

Anderson is Huskers' 'stopper'

By Barry Trevarrow

As the Nebraska baseball team gears up its drive for the College World Series, pitcher Jeff Anderson is the one player they'll want on the diamond when the chips are down.

"Jeff is a great competitor," assistant coach Ray Tromba said. "If there's one player on this team that I look at as a 'stopper', Jeff's the one. He has the ability to do whatever it takes to win a game for us."

Anderson, a junior from Nampa, Idaho, is about to complete his third season as a Husker. In his first two seasons, he led the pitching staff in appearances with 22 as a freshman and 23 more as a sophomore. Anderson posted a 2.47 earned-run-average those years, compiling a 15-4 record while striking out 58 batters in 131 innings of action. Anderson led the Big Eight in 1981 with an amazing 0.82 ERA during the conference season and continued his success last year with a 1.65 mark. Nebraska is lucky to have acquired Anderson.

"I had decided to go to a junior college down in Arizona," Anderson said. "But I came home one night and had a message from (Nebraska coach) John Sanders.

I'd always dreamed of playing for a big name school. I was impressed with the facilities and I changed my mind."

Anderson, a 6-foot righthander, wasn't even predicted to pitch for the Huskers after fall workouts as a freshman.

"The coaches helped me work really hard over the winter," Anderson said. "I improved my concentration 100 percent and was used mostly by relief pitcher that season."

Anderson posts a perfect 7-0 record this year to lead the team in victories. He has struck out 28 batters in 42 innings of action while compiling a 1.93 ERA. Ron Hendricks leads the team with a 1.47 mark in 18 innings pitched. Anderson says he doesn't consider himself a strike-out pitcher.

"I think I'm better at working around hitters and forcing ground balls," Anderson said. "I like to go to my sinker and curve to throw off opponents."

Tromba cites Anderson's consistency as his biggest asset.

Anderson said he expects Oklahoma State to challenge the Huskers for the Big Eight title. The conference tournament is set for May 12 through 15 in Oklahoma City.

Jones . . .

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"I've always tried to be consistent and I think I've been able to do that," Jones said. "How I saw myself was that if I could improve every year, I'd be satisfied."

"We've been able to do good here at Nebraska teamwise, with not much talent. You could never think the team could do well and yet we would. Sophomore year was the best year we had as a team.

In that year, 1981, Nebraska was able to finish second in both the Big Eight indoor and outdoor championships. The Cornhuskers finished 10th in the NCAA Indoor that season as well. It was a good year personally for Jones as he placed in the long and triple indoor jumps and qualified for Nationals on Nebraska's 400-meter relay team that holds the school record.

The Jamaican athletes on the team are sometimes forced to take the blame for when things go wrong. Jones said when foreign athletes come to compete in the United States in track they are expected to be great and nothing short of greatness is good enough.

"When things go bad and it involves the Jamaicans the blame falls on us. As a foreigner you're in a position that you have to do well all the time. You feel that everybody's got their eye on you.

"We (Jamaicans) work out at a slower pace and people think that we're lazy but that's just the way we work out. People feel that if you work out hard you'll do better. But we can't take what we've been taught for 15 years and just throw it out. I just said to hell with that."

Right now Jones is pointing to one race, the 400-meter relay at the Big Eight championships in Stillwater, Okla.

"If Charles goes through that tape and we've won, that would end it perfectly," Jones said. "I'll feel great going out that way. If we win the race it will make my years at Nebraska seem that much sweeter."

"I run track because it's fun. It's getting to a point where it's not fun anymore. Everybody wants to win. It's getting to a point where it's an all-win situation. I don't want any part of that."

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