



William Lauer/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska's Jennifer Stevens slides home as University of Wisconsin-Green Bay's Sheila Taylor blocks the plate.

# Softball coach blames self for 21-14 record, Iowa tournament loss

By Darran Fowler  
Staff Reporter

If it sounds like Nebraska softball coach Ron Wolforth is being a little hard on himself, it's because he is.

After going 2-2 this weekend at the four-team Iowa Hawkeye Invitational -- a tournament the Cornhuskers' fourth-year coach felt Nebraska should win -- Wolforth was highly critical of the job he is doing.

In the opening game of round-robin play, Nebraska lost 5-2 to Miami of Ohio, a team Wolforth felt the Huskers should not have lost to again. Miami already had beat Nebraska 3-1 earlier this season.

Nebraska followed with victories over Adelphi of Garden City, N.Y., 1-0, and 16th-ranked Iowa 3-1, before going into the semifinals against Iowa. Nebraska was eliminated by the Hawkeyes 1-0.

The weekend split puts the Huskers at 21-14 this season, an unsatisfying record by Wolforth's standards.

"I feel we're a better team than 21-14," he said.

And he takes the blame for the Huskers not being better.

He said this team has obvious talent, strong pitching and great speed. The only variable missing, he said, is the one he controls -- coaching.

"The bottom line is coaching," he said. "What can we do differently or what could we have done differently?"

"We do have a lot of talent and so,

as far as coaching, what do we need to change?"

"Sometimes you need to sit back and take a look at what is occurring because sometimes the bottom line is you."

Wolforth continued his self-criticism, saying the team is not only talented, but hard-working.

"I blame myself more than the players," he said. "I recruited these players, and blaming them I don't think would be very fair or very wise."

However, Wolforth said he is disappointed with players in one respect. He said a goal for this team was to improve 1 percent every day, every game.

"I feel that we haven't done that for quite some time," he said. "We've kind of stagnated the last few games."

Wolforth said he is worried about Nebraska's lack of improvement and subsequent lack of momentum. The Huskers have 14 games remaining in the regular season.

"I still think we're a fine team, but I don't know," he said. "It's getting awful late in the season, and I'm real concerned about what's happening."

Wolforth said his feelings do not mean he is ready to give up on the season. He said he is going to analyze the past and refocus for the remainder of the season.

He has made a couple changes, mostly shuffling the batting order, but said "it is awful late in the year to make too many changes."

## Will

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hits for the pitcher, while the pitcher plays for the hitter. Even though it is not used in the National League, Will feels the strategy that comes from the pitcher hitting is not worth watching.

He would rather watch a real batter hit than have a lame-duck pitcher take his cuts.

The argument against Will's theory is that baseball is a complete game, so a player playing the field also should have a chance to bat.

Maybe, just maybe, Will really dislikes the designated hitter and is using Johnson's "unfavorable chance deviation" theory in hope the rule will be changed. However, his reasons for favoring the designated hitter are not clear.

That foginess doesn't take anything away from the book, as Will has done what every baseball fan would love to do -- write a book about baseball and make money doing it.

Mihaven is a senior history major and a Daily Nebraskan sports reporter and columnist.

# Coaches' successes unnoticed; gymnasts headed for top

Grant or Joseph?

After two weeks of spring football practice, Nebraska junior quarterback Mickey Joseph has jumped from the gates early in the great Cornhusker quarterback race.

Joseph, a 5-foot-10, 175-pound player from Marrero, La., has out-



Chuck Green

performed teammate Mike Grant, a junior from Valrico, Fla. through the first two Saturday scrimmages, although Grant missed the first scrimmage with a nagging shoulder injury.

Both players are listed at the No. 1 spot on the Nebraska depth chart.

Given the obvious tendency of Nebraska coach Tom Osborne to stress

the rushing game, the pre-fall depth charts may surprise a lot of sports-page coaches and list Joseph all alone at the top.

Osborne's unwillingness to evolve Nebraska's offense into the 1990s and employ a quick-striking passing game may be just the thing that will make Joseph a starter after three years of disappointment.

Allen goes for No. 1 -- again

The Nebraska men's gymnastics team is again at the top of the collegiate rankings -- nothing new to Husker coach Francis Allen.

In the last 11 years, Allen has coached the Huskers to six national

championships and four second-place finishes. Nebraska, which has been ranked first throughout the season, again is picked as the team to beat at this weekend's NCAA championships in Minneapolis.

It's interesting to see coaches of money-making sports on this campus receive large pay raises at the end of mediocre -- or downright bad -- seasons, then watch the contrast when it comes to Allen.

Allen is the only Husker coach on the campus that has consistently contended for national titles year after year, and actually won a few. Unfortunately for him, it seems to go unnoticed when salaries are reviewed and increased.

No wonder Nebraska's athletic department has financial difficulties these days . . .

. . . with Walton right behind

Allen isn't the only Nebraska coach shooting for a national championship this spring. Rick Walton, the women's gymnastics coach, also is in the running.

The Husker women are ranked No.

5 in the nation heading into this weekend's NCAA championship meet in Corvallis, Ore.

The Huskers, who have won the Big Eight championship the last four years, finished second to No. 1-ranked Utah two weeks ago in the Midwest Regional in Salt Lake City.

But the regional took place in Utah's home gym, and the Utes have been

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