummies and keeping track of the 35 footballs used during a Husker practice.

On game weekends, Frei said, the managers help take care of room assignments in the Nebraska Center for Continuing Education, if the game is at home, or in a hotel or motel if the game is away.

The manager's also make sure the players are on buses

to and from the hotel, airport, or stadium and wake up the players on game days.

As head manager, Frei said he records the number of minutes played by each player during the game while the other managers help keep the sideline in order and keep the coaches' headphones untangled.

He said that the eight managers are split between the freshman and varsity teams, with two or three working with the freshmen and the others working with the varsity.

The head and junior managers attend the away games, Frei said.

He said managers work 4½ to 5 hours a day and receive one hour of credit per semester.

Frei said he would encourage anyone interested in becoming a manager to apply but he warned "you've got to like the sport, it takes up a lot more time than a guy would think."

He said he enjoyed working with the players and coaches and that his experience on the inside provided a completely different picture of Nebraska football than an outsider would observe.

"I think we'll have a good season. I'd sure like to be in Miami come the 1st of January."

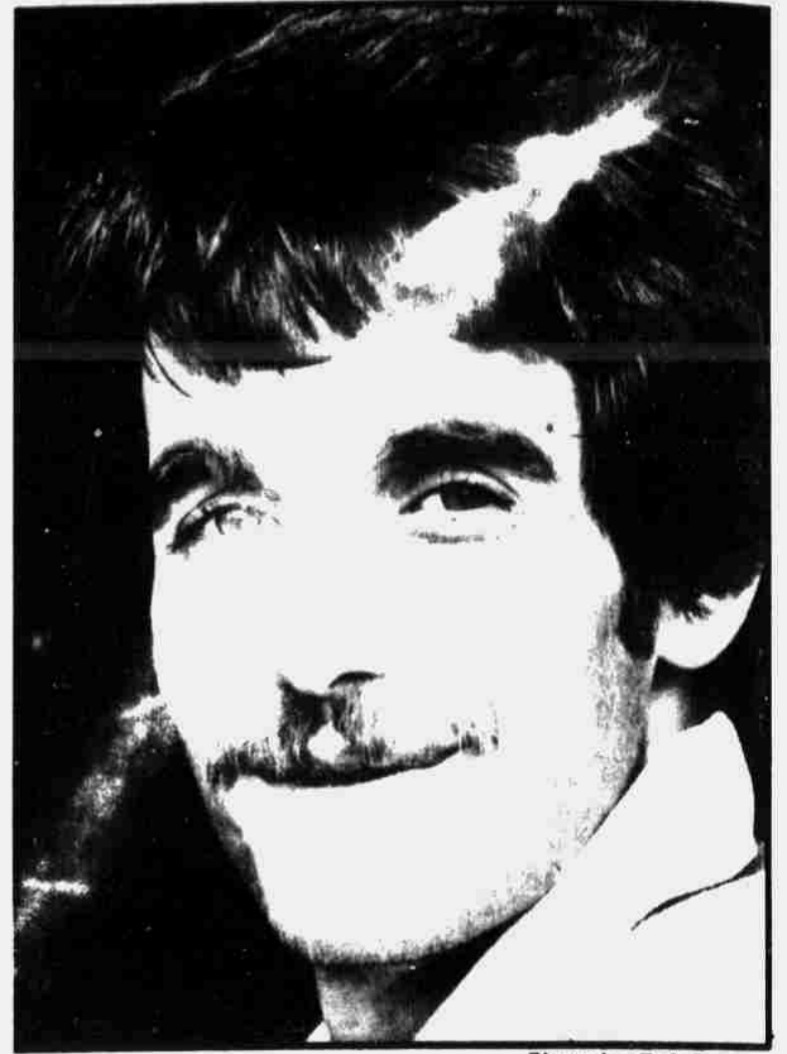


Photo by Bob Pearson

Student manager Mike Frei

Neck-and-neck races make for exciting baseball season

By L. Kent Wolgamott and Jeff Taebel

Despite lower run production, major league baseball races are much tighter than they were at this time last year. And as a result, baseball attendance has soared.

Three of the four divisions feature exciting races that could go down to the final day of the season.

Only in the American League East, where the Boston Red Sox have opened up a substantial lead over the defending world champion New York Yankees, does the race appear decided.

The Yankees, Milwaukee and Detroit remain in striking distance of the Red Sox, but only a substantial slide by Boston will enable one of these teams to go on to the American League playoff.

In the American League West, Kansas City and California seem to be locked into a two-way battle for the division pennant crown.

Kansas City is favorite

Although both teams have records worse than the top four teams in the East, Kansas City probably is the favorite, based on its late season surge of last year and the return of injured starters Geroge Brett, Frank White and Fred Patek.

California has been able to score and get good starting pitching but often not in the same game.

Early season leader Oakland has faded and pre-season favorite Texas has been struggling all year.

Both races in the National League are close and could result in surprise winners.

But perhaps the three best teams in baseball are fighting for the National League West championship.

San Francisco, Los Angeles and Cincinnati have traded the division lead day-to-day for the last two weeks.

Giants are surprising

The Giants, the surprise team of baseball, have depended on strong pitching and timely hitting by Jack Clark and Terry Whitfield, but their bullpen often has let them down.

Cincinnati, loaded with hitting, has had a slew of injuries in addition to their perennial pitching woes. Even ace Tom Seaver's record has slumped below .500.

Defending NL champs, the Dodgers, are first in pitching and tied for first in hitting in the league, reflecting the balance of this strong team.

The return of left-handed relief pitcher Terry Forster and the recent explosion of Reggie Smith's bat make the Dodgers extremely tough in the stretch.

The remaining three teams in the division can only play the spoiler role for one of the leaders and must wait until the distant future to have a real shot at the big boys on the block.

Strange race in East

The strangest race of the year is occurring in the NL East where the Chicago Cubs are defying a historical pattern by coming back in August, which has traditionally been the month for the Cubs to fold.

The Philadelphia Phillies may be the victims of the Cubs streak while they struggle to combine both pitching and hitting in the same game.

Montreal and Pittsburgh still may be heard from, but it would require a swoon by both of the leaders for them to advance substantially.

Which leads us to the playoffs.

In the American League, we see Kansas City and Boston for the pennant.

Always a bridesmaid

Expect Kansas City to once again be the bridesmaid since the Red Sox, with the best record in baseball, have been headed to the World Series all year long.

In the senior circuit, we see Los Angeles playing our darkhorse selection, the Chicago Cubs, for the NL championship.

But don't expect too much from the Cubs; Los Angeles should sweep this series.

And in the World Series, expect Boston's left field wall, the famous Friendly Green Monster to turn a shade of Dodger Blue as the righter power of Smith, Ron Cey, Steve Garvey and Dusty Baker lifts routine Dodger Stadium flyballs over the wall, to provide the necessary advantage for Dodger Manager Tom Lasorda to bring a World Championship to L.A.



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