

## Winning, losing, not breaking even

Betting on a favorite team, horse or dog is fun, exciting and rewarding — as long as you're winning.

But gambling also has been known to ruin families and disintegrate lives, not to mention savings accounts.

Chuck  
Green



And you never know when you're going to win, or when you're going to lose.

For at least one student, gambling ruined his career at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Maybe even more.

It was Oct. 3, 1987. It was a cool, sunny day in Lincoln, not the type of day that hinted of impending disaster. But it was a day Jim (not his real name) will never forget.

Not even if he wants to. On that day, Jim lost over \$40,000 betting football games.

"It was the single most-disastrous thing that's ever happened to me in my life," Jim said. "I was delirious with fear. I didn't know what to do, where to go... nothing. I just wanted to run away and hide somewhere where no one would find me."

"If I knew of such a place, I'd be there right now."

Jim's trouble began early with an 11:30 a.m. game on TBS (Cablevision channel 4), which he had \$2,200 bet on. He doesn't remember who played in the game, but he does remember that he lost.

When it became evident that he was going to lose money on his first game — "The game was pretty much over by halftime," he said — Jim tried to win back what he was going to lose, plus "a little more."

Jim bet five games that started at 1:30 p.m. Using three different Lincoln bookmakers, Jim placed \$1,100 on three of the games and \$550 on the other two. In addition, he placed a \$500, five-team parlay on the games.

In a parlay, a player must win all games. Jim's five-team parlay gave him 20-1 odds. In other words, had Jim won all five bets, the parlay would have paid him \$10,000, plus the \$4,000 he would have won on straight bets.

Instead, he lost all five games. He lost \$4,900, raising his total losses for the day to \$7,100.

Jim said he knew he was in serious trouble by this time, but his "gambling instincts" told him to win back the money he had lost.

"By the time I had lost all my 1:30 games, I was obsessed with getting it back and still sticking it to the bookie (winning money)," he said. "But I was running out of games."

Jim decided to stay away from betting the late afternoon games played on the West Coast, that started around 5 p.m. Lincoln time. Instead, he called a friend, who was a Lincoln bookmaker with connections to Las Vegas gambling casinos.

"I knew this guy that had bet some games over the phone to some place in Vegas last season," Jim said. "He used to work at one of the places for about four years as an assistant oddsmaker or something. I gave him a call and told him my situation, and he told me how I could call in bets to these places over the telephone."

Since the bets were made over the phone and from such a far distance, Jim used three credit cards to ensure his bets. With the help of his friend, he called three Las Vegas establishments and placed the highest bet they would accept — \$11,000.

The casinos reluctantly allowed Jim to place his bets, but only because of the relationships between Jim's friend and the head oddsmakers at each casino.

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A galloper gives his horse a workout early Wednesday morning at State Fair Park, which starts its horse racing season Friday at 7 p.m. The track will feature night racing for the first time this season.

Brent Schott/Daily Nebraskan

## Official says lights will stabilize track

By Steve Sipple  
Senior Editor

State Fair Park will begin its thoroughbred horse racing season Friday night, and track officials are hoping recently installed lights will revive the track's hard times.

Attendance and mutual handle (money bet and won each day) have declined sharply during the past three years at State Fair Park. Last year, mutual handle dropped 18.1 percent and attendance was down 5.6 percent from the 1986 total, which were so low that the track's racing was cut short by two weeks.

State Fair Park General Manager John Skold said he's optimistic the lights will help reverse the downward trend his track — and the state's four other tracks — have experienced during the past three years.

"Before the downward trend, nobody had to worry because everything was going well," Skold said. "The tracks were making money. Then we hit hard times. One of the obvious things we asked is when more people could come to the track. Obviously, more people can spend time at the track during the night rather than in the afternoon. We're hoping that's the case."

ABC Electric of Lincoln installed the lights at a cost of \$236,000 during the summer.

Skold said new night post times should draw a different — and hope-

fully larger — crowd than last season's afternoon posts. This season, the races will begin at 7 p.m. weekdays, 5 p.m. Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays.

One crowd Skold said he still doesn't expect to draw is the college crowd. He said he didn't have University of Nebraska-Lincoln students in mind when the decision was made to install lights. The UNL campus lies less than a mile south of State Fair Park.

**'Those people have their free time in the evening. We're hoping they'll find their way out here.'**

— Skold

"We haven't written off those people," he said. "We have tried different promotions over the years and have never gotten our share (of students). I don't know if it's a case of no background or lack of exposure, or what."

"College people have never been a big part of our patronage."

Skold, in his first year as general manager after the retirement of Henry Brandt, said night racing would at-

tract middle-aged people who can't attend afternoon sessions because their jobs wouldn't allow them to.

"'Yuppies,' for want of a better word," Skold said. "Those guys and ladies are dedicated to their jobs, yet they have more dispensable income than people with a normal-type job."

"Those people have their free time in the evening. We're hoping they'll find their way out here."

Skold said he's hoping enough people will find their way to State Fair Park to improve on — or at least match — last season's on-track attendance and mutual handle totals. Even if they match last year's totals, he said, the project will be worth its cost.

"If we hold our own, with the other four tracks simulcasting, we'll be very pleased," he said. "If we reverse the present trend, or no longer decline, it will be a good investment."

Omaha's Ak-Sar-Ben, Grand Island's Fonner Park, Columbus' Agricultural Park and South Sioux

City's Atokad Park will each simulcast State Fair Park's entire season.

Skold said State Fair Park can prosper even though it will lose people who would ordinarily have traveled from those cities to Lincoln to watch and bet on the races.

State Fair Park generated enough money to raise its minimum purses by \$1,800 through simulcasting races from Ak-Sar-Ben, Fonner, and Columbus. This season, State Fair Park's minimum daily purse will be \$3,000.

The larger purses have helped to bring back some top jockeys and trainers who have skipped State Fair Park's season in the past because of declining purses.

Included among the trainers who stable horses is Herb Reiken, trainer of three-time Ak-Sar-Ben horse of the year Who Doctor Who.

Skold said horsemen turned in applications for 2,300 stables. State Fair Park, he said, can stable 1,200 horses.

## Husker 'has adjusted'

By Mark Derowitsch  
Senior Reporter

Pat Tyrance's rapid ascension to the top of Nebraska's depth chart took some thought.

Tyrance, one of the Cornhuskers' starting inside linebackers, said that focusing on football helped him to net his starting job.

"I think I just lacked confidence as a freshman," he said. "It was funny. There were a lot of guys who were high school All-America's, all-stars and stuff, and I was just an all-state honorable-mention player. I needed time to gather my thoughts and get adjusted to college. Once I did that, I was ready to go."

Tyrance's lack of confidence disappeared during his redshirt year last season. He said playing

against the varsity's 1st team helped develop his confidence.

As a freshman in 1986, Tyrance tied for 6th-place on the junior varsity team in tackles with 23.

"Playing against the varsity as a scout-teamer was the key," he said. "That's what turned it around."

Nebraska linebackers coach John Melton said Tyrance's work habits during his redshirt year are paying off this season.

"He bulked himself up a little, and he's a little faster and a little stronger," Melton said. "He just shot out of the blue and he had a great spring. He's a good football player, and I'm very pleased with his progress."

Tyrance, a sophomore from Omaha, said his first three games

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## Nine Cornhuskers miss practice

By Mike Kluck  
Staff Reporter

A cool, wet practice at Memorial Stadium Wednesday may have helped the mood of the Nebraska football team, but it didn't help the list of wounded players, Cornhusker coach Tom Osborne said.

Nine players were held out of practice with injuries. Many are still recuperating from Nebraska's 41-28 loss to UCLA last Saturday.

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