

Combat

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homa State in contention for the conference title and came back with a 7-2 defeat. Nebraska did rebound in the Big Eight tournament, but head-to-head victories gave the Cowboys the title over the second-place Huskers.

McDermott said duals against the two Oklahoma schools always are

vital to Nebraska. He said his players know what is at stake, so he hasn't been harping on the standings.

"They have enough pressure on them," he said. "If I keep reminding them about it it just puts too much pressure on them."

But that will change. "In the next couple days I'll put a little kindling on the fire to tell them how important this is," McDermott said.

McDermott said his squad hasn't

seen Oklahoma State, and saw only a little bit of Oklahoma at the Corpus Cristi Invitational. The Huskers look stronger on paper, McDermott said, as they are a notch better at each position.

However, he said, the teams are strong mentally.

"They're not like last year, but very competitive," he said. "That's what's keeping them in contention."

"Sometimes desire wins more matches than talent."

Huskers

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son play, they must now go 10-2 down the stretch, he said. The automatic bid goes to the champion of the Big Eight tournament in May.

"We have to win all four," he

said. "We can't afford to lose any more before the Oklahoma State series. It's that stage of the year where it's getting down right critical (to win games)."

Oklahoma State, the conference leader, comes to town for a double-header next weekend.

Going 10-2 or better is something

Nebraska is capable of, Wolforth said. However, he added, because of the team's "split personality" this season, it also is capable of going 5-7 or worse.

"It's been that kind of year," he said. "I have no idea if they are going to come out and get after people."

Pepin

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the Husker quartet heading to California. She will be tackling a new challenge at the meet, as she will compete in the 10,000 run for the first

time in her career.

Kwizera will compete in the 800 run and van der Kolk will be in the 1,500 run at California.

Pepin said the Husker men have been relatively free of injuries. An exception is sophomore javelin thrower Roddy James, who has been suffering

from an elbow injury.

Tamas Molnar, a sophomore sprinter who won the indoor Big Eight championships in the 400 and 200 dashes this season, has been taking a break from competition, Pepin said. He said Molnar is healthy and will compete again soon.

Cards

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plicates, through the mail. The six weeks waiting for that package were awful. I memorized everything about those cards -- pictures, statistics, everything. I could flip at the speed of light through as many cards as my left hand could hold, stopping at the card I wanted.

Those cards saved me during the strike that season. I made my own 1980 All-Star teams and started a five-game series on the living-room floor. Using a graphic from a Street & Smith yearbook, I recreated Boston's Fenway Park, with my parents' stereo becoming the now-Brown Monster.

Sitting on my knees for hours at a time, my heroes batted, ran, pitched and caught in thrilling games that usually ended with George Brett

driving in Willie Wilson for the winning run. I never finished the series, since I got bored with it and mom wanted her living room back.

I once tried to include my best friend in a living-room game. My favorite hitters kept ripping deep shots to right, and my friend's favorite outfielders kept making miraculous diving catches. Baseball-card baseball must be played solitaire.

Those days made baseball card collecting as good as it could get. I had every card available, plus innocence, love, parental resentment and no interest in investment.

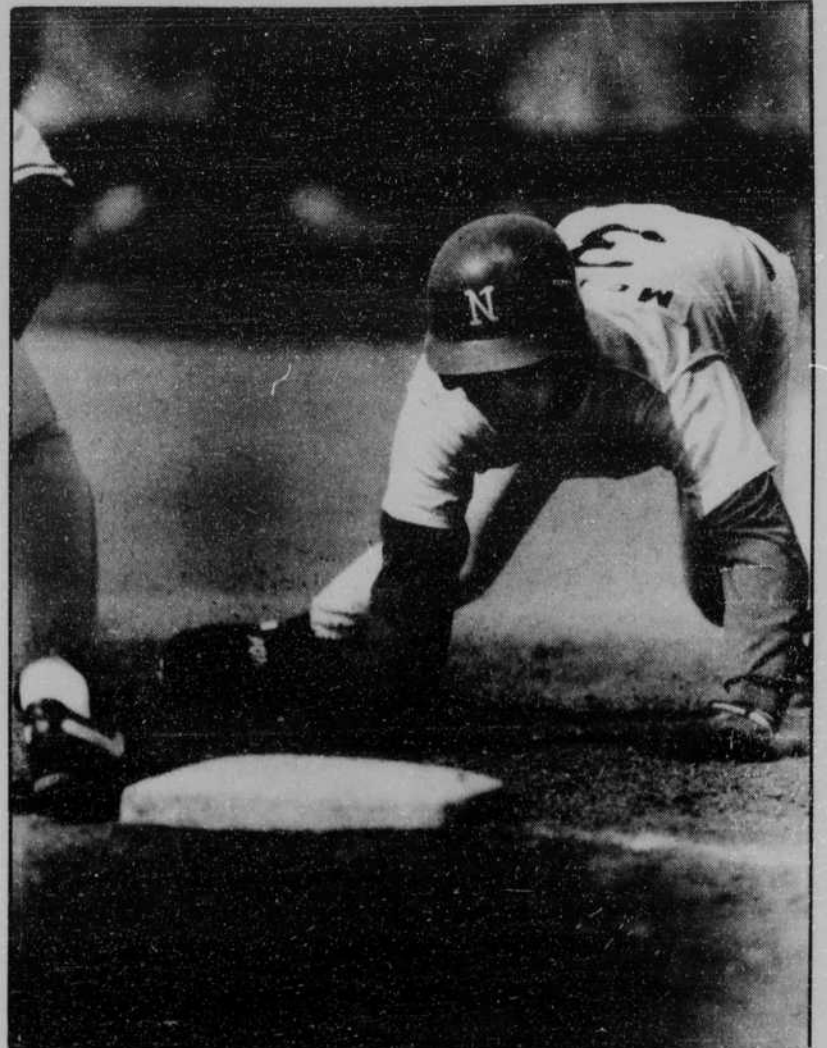
Nowadays, kids can pick up complete sets near the check-out lanes at Target like gum, camera film or 75-cent tabloids. Mom and Dad will smile, pat the kid on the head and say, "Good investment, Chris! We'll hurry right home, put them in sterilized plastic sheets and you can look at them when you're 18.

Maybe later we'll pay 15 bucks at a card show so one of these players can autograph your card."

No, no, no, that's not right. Baseball cards are for the kids. Nebraska's cards are for the 10-year-olds who idolize Fast Eddie Anderson and won't care that the Cornhusker center fielder is going back, back, back for a deep fly ball somewhere next to the pitcher's mound. Charlie Colon can take his card and show it to the other Lincoln Northeast alumni. If Oklahoma State has its own set, anyone can replay this weekend's series, with the home team sweeping.

Like Barbie dolls, mud pies, sparklers and garter snakes, baseball cards should be valuable only to kids. To kids, they should be the most precious things in the world.

Domeier is a junior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan senior reporter and columnist.



William Lauer/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska's Shaun McGinn lunges back to first base on a pick-off attempt against Northwest Missouri State.

Vosik

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it will set us back at all."

● Sanders said earlier this week that his pitching rotation likely will include John Ofstun, Doug Tegmeier, Josh Bullock and Joe Shapley.

Ofstun is 3-0 with a 3.54 earned run average, while Tegmeier is 4-1 with a 5.11 mark. Bullock is 3-2 with

a 3.89 mark, while Shapley is 2-1 with a 5.94.

Nebraska's leading pitcher is relief ace Dave Matranga, who is 7-1 with a 1.51 ERA. He also has two saves.

Oklahoma State's leading pitcher is Dennis Burbank, who is 6-0 with a 3.11 ERA. The Cowboys rank fourth in Big Eight team pitching with a 4.98 ERA.

Nebraska is second with a 4.23 mark.

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