



Robin Trimarchi/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska outfielder Jeff Stych leaps into his slide toward second base. Stych, a redshirt freshman for the Cornhuskers, is hitting .295.

Sanders remains optimistic despite recent road losses

By Nick Hytrek
Staff Reporter

Despite being swept in a four-game series at Kansas, Nebraska baseball coach John Sanders said the team's recent nine-game road trip wasn't a total loss.

"We didn't play well at Kansas, and they did," Sanders said. "We didn't play consistently."

The Cornhuskers will play the nationally ranked Creighton Bluejays Wednesday in a doubleheader at Buck Beltzer Field. The first game will start at 4 p.m.

Sanders gave a lot of credit to Kansas for the sweep.

"Kansas is a better team than they were last year, a lot better," Sanders said.

Nebraska split the four-game series with the Jayhawks last season.

Sanders said some good came out of the road trip.

"Our hitting was a real positive and the pitching was stable for the most part," he said.

The Cornhuskers finished the spring trip with a 3-6 record, winning two of three games against Hardin-Simmons and splitting two games with nationally-ranked Texas Tech.

In the two games against Texas Tech, the Huskers, 14-10, showed signs of coming out of a hitting slump, scoring 10 runs in each game.

"It was a real positive," he said. "Texas Tech is a good team and they throw some quality pitchers at us."

Even though Nebraska is now 0-4 to begin the Big Eight season, Sanders said there will be no added pressure to win.

"Last season we split every series except two. We lost three to Okla-

homa State and won three against Iowa State," he said. "So now we'll be looking to pick up a game here and there."

"But I'll tell you what, the Big Eight is really balanced this year. I said that at the beginning of the season and I still believe that."

After being swept by Kansas, Sanders said the players need to work on fundamentals.

"We need to look at our problems and find a solution to them," he said.

Sanders gave the players Monday off because of fatigue from the trip and said it will be back to basics today.

"We'll look to have a hard practice and just work on some fundamental things," he said. "I think the players are really motivated to get back."

Gooden receives contract extension, becomes second-highest-paid player

PORT ST. LUCIE, Fla. (AP) — Dwight Gooden vaulted to No. 2 on baseball's salary list Monday, agreeing to a three-year contract extension worth a guaranteed \$15.45 million.

The average annual value of \$5.15 million places Gooden just behind Boston's Roger Clemens, who will average \$5,380,250 during a four-year extension he agreed to Feb. 8. The two former Cy Young Award winners are the only players with contracts averaging \$5 million a year or more.

Gooden's new deal contains a total of \$750,000 in performance bonuses that, if earned, would leapfrog his deal over Clemens' contract.

"It is important, but it's so close that it really doesn't matter," Gooden said of the race for the top spot. "It depends on how you look at it (whether the paid or not)."

"The bottom line is we got what we wanted," said Gooden's agent, Jim Neader. "The Mets got Dwight for three years, and Dwight got his \$5.4 million."

"He will be the best-paid player in the National League," Mets executive vice president Al Harazin said. "In general, it's a unique contract for

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Gooden will be making \$2.25 million this year in the final season of a three-year contract worth \$6.7 million. When he agreed to the deal on Feb. 8, 1989, it made him the highest-paid player in baseball. But Clemens passed him one week later with a three-year \$7.5 million contract.

Under the new deal, Gooden will get a \$2 million signing bonus and salaries of \$4 million in 1992, \$5 million in 1993 and \$3.7 million in 1994. He also is guaranteed \$250,000 per year under a joint video-promo-

tion deal with the Mets that is part of the extension.

Gooden can make a \$250,000 bonus each year if he pitches 200 innings. He would collect the full \$750,000 in bonuses if he pitches a total of 500 innings over the three years.

If Gooden makes all the performance bonuses, he would make \$16.2 million over the three years, an average of \$5.4 million per season.

Last fall, Gooden had set a Feb. 22 deadline for a new deal, then altered his stance the day after the deadline passed. The sides have been talking since.

Gooden originally sought a four-year extension worth more than \$20 million. He softened his stance to three years after Mets objections.

Gooden, 26, was 19-7 last season with a 3.83 ERA. He won the National League Cy Young Award in 1985 with a 24-4 record and a 1.53 ERA, then went 17-6 the following season as the Mets won the World Series.

He missed the start of the 1987 season while undergoing cocaine rehabilitation. Gooden is 119-46 lifetime.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Crew teams finish first, second

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln crew teams recorded a first-place finish and a second-place finish Sunday in triangular sprint races with Wichita State and Northwestern.

The UNL team of Ron Vokoun and Wade Sikkink, Charles Richardson, Eric Polivka and Patrick Bonnett won by two boat lengths over Wichita State in the men's

novice four.

In the women's varsity four, the UNL team of Vokoun, Amy Green, Teresa Kastl, Sarah Batcher and Aimee Connelly finished second behind Wichita State.

The next competition for the teams will be the Great Plains Rowing Championships, April 12-13 in Topeka, Kan.

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*Sponsored in part by the Jelinek memorial Fund.

**Made possible in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

**A mid-America Arts Alliance Program.