

Baseball spawns booming sales

By Jeff Singer
Staff Reporter

There is only one event that Lincoln sports clothing businesses look forward to more than Christmas: the start of the major league baseball season.

The dusting-off of the diamonds means big sales at the local stores that specialize in baseball clothing, two Lincoln retailers said.

Tim Lee, manager and owner of the Pro Image, said popularity and availability are what bring the customers to his stores.

"Whenever a team changes

uniforms, it seems everybody wants to jump on the bandwagon and buy something of that team's," Lee said.

He said the hot teams this year are the Chicago White Sox and the San Diego Padres because of their new uniforms.

He also said that the baseball clubs from the Midwest — the Chicago Cubs, Kansas City Royals and the White Sox — are annual favorites.

Lee said that big-name players going to new teams tends to open up many of his customers' wallets in April.

"Darryl Strawberry going to the Dodgers, and the White Sox picking up Bo Jackson has really raised the demand for their merchandise," Lee said.

Lee said his baseball sales have increased by as much as 30 percent over last year and that this represents a nationwide trend in the popularity of baseball clothing.

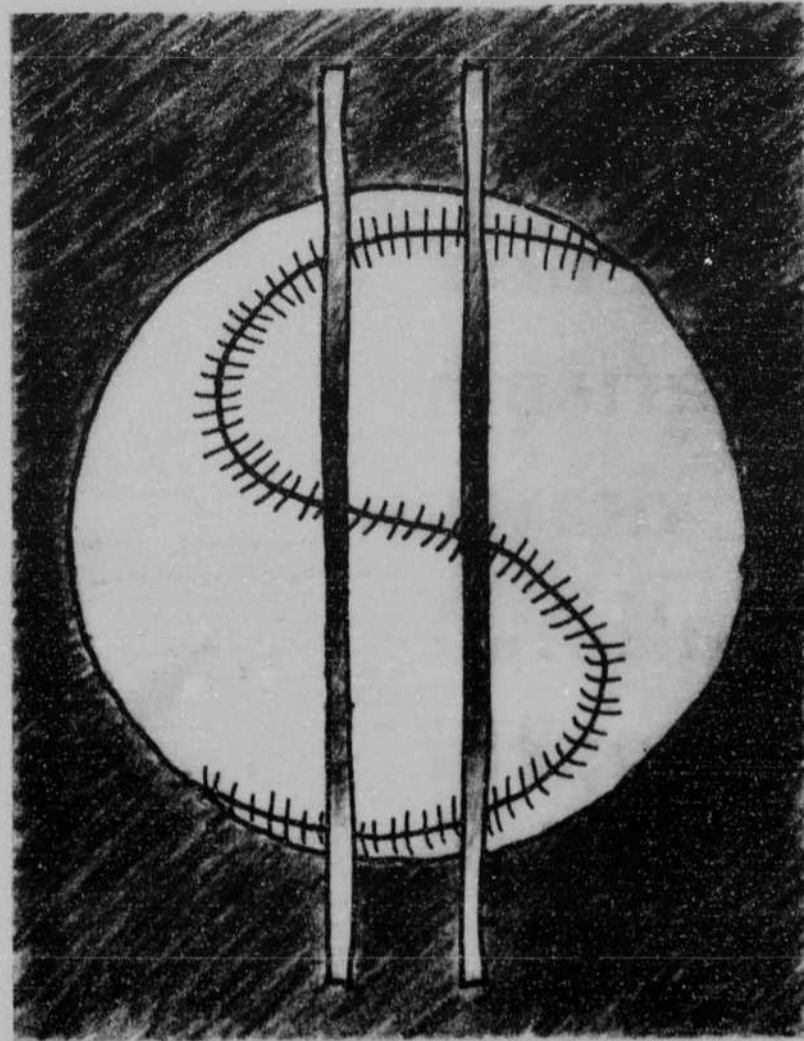
Another Lincoln businessman who agreed with Lee is Kirk Lehl, manager and owner of the Pro Jersey. He said he has seen a dramatic increase in baseball products since he started his business two years ago.

"I've had a 50 percent increase in baseball sales since last year," Lehl said. "This has become a big business around this time of year."

Lehl said that his customers are as diverse as the variety of baseball items he sells.

"The customers that shop in my store range in age from 10 years old to 40," Lehl said. "On average though, the majority of my customers are in their early 20s."

Whether it's a winning team's jersey, a new team's cap or whatever, two things are for sure: It will be popular and according to Lincoln merchants, everybody will want it.



Tom Tewater/Daily Nebraskan

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