

Sports

Cornhusker slugger's assets keep him on deck

By Tom Shelton

Combining home run hitting power with a stellar batting average, Nebraska's Steve Stanicek has been among the most feared batters in the Big Eight this season.

Stanicek, batting a team-leading .484 for the Huskers, has smacked nine round-trippers, and is on his way to new Husker records in homers and RBIs.

Despite his tendency to hit the long ball, Stanicek said he is a selective hitter, not intentionally swinging for the fences on every pitch.

"I'm more selective at the plate," Stanicek said. "I try to hit the ball hard, and if they (home runs) come, they come."

Like most batters, Stanicek prefers to hit fast balls. He

said sliders are the most difficult pitches to deposit over the fence.

Stanicek has not always had the ability to hit tape measure bombs. His sophomore year in high school at Park Forest, Ill., he only hit one home run, but his junior year saw him hit six and he hit nine his senior season. The 6-0, 190-pound Stanicek said his increased power at the plate can be attributed mainly to weight training.

Notion false

The feeling of many about weight lifting is that it makes players muscle-bound and unable to whip the bat around fast enough to catch the fast ball. Stanicek has proven that notion false, at least in his case.

"If you do the right kind of stretching exercises along with weight training, you won't lose your bat speed,"

Stanicek said. "There are a lot of myths about that."

John Sanders, Stanicek's coach, said Stanicek's power does not stem from any secret formula.

"He just gets it from hard work. His main assets are his techniques, size, strength, and quickness," Sanders said.

Sanders said Stanicek's chances of making it as a professional ball player are looking better all the time because of consistent improvement. Stanicek was drafted out of high school by the St. Louis Cardinals in the 12th round of the 1979 draft, and will be eligible to receive offers from pro teams at the end of this, his junior year.

Stanicek himself said the major leagues are definitely on his list of possibilities.

"I'm pretty interested now," Stanicek said, "but they'll have to make it worth my while to skip my senior year."

Defense, offense

No slouch on defense, Stanicek said he has worked hard to make sure he doesn't sacrifice home runs at the expense of errors.

"I've worked as hard on offense as I have on defense," he said. "I'm pretty good defensively."

Sanders said the tendency of some players to let their defensive skills slide while working to improve their offensive output is not a problem with Stanicek.

Stanicek's increased selectivity at the plate has resulted in more walks and less strikeouts, Sanders said.

"He's been up between 80 and 90 times this season and has struck out only six or seven times," Sanders said. "That's amazing."

"Steve will load up when the situation calls for it, but otherwise he'll wait for a good pitch. He's got a good rhythmic swing and natural power," he said.

Sanders said Stanicek's size, strength and power make it inevitable that some of his swings will result in the ball going over the fence.

Stanicek said his strikeouts have been cut down somewhat by his opting for a lighter bat — from a 31- to a 30-ounce.

"I've found I have more control with a smaller bat," he said.

Stanicek said he gets the most satisfaction out of putting his opponents' pitches into orbit.

"Knowing you beat the pitcher is the best part of the game," he said.

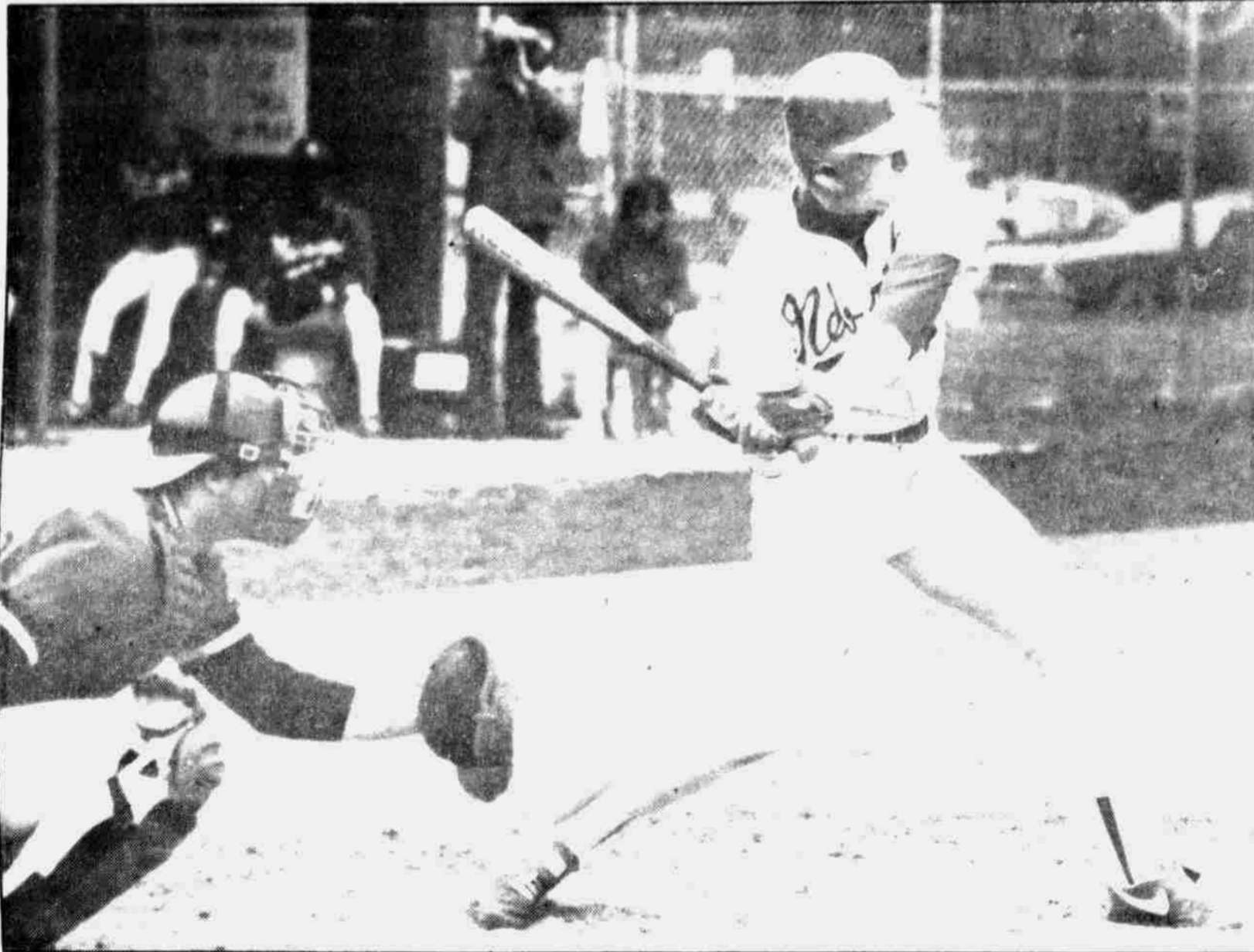


Photo by Dave Bentz

Junior Steve Stanicek steps into a pitch against UNO Tuesday. Stanicek leads the Husker offensive attack with a .484 batting average.

Tennis coach says team unity needed

By Dirk Maley

Frustrating is the word that best describes Coach Kerry McDermott's feelings regarding the men's tennis team's inability to win the close matches so far this season.

The Huskers have lost a number of three-set matches this season, most recently at last weekend's Regional Team Tournament in Kansas City, Kans. In a 5-7 loss to Southern Illinois, the Huskers dropped all but two matches in three sets.

Nebraska's first-year coach cites youth and inexperience as part of the problem. Another factor is mental.

"We're match tough right now, but we're lacking mental toughness and team unity," McDermott said. "We can never all play together as a team on a given day."

McDermott said this should change when the Huskers begin conference play Friday in Lincoln against Iowa State. The Huskers also will play Kansas State Saturday and Oklahoma Sunday. Weather permitting, the team will play at the varsity courts.

The team's main goal entering the season was to finish in the top three teams in the league. That hasn't changed and McDermott said it's a realistic and attainable goal.

The Oklahoma Sooners are probably the team to beat this year, McDermott said. The Sooners defeated Oklahoma State, last year's Big Eight champion, at the regional tournament. Experience and maturity are Oklahoma's strong points, McDermott said, indicating that the team consists primarily of juniors and seniors.

In contrast, Nebraska may be, with the possible exception of Colorado, the youngest team in the league. With

only one senior, McDermott has had to rely heavily on freshmen and sophomores. Craig Johnson and Jim Carson are two Husker neeters who have proved effective in their first year of competition.

Johnson, Nebraska's top singles player, has a 3-5 record, playing against top-notch competition. Johnson lost to all-American Scott Johnson of Oklahoma State, 2-6, 1-6, in the Regional Tournament.

Johnson has combined with Carson, Nebraska's No. 2 singles player, to form a strong doubles team. The two possess a 6-2 record in doubles competition. In singles play, Carson has beaten six opponents and lost to five.

Nebraska's overall record entering league play is 5-6. McDermott said he is somewhat disappointed with that mark but thinks it will improve during conference play.

"All Big Eight play will take place outdoors with the weather permitting," he said. "The slower courts should help us by giving our baseline players more time to react and get to the ball. On a faster court, there's very little reaction time."

McDermott said team spirit remains high and that's essential if Nebraska hopes to finish high in the league standings.

"The team has been working hard and their attitudes remain real good," McDermott said. "We've worked too hard to quit now and I don't see any team in the conference working harder than we do. We need to win and to pull those close ones out. It's time for our kids to put those close losses behind them and to go out and prove they can play with the best."

Booster banquet tribute to gymnasts

The Nebraska Gymnastics Booster Club will have its annual banquet Monday at the Nebraska Center for Continuing Education, 33rd and Holdrege streets. The cocktail and autograph session will begin at 6:30 p.m. with the dinner beginning at 7 p.m. The public is invited to attend.

Members of the UNL men's and women's gymnastics teams and the Nebraska School of Gymnastics will be honored. Special tribute will be paid to the seniors, including all-Americans Jim Hartung and Steve Elliott.

Gov. Charles Thone and UNL Athletic Director Bob Devaney will attend and Coach Francis Allen will show the 1982 NCAA gymnastics film. Herbie Husker will attend and there will be posters available for autographs.

Tickets may be requested from the gymnastics office today and they will be available at the door Monday. Prices are \$10 for adults in advance and \$12 at the door. Children's tickets are \$4.50 in advance and \$5 at the door.

Football ticket sale will begin April 26; application required

By Larry Sparks

The spring sale of 1982 student football tickets will be April 26 through 29 at the Athletic Ticket Office, South Stadium 117. The office is open 9 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

UNL Ticket Manager Helen Ruth Wagner said notices have been posted on campus, and she urged students to read them carefully because several changes have been made in the ticket policy.

Students applying for tickets this year are being asked to bring an application card that they have already filled out. The cards will be available beginning Monday at the Student Accounts Office in Administration 204, the information desk at the East Union and the ticket office.

When buying the tickets, students must present the application card along with a student ID card and cash or a personal check for \$36. Checks must show a Lincoln address and phone number.

Students will draw a lottery number, and the ticket orders will be filled using these numbers. The tickets may be picked up Sept. 7 through 10 upon presentation of a current student ID showing full-time student status.

Married students may purchase a ticket for their spouse if they present proof of marriage. Spouse tickets will cost \$72 this year.

Students still may request tickets in blocks, but those sections will be limited to 100 tickets this year. A representative of the group should present a completed application form, student ID and individual payment for each person in the block. Each student will be required to pick up his or her own ticket in the fall.

Students who purchase tickets in the spring but do not attend UNL in the fall will be permitted a full refund if the ticket office is notified in writing by Sept. 1. No refunds will be given after that date.

Wagner said the ticket office will have a computer system in the fall. The ID numbers of all students purchasing tickets will be entered into the system, which should prevent students from purchasing additional tickets after obtaining duplicate student IDs. The system also will prevent students who have dropped to part-time status from picking up a ticket, she said.