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Tickets for two

Trevor Franklin, 12, indicates his need for two football tickets Saturday in front of Memorial Stadium. He was one of many participating in the annual ritual of ticket buying and selling before a Nebraska home game. For more on Nebraska's 42-7 victory against Wyoming, see page 8.

Access policy to locker rooms draws writers' mixed opinions

By Jim Rasmussen
Daily Nebraskan Senior Reporter

Two veteran sportswriters gave different opinions Sunday concerning UNL's new policy of barring reporters from the Cornhusker locker room after football games.

Under the new policy, players are brought to a large interview room after games. The university changed its locker room policy to give equal access to female reporters, who formerly had to wait outside the locker room while their male colleagues interviewed players inside.

The new policy went into effect Saturday for the Wyoming game. Mike Babcock of the Lincoln Journal and Star and Dave Sittler of the Omaha World-Herald said they were surprised at how well things went Saturday.

Babcock said he thinks having an interview room is preferable to interviewing players in the locker room.

But Sittler said he prefers locker room interviews because they are more spontaneous and the players show more emotion.

Both writers complimented the UNL Sports Information office for making the players available for interviews.

"I thought it went very well," Babcock said. "It was a lot better than I thought it would be."

Babcock said he had been opposed to the new setup, but Saturday's experience changed his mind. He said he liked the quieter atmosphere of the interview room.

"The locker room is a terrible place to interview people," he said. "You're elbow-to-elbow in there."

Although Sittler also said he doesn't enjoy the locker room atmosphere, he said, the new policy hinders his ability to get a good story. He said the interview room just doesn't have the on-the-spot atmosphere of the locker room.

"By the time the players get to the interview room, you just don't see some of the emotion," Sittler said.

Sittler recalled the Oklahoma game last year, when Neil Harris tipped a fourth-down Sooner pass in the end zone, preserving Nebraska's lead in the final minutes. Harris was very emotional

in the locker room afterward, Sittler said.

Sittler said he doubts it would have been the same if Harris had had some time to compose himself before going to a room to be interviewed. Reporters wouldn't have been able to see his spontaneous reaction after the game, he said.

Sittler also said he didn't get to speak with two players he wanted to talk to. He said the players came to the room, but left before he could talk to them.

"That might have been my fault," he said. "I may have spent too much time interviewing other people. But I can't remember missing anybody in the locker room."

Babcock said he thought the players gave ample time for interviews. He said he was surprised he was able to talk to players alone. He said he had anticipated a news conference-type situation, where a bunch of reporters would interview players at once.

No women reporters came to the interview room Saturday, although several are expected later in the season.

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Fraud with credit cards can be halted

By Kevin Dugan
Daily Nebraskan Staff Writer

So you don't remember ordering that mix-o-matic, set of Ginsu knives and versatile bamboo steamer that arrived yesterday. But the charge card number on the bill matches the number on your MasterCard.

Or maybe you can't compare the charge numbers because you can't find your card.

Worse yet, no merchandise and no charge card, but a \$45 bill from Visa or any of the stores that offer their own brand of in-house charge card.

The ease with which credit card fraud is committed makes this crime appealing to practical jokers and professional thieves alike.

Anyone can order almost anything by phone simply by giving the number and expiration date of their credit card account. No signature required.

"This type of crime happens all the time," said Mary Zabel, Financial Card Center security manager at First Federal Lincoln.

According to Nebraska law, a credit card owner can be held liable for up to \$50 worth of fraudulent claims. In essence then, the card holder may be required to pay for someone else's play.

Detective Earl Franklin, an investigator with the Forgery and Fraud Unit of the Lincoln Police Department, said credit card fraud is a sporadic, yet ongoing crime in Lincoln.

Zabel said fraud at department stores accounts for the major portions of bank losses.

The amount of most fraudulent charges is less than the merchant floor limit, she said, since purchases over the limit must first be cleared through an authorization center. However several charges below the limit often are made before the card owner realizes and reports the crimes, she said.

Fred R. Stone disagrees with any theory that "the bank suffers the loss." Stone, executive vice president of the Retail Merchants Association of Nebraska Inc., said

the cost of credit card fraud is borne by the consuming public. The losses incurred by banks because of fraud are reflected onto the consumer by an increase in service charges and interest rates, Stone said.

So think again before ordering that Slim Whitman collection and charging it to your neighbor's account.

Franklin said telephone solicitation is a common way of getting account numbers. He cited one example in which a Lincoln woman, thinking she had won a vacation, gave a caller her card number and was subsequently billed \$2,300 for charges made through a mail order firm.

Franklin said other cases have involved fraud merchants, who, after acquiring many card numbers by phone, then make several charges to each account and skip town with the cash.

Many cases of credit card fraud result from negligence by the card owner, Zabel said. Cards left in a car, forgotten in a store or lost in a bar indicate the irresponsibility of some card owners.

Franklin said he currently is working on a case in which a Lincoln man had his checks and credit cards stolen from the glove compartment of his car. Charges in excess of the misdemeanor limit have been made within the past month, he said.

Rex Gruber, a regional credit card fraud investigator with First Data Resources in Omaha, said he thinks current Nebraska fraud laws are inadequate. He said penalties should be steeper.

Also, he said, women are more susceptible to credit card theft. Merchants and card owners should be educated about fraud prevention.

Zabel said prevention includes not loaning the card to friends or relatives. She said to be cautious with the card number and receipts and to pay attention during transactions.

She said merchants have been known to duplicate charge invoices and then collect from the bank. Tourists abroad should be particularly aware of this scam, she said.

Counties to cash in on damages

Farmers in 23 Nebraska counties soon will receive financial aid for damages suffered in weather-related disasters this year.

Counties along the Missouri River and in southeastern Nebraska will receive part of a \$12 million supplemental appropriations bill that Congress passed in July.

Ron Mueller of the Nebraska Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service said the money will be used to "rehabilitate existing conservation

structures and to restore farmland damaged by rains and flooding earlier this year."

Farmers eligible under the bill will receive aid for damages suffered to terraces, waterways, farm ponds and other farmland property, Mueller said.

John Amick, legislative assistant to Nebraska Rep. Doug Bereuter, said eligibility for the aid will be determined by farmland evaluations by county extension agents.

The money will be available on a cost-sharing basis, Amick said. The federal government will pay 64 percent of the cost paid and the farmer will pay the rest.

Emergency funds for Nebraska were depleted in June, Amick said. New funds to aid farmers came from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which collected from states that had not used up all of their emergency funds from last year.

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