

Osborne reminds fans of true spirit of sports

Is There Life After Football? I think so.

In one respect, I can divide my friends into two categories: the ones who understand why I love Nebraska football games, and the ones who don't. As an Omaha kid hitchhiking, fence-jumping and end-zone-sitting during the '60s, I've loved the Huskers. I still love 'em, and I'll love 'em in the future, win or lose. That last sentence comes with more than a bit of trepidation. I've always thought (and been taught) that winning was everything, as the late Vince Lombardi reportedly said. Boy, was he wrong.

In a half-time television interview Saturday, coach Tom Osborne said he has never told his players that "they have to go out and win this game." He just wants the players to perform to the best of their capabilities. Oklahoma Coach Barry Switzer reiterated this point during his subsequent interview during the half-time close-up. Switzer said he doesn't feel that bad if his team loses as long as his team plays its hardest. Almost sounds like the true spirit of athletics might be rearing its

ugly head.

Let's face it, Big Red fans. We've been spoiled. We have come to expect the smell of the kill, rather than the thrill of the hunt.

I recently lost my uncle, who was 59. Am I supposed to be remorseful that he lost the rest of his life? Hell no. I rejoice that he won his first six decades. Let's take pleasure from what we get, and try like hell to learn from what we have lost. If I've learned anything from either case, it is to appreciate the effort and the striving in the battle, whether it be on the football field, in a labor union, or in a hospital. That's what sports are all about and, more importantly, that's what life is all about.

Thank you, Coach Osborne, for reminding some of us Big Red fanatics that there is a bigger picture. It is only a game, but it's easy to lose one's perspective when you pull it off as beautifully and consistently as you have. Thanks for a great season. Give the bowl your best shot and I'm ready for a few new trick plays.

Billy Shaffer

Daily Nebraskan Senior Editor



Joel Sartore/Daily Nebraskan

Don Kennedy, a UNL cheerleader, wipes tears from the eyes of cheerleader Renee Stubblefield during the final seconds of the Nebraska Oklahoma game Saturday.

Baby Fae's doctor 'sidestepped' medical ethics

This essay refers to Chris Burbach's editorial (Daily Nebraskan, Nov. 5) and two letters to the editor from Mark Driscoll and Robert Singer (DN, Nov. 7), all concerning Baby Fae, who died Thursday after three weeks of life with a transplanted baboon heart.

Guest Opinion

Before returning to UNL this summer to complete my pre-medicine requirements, I had spent 10 years working as a nationally registered paramedic and as a registered trauma specialist. During the last three years, I spent 18 months in a trauma center on a thoracic trauma team and a neo-natal intensive care team. We worked with people who had severe chest injuries and with critically ill and premature newborn babies.

From this experience, I would like to point out important facts that many people have overlooked and that have left the medical community in awe.

Baby Fae's heart condition, called hypoplastic left heart syndrome, is fairly common among newborns, affecting about one in 10,000. The left ventricle, responsible for pumping blood throughout the body, fails to develop before birth. Most babies with hypoplastic left heart syndrome often suffer from other problems. According to reports, Baby Fae also suffered from an enlarged and underdeveloped aorta, the largest artery leading from the heart, and underdeveloped heart valves. However, Baby Fae remained stable, stable enough to be sent home with her parents.

Doctors normally treat such diseased babies by surgically creating a tube between the pulmonary artery and the aorta. This is a temporary measure and is normally effective for one or two years. Later, doctors can directly connect the aorta

and lungs and create an extra chamber in the right side of the heart. This is called the Norwood procedure.

According to a Newsweek article (Nov. 12), Dr. Leonard Bailey — Baby Fae's surgeon — tried the Norwood procedure once and failed. The Norwood procedure has a 25 to 33 percent mortality rate.

With this information, the first point to be made is: Why wasn't the Norwood procedure, an operation that has been proven effective, not considered before the baboon heart transplant? The same Newsweek article also states that this procedure was not even discussed with Baby Fae's parents until after lengthy discussions about the transplant.

The subject of the transplant itself raises questions about Bailey's intentions. Bailey and his staff did not try to contact any other organ procurement centers for Baby Fae. According to reports, as many as two hearts were available at the time Bailey performed the surgery.

Bailey's intentions were evident before the surgery. As early as Oct. 23, Bailey had begun tissue matching for the baboon heart. The surgery was not performed until Oct. 26. Bailey's intentions were also evident by the fact that the Loma Linda Medical Center's institutional review board has never approved a human heart transplant program, so this surgery could not have been done by Bailey at Loma Linda.

I also would like to disagree with Singer's statement that newborn's immune systems do not "kick in" until after birth. On the contrary, they are almost completely developed. During fetal development, four types of immunization cells have been identified, including the cells that are leaders in preventing organ rejection.

Most of Baby Fae's chances of rejection lay in the drug cyclosporine, which she received intravenously. The drug has serious side effects, ranging from organ rejection and severe tissue damage to kidney tissue damage and renal failure.

Besides all of this, we have not even discussed the size of the baboon heart, which, if everything had functioned properly and the organ had not been rejected, probably would not have been big enough to support Baby Fae when she got older.

As far as medical ethics and respect for human life go, I am all for research. It is research that has advanced medicine to the place it is today. But the question is one of medical ethics, and I feel Bailey has acted outside of its boundaries. The first priority of a good physician and researcher

is to gather and analyze all of the facts before making a decision. Bailey hastily made a decision when there were other proven measures available to him to save Baby Fae's life.

If we, who pursue medical careers, condone this type of behavior, not only will we fail as professionals, but we will also fail to gain the respect of our most valued asset, our patients.

James E. Ruley Jr.
graduate student
pre-med

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