

No. 1 pitcher maintains intensity

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Leinen said he wasn't surprised by his success last season. He said the key to his turnaround, which entailed going from a 1-0 record and a 6.75 earned run average as a redshirt freshman, to earning All-Big Eight honors last season, was a tough mental attitude based on self-confidence.

"To be a good pitcher, you have to have a big ego," Leinen said. "You have to have a lot of self-confidence and tell yourself you're better than the hitters. If you let the hitters get an edge on you, you're in trouble."

Leinen said he also attributes his success to Nebraska pitching coach Tom Pratt. He said Pratt helped him by changing his delivery and keeping him feeling confident.

Leinen said Pratt's delivery change involved altering his arm movement. He said he now releases a pitch at a lower point than he did during his first two seasons.

Pratt said the change has paid dividends as Leinen rose from a scholarship pitcher, battling for spot starting and relief duty, to Nebraska's No. 1 pitcher. He said Leinen has all the tools to become a good major-league pitcher.

Pratt said he doesn't like to take much credit for Leinen's turnaround.

"I just like to take credit for guiding him," he said. "That's all."

Pratt said he is confident Leinen can continue his success because the junior left-hander from Ralston arrived at Nebraska more determined than ever after a "fantastic" summer. Leinen spent his summer in Ware-

ham, Mass., where he compiled an 8-1 record and earned All-Star honors while pitching for the Wareham Gate-men in the Cape Cod Summer Base-ball League.

Pratt said Leinen's summer experience allowed him to maintain his intensity level. He said Leinen has maintained the same type of intense attitude this fall.

"He can't get much better than he did last year, but he's been a great role model because of his work habits," Pratt said. "He's like a major-league veteran going to Triple A. He knows he has to improve and he's doing everything he can to make sure he does."

"That's what made it really, really neat," Sanders said. "It wasn't one of those hang-in-the-wind deals. Pat was always very straightforward."

Sanders said he tried to help Leinen through the negotiations by showing him all of his options. He said he wanted to make sure Leinen knew there was a "menagerie" of routes he could take.

Sanders, a former Nebraska prep athlete of the year whose major-league career includes one game with the Oakland Athletics, said he also tried to assist by relating details of his career.

"We didn't get into war stories," he said, "but we did show him that

'He's like a major league veteran going to Triple A.'

—Pratt

Leinen said the Mets stayed in touch with him throughout the summer, but he chose to return to Nebraska after weighing financial and academic concerns. He said he returned for his junior season because the money offered by the Mets was not enough to offset another year of schooling.

Leinen said he has no hard feelings toward the Mets.

"I'm glad to be where I'm at," he said. "I don't feel like I lost anything. Things just didn't come through."

Pratt and Nebraska baseball coach John Sanders said they are glad Leinen returned. Sanders said Leinen "deserves to be complimented" because he was truthful throughout the negotiations.

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Sanders said Leinen's presence makes him appear to be a smarter coach. He said Leinen has the same type of impact as Orel Hershiser, the Los Angeles Dodgers' pitcher who is a top candidate for this year's National-League Cy Young Award.

"Pat Leinen is a factor," Sanders said. "He makes coaches look real intelligent because he's a talented pitcher."

Sanders said he would like to see Leinen rededicate himself to excellence this season.

"I'd like to see him maximize his abilities," he said. "I want to see him re-establish himself and provide leadership."

Performance doesn't earn Pickens Missouri start

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interceptions.

Pickens recorded three interceptions in the Red Ravens' 49-14 victory against the Nebraska freshmen last season.

Foster said one of Pickens' strong

attributes was his quickness. Hicks said Pickens is fast in covering a receiver after he makes his cut.

Pickens said he came to Nebraska from Coffeyville because the Huskers' defense resembled Coffeyville's. He said since he didn't play spring ball he has been learning from Hicks and senior Charles Fryar.

Writers named Lasorda UNL's best manager

NEW YORK (AP) - Tommy Lasorda, who led Los Angeles to the World Series championship and their sixth National League West title in 12 years, was named NL Manager of the Year Wednesday by the Baseball Writers Association of America.

Lasorda received 101 points in balloting by a committee of two writers from each NL city. He had 19 first-place votes and was named on 23 of 24 ballots. It was the second time Lasorda was voted manager of the year. He won the award in 1983, its initial year.

Jim Leyland of Pittsburgh was second with 50 points after leading the Pirates to an 85-75 record and second place in the East behind the New York Mets.

Davey Johnson, who led the Mets to a league-leading 100-60 record and their second East title in three years, was third with 38 points.

Jack McKeon, who took over the Padres from Larry Bowa on May 28, was fourth with 27 points. San Diego was 67-48 under McKeon and had the second-best record in the league over the final four months of the season.

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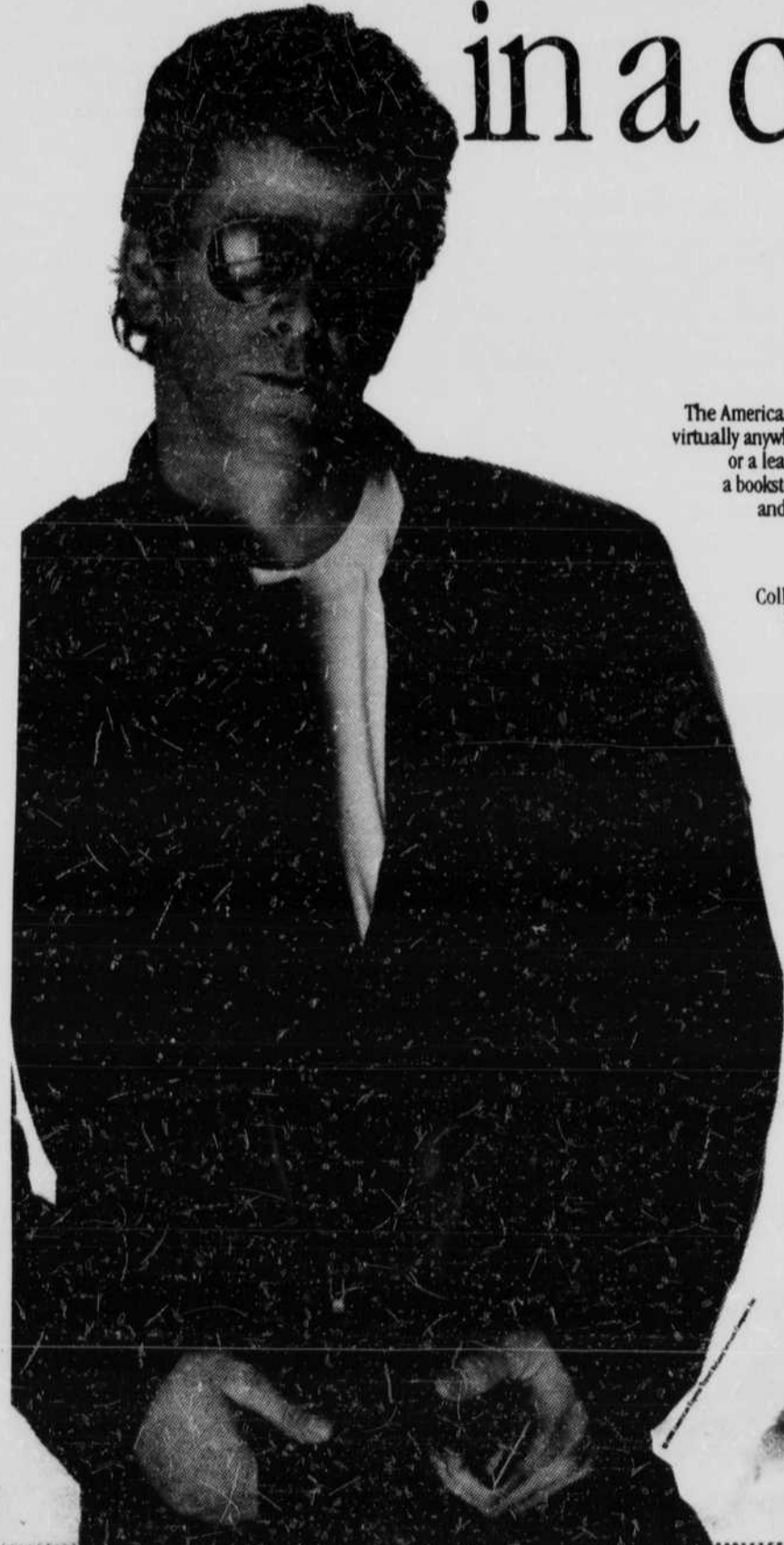
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