

Huskers, Lady Jays split doubleheader

By John Adkisson
Staff Reporter

OMAHA — It took all she had, but Nebraska softball pitcher Stephanie Skegas strong-armed her team into a doubleheader split with Creighton Tuesday.

After the Cornhuskers had lost the first game 4-1, Skegas recorded her seventh victory of the year and Nebraska won the nightcap 5-1 before 200 fans at Seymour Smith Field.

The Huskers moved their season record to 10-8 with the split, and kept a 23-22 edge in the all-time series with the Lady Jays.

"We got one, but we could have easily had the sweep," said Nebraska coach Ron Wolforth.

Skegas toyed with disaster all evening long, allowing Creighton baserunners in all but two innings. Three times, however, she recorded the final out of the inning with a Lady Jay standing on third base.

"I was a little disappointed that she didn't close the door like she could have," Wolforth said. "As a pitcher, you've got to protest those leads."

Skegas missed an opportunity for her sixth shutout of the year in the final inning. With one out in the seventh, she gave up an RBI double to Creighton's Tracy Rice.

The Huskers were helped offensively by third baseman Ann Halsne,

who hit a towering solo home run in the second inning to give Nebraska a 1-0 lead.

Wolforth said he was pleased with Halsne, whose deep shot to left was Nebraska's first home run this season.

"She's coming around, just like a lot of our hitters, but it's none too soon," Wolforth said.

From there Nebraska never looked back, scoring single runs in the fourth and fifth innings and adding two in the sixth.

In the fourth, the Huskers' Misti Guenther singled to left and moved to second on a sacrifice bunt. After Amy Erlenbusch reached on an error and Halsne walked to load the bases, Guenther scored on a sacrifice fly by Denise McMillian.

Cris Vucurevic singled with one out in the fifth. Michelle Cuddeford bunted her to second and Guenther walked. Guenther took off for second and was in caught in a run-down, but Vucurevic scored during the run-down.

Nebraska scored two quiet runs in the sixth. Shae Sloan walked, Jennifer Stevens reached on error, Halsne flew out and McMillian singled but Sloan couldn't score. Marie Bowie bounced out for the second out. But then Kristin Davidson walked and Vucurevic walked for the final two

See HUSKERS on 8

49ers lose key members as Plan B free agents

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Plan B free agency is doing to the San Francisco 49ers what so many other teams could not, breaking up major parts of the player ensemble formed during a decade of success.

Joe Montana is still around to run the offense that helped the 49ers reach the playoffs in each of the past eight seasons, including four Super Bowl wins. Montana can still throw to Jerry Rice and John Taylor.

But he lost a key member of his supporting cast when running back Roger Craig, left unprotected, bolted to the Los Angeles Raiders as a Plan B free agent. Craig, 30, signed a two-year deal Monday night.

The former Nebraska running back rejoins former 49ers defensive star Ronnie Lott, a 10-year veteran who was left unprotected despite another Pro Bowl season in 1990. Lott, 31, signed with the Raiders a week ago.

The San Francisco defense lost a second starter Monday, when linebacker Matt Millen, 33, signed with the Washington Redskins to be closer to his hometown of Hokendauqua, Pa.

"It looks to me like the 49ers are a team in a transition," Craig's agent, Jim Steiner, said. "It was in Roger's

best interests to move on."

Craig is the only player in NFL history to top 1,000 yards in both rushing and receiving in a single season. He led the 49ers in rushing from 1985-89, breaking the 1,000-yard mark three times.

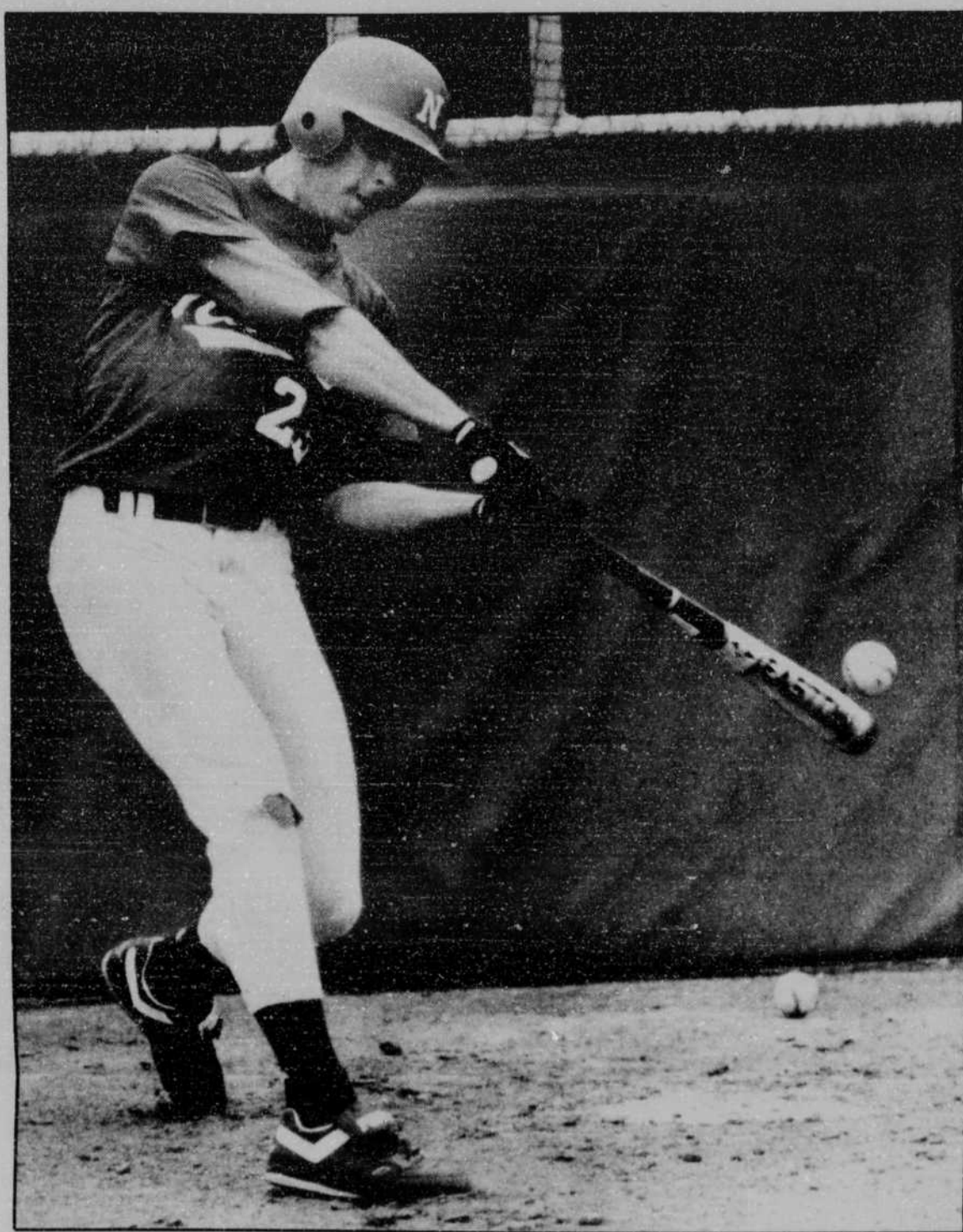
Last season, he missed five games with a knee injury and rushed for only 439 yards in 141 attempts and caught only 25 passes.

"I don't think we're going to enter the season with any different expectations," said San Francisco coach George Seifert, who has guided the team to a Super Bowl win and an NFC championship game appearance in the two seasons since succeeding Bill Walsh.

The club also is anticipating the retirement or departure of linebacker Keena Turner, cornerback Eric Wright and wide receiver Mike Wilson, who, with Lott and Montana, were the five 49ers to play on all four of San Francisco's Super Bowl teams.

The 49ers signed eight Plan B free agents, the most since the implementation of the plan three years ago. In each of the previous two seasons, the 49ers had signed six.

See 49ERS on 8



Staci McKee/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska's Gary Tackett, a .283 hitter this season, takes batting practice Tuesday in preparation for today's doubleheader.

Nebraska, Creighton to play

By Nick Hytrek
Staff Reporter

There will be no hard feelings when Nebraska and Creighton meet today in a 4 p.m. baseball doubleheader at Buck Beltzer Field.

Creighton, 20-6 entering a game Tuesday, is ranked No. 12 by Baseball America and won three out of four games against Nebraska last season.

In a 16-12 loss to the Bluejays last season, two separate incidents resulted in three Nebraska players and one from Creighton being ejected.

Sophomore catcher Sean McKenna, who was thrown out of that game for charging the mound after being hit by a pitch, said the incident is all but forgotten.

"It's over with," he said. "I'm just going to concentrate on my game."

Husker coach John Sanders said he thinks what happened last year won't be on his players' minds.

"I don't think it will affect us," he said. "There are no hard feelings, at least not on our side."

Creighton Coach Jim Hendry said he doesn't think it will be a factor.

"That was a separate issue," he said. "John and I get along fine. I don't expect it to carry over from last year."

The Huskers, 14-10, have lost their last five games, so Nebraska will focus on its own game instead of worrying about a Creighton team that is hitting .388, Sanders said.

"We'll play our normal game," he said. "We're going to pitch from our strengths. We need to control ourselves."

Sanders said it is important for the players to come out and play

See CREIGHTON on 8

NCAA season ends in disappointment; rewind requested

I, now regrettably, taped Monday night's national championship game.

I made sure I didn't record over Nebraska's last win of 1991, against Kansas, and I made sure I taped over the Cornhuskers' last loss, against Xavier.

I desperately hoped Kansas would beat Duke in the NCAA final I was taping.

Somehow, I reasoned, capturing the Jayhawks' national championship on video right after the Huskers' victory over Kansas would remind me of what could have been for Nebraska this year.

Unfortunately, that tape will always have a disappointing ending.

But maybe that's fitting. Kansas' loss was a disappointing ending to this year's NCAA tournament.

The upstart Jayhawks surprised everyone but Big Eight fans when they passed Indiana, Arkansas and North Carolina on their way to the national championship game.



Todd Cooper

But their loss shouldn't have surprised anyone. Not because Duke was a better team, and not because Dick "Duke" Vitale said the Blue Devils would win, but because the Jayhawks had played similarly poorly in two previous crucial games.

Monday night's loss paralleled Kansas' two other critical losses — both to Nebraska. Both on my tape.

I rewound to see the first loss, when Kansas visited Lincoln in March to close out Big Eight Conference play. The Jayhawks were looking for an outright Big Eight title, but Nebraska beat them. Kansas committed 26 turnovers in

the game while missing 10 free throws in the last six minutes of play to lose, 85-75.

Not ignoring Nebraska's defense, as I rewound and played it back, I saw that easy shots (free throws) beat Kansas that day.

Not ignoring Duke's defense, as I played the national championship game back, I saw that easy shots (layups) beat Kansas on Monday.

The Jayhawks missed nine layups and 12 other shots from within 10 feet to lose the national championship.

I fast-forwarded past that first Husker game to a section of that tape of Kansas losing Big Eight tournament title hopes to Nebraska March 9. The story of that game was foul trouble. Mike Maddox and Mark Randall exited the game early. Alonzo Jamison, in foul trouble the entire game, was virtually non-existent.

I looked at Monday night's game again. And again, I saw Maddox in foul trouble. And Jamison — the player the Jayhawks rallied

behind to beat Indiana, Arkansas and North Carolina — was seemingly not even on the tape, finishing with two points on one of 10 shooting from the field.

Although I don't have it on tape, I saw disappointment in the faces of the Jayhawk players as they boarded their bus after Kansas' first title loss.

After their second loss, I saw Mark Randall and Patrick Ritchey in the lobby of our hotel, obviously downtrodden from the loss.

Monday night, I didn't have to see the Jayhawks to realize their disappointment.

And I didn't have to see any Nebraska players to realize their disappointment at what might have been. I know they rewind and watch the tape of their wins over Kansas, and possibly their loss to Xavier, again and again.

Nebraska was the only team to beat Kansas twice this year. The Huskers were comparable

See NCAA on 8