

Tradition brought Coloradan to Nebraska

By John Gardner
Staff Reporter

When Nebraska tangles with Colorado on Saturday, Brian Boerboom will tread onto his old stomping grounds for the final time as a Cornhusker.

Boerboom, a senior offensive tackle from Colorado Springs, Colo., said it's fun to go back and play Colorado because many friends and family members come to watch the game.

Otherwise, he said, it's just another game.

"We don't really consider Colorado to be our rival," Boerboom said. "Whoever we play each week is our rival."

Because of this, he said, it won't be a "big blow" if they happen to lose.

"It won't be bad for our program, it just will

be good for theirs," Boerboom said. "We just want to beat them to win the Big Eight."

Boerboom attended Doherty High School in Colorado Springs and almost went to Colorado. One specific thing swayed him to come to Lincoln.

"The reason I came here is because of the tradition here," he said. "Colorado could be an up-and-down team at any time, especially when I came to school."

"Nebraska has always been a powerful football team."

Boerboom, highly touted out of high school, received several honors as an offensive guard. As a senior, he was named to high school All-America teams by Bally and Scholastic Coach and was the offensive player of the year in the Colorado Springs area, an unusual feat for a lineman.

As a freshman for the Cornhuskers in 1987, Boerboom started at right tackle for the now defunct junior varsity team. He then redshirted

in the 1988 season. Boerboom lettered as a sophomore, backing up Tom Punt and Terry Eyman at left tackle.

Last season, Boerboom helped Nebraska lead the Big Eight in three offensive categories, including rushing offense, total offense and scoring offense.

But, for the past two seasons, a win against Colorado has eluded Nebraska. Boerboom said the offensive line didn't play up to its potential last year against the Buffaloes and believes this year it will be different.

"This year we're playing a lot better on the line. Since they beat us two years in a row, it means a little more this year."

However, beating them off the line will be no easy task, Boerboom said. The Buffalo defensive line is big and strong with no weak spots and one familiar face, he said.

"I played against their nose guard (Joel Steed) in the state high school championship game," he said. "That guy is real hard to move.

He fights off blocks from the center really well."

Boerboom said he is confident about the Huskers' diverse offense this year — especially with players like Keithen McCant and Derek Brown.

"Keithen can both run and pass very well," Boerboom said. "When the defense knows it's a passing down, Keithen can tuck the ball away and get the 11 or 12 yards we need for the first down. It's just great."

Creating the big holes for Brown is quite a feeling too, he said.

"If I can make a hole, even half a hole, Derek can get through there," Boerboom said. "For his size, he's a real workhorse."

Boerboom said he would like to try out for professional ball, but if he doesn't make it, he has something to back down on.

"I plan on student teaching next fall," he said. "After that, I'd really like to get a teaching job and coach football."



Boerboom

Vitale hails, hypes Husker hoops

If a blustery shot of winter and another miserable Nebraska-Colorado football game aren't enough to make you believe it's almost basketball season again, try this:

Dick Vitale says so.

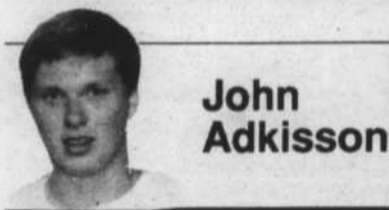
Vitale, the oh-so-colorful hoops analyst for ABC and ESPN, said in a phone interview Wednesday that Nebraska and the Big Eight may be as good as they've ever been.

"I think people have to realize how tough that Big Eight is," Vitale said. "It is absolutely dynamite in basketball now. You can have a good team and finish in fifth or sixth place."

And fifth or sixth is exactly where Vitale and about every other basketball analyst are placing Nebraska in their preseason polls — even after the Huskers' third-place season and 26-8 finish under Coach Danny Nee last season.

Don't get Vitale wrong. Nebraska is good. But he said other teams in the Big Eight are as good as any in the country.

"Oklahoma State is going to be dynamite with Byron Houston and the whole gang coming back. Kansas is going to be very good again," Vitale said. "And Oklahoma — 'it's payback time,' — Billy Tubbs says."



John Adkisson

After that, Nebraska and Missouri will battle for a spot in the NCAA Tournament according to Vitale.

Although the Big Eight is moving to ESPN and Big Monday telecasts this season, Vitale said he won't be courtside when Nebraska and Oklahoma battle in a Jan. 27 nationally televised matchup at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

"I would be so excited to come out to red country," Vitale said. "But I don't see it happening this year. I simply go where my bosses tell me."

But Vitale said Big Monday should be a big boost for the Big Eight.

"It's a real positive for the conference," Vitale said. "Big Monday is a happening, like Monday Night Football on ABC."

Vitale said he has visited the Nebraska campus only once before — and added that he loved the atmosphere. He said he would like to return sometime during basketball season to see or call a game.

"I know your program is in a positive way," Vitale said. "Danny Nee is a quality coach. He's got such a feisty, scrappy personality — and that is reflected in his players."



DN file photo

Nebraska's Carl Hayes blocks a shot by Missouri's Jamal Coleman in last season's Big Eight tournament championship game. Hayes is the only returning starter from last year's 26-8 Cornhusker team.

This year, Vitale predicted big years for the Huskers' two top returning scorers — Eric Piatkowski and Carl Hayes.

"Piatkowski should have a good year, and so should Hayes," Vitale said. "But you're going to miss the big guy (former 7-foot-2-inch Husker center) Rich King. That'll hurt."

The key to Nebraska having future success, Vitale said, will be Nee's ability to consistently recruit blue-chip recruits.

"If you can set up a recruiting scenario where you're bringing in top-notch players all the time — two or three a year — then you're on your way," he said.

One advantage Nebraska has over most other Big Eight schools, Vitale said, is the advantage of already hav-

ing a strong football program on which to build.

"You've got a great showcase there on the football Saturdays," Vitale said. "All of that, if carefully planned, can blend together with basketball."

And if Danny Nee and Nebraska continue to grow and succeed, look for Dickie V to make a Lincoln appearance in the next few years.

"Maybe one day they'll get me down to Nebraska country and I can start shouting 'Danny Nee, baby! The Huskers, baby! Move over Osborne, Danny Nee's the king of the campus! The red and white, baby!'"

"It's hoop time," he said. And now, not even the calendar can argue with Dick Vitale.

Adkisson is a junior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan staff reporter.

Buffalo fans ungracious; NU will lose anyway

It's here again. The big one. THE game for Nebraska football fans.

Nebraska vs. Colorado. Hi-ho! Gone are the days of Oklahoma and Barry Switzer, of Sooner magic and loudmouth, cocky players from both teams exchanging unpleasantries for weeks before the game.

Those were the old days of Cornhusker football. This is 1991.

Taking the place of funny-dressing, accent-laden Oklahoma football fans are drunken, obscenity-spewing, rock-throwing, car-vandalizing Colorado fans, who have been losers for so long, none of them know how to win graciously.

Win graciously? To Buffalo supporters (no pun intended), this is a contradiction in terms.



Chuck Green

Growing up as a Husker fan, I can remember hating Oklahoma, like any red-blooded Nebraskan. It was a requirement. The way Switzer and his teams used to wait until the game's last two or three minutes to send Nebraska's national-title dreams spinning down the toilet and then talk about how they were the best around, it made one want to vomit. Again and again, every November.

The worst fans in the Big Eight then? Hands down, they were Missouri's. The Tigers. The filthy, black-and-gold cheap-shot artists from Columbia, Mo., and their Warren Powers-taught injury-inflicting techniques (See Jarvis Redwine, 1979 and 1980, Turner Gill, 1982, etc., etc.).

And their fans loved it, all the while befuddled as to why Nebraska Coach Tom Osborne would get so upset just because one of Missouri's players took out his star I-back's knee on an extra-point attempt.

But with the decline in the early-1980s of both of those programs, my hatred subsided.

As I got older and began to understand that Nebraska's program was the most overrated in the country, my love for the Huskers soon waned. Then long about the mid-1980s, I out-and-out lost almost all appreciation for the Huskers, for various reasons which would be libelous to write here.

After all, you can't like a team you don't respect.

But then came the emergence of the Colorado football program as one to be reckoned with in the Big Eight.

In 1986, when the Buffs beat

Nebraska for the first time in 970 years (18 actually), I remember sitting in the stadium, drenched with beer, courtesy of those wacky Colorado fans, wondering if I was dreaming.

Colorado? The joke of college football throughout the late-1970s and early-1980s? A powerhouse? No way, I remember thinking. This will pass. They're just a flash in the pan.

Uh-huh.

Four years later, the Buffs win a national title, thanks to a clip by a Notre Dame safety on a game-winning punt return last Jan. 1. Sickening. Absolutely sickening.

The worst part was not the fact that Colorado won the championship. After all, the Buffs played a tough schedule and got through it with only one loss. They were deserving of every honor they got.

But it's those fans. Those jerk fans. God, I hate those fans.

If this country is ever under nuclear attack, I vote for Boulder, Colo., as the target of the first strike.

Buff fans have made Boulder the Miami of the mountains. When those two teams meet in Boulder in 1993, there will be deaths in the stands. Which is fine . . .

But this week, the Huskers will take their high-powered offense and No. 9 ranking to Boulder for an ESPN-televized game in the snow and cold.

Husker fans are out for blood, just like last season. Last year, from the start of the season to the day before the game, Nebraska faithful continuously thought with their hearts instead of their heads. They predicted a smashing victory for Nebraska, and hurt Colorado players strewn from end zone to end zone.

The result? A four-touchdown fourth-quarter effort from the Buffs against an overrated Nebraska defense and a lot of angry Husker fans who couldn't sleep for weeks.

Expect the same this season. There probably won't be any fourth-quarter heroics. This time, Colorado will take it to Nebraska from start to finish.

The crowd will roar. The Buffs will talk trash. The Huskers will wet their pants. Osborne will call Colorado a great team. Nebraska fans will call for Osborne's and defensive coordinator Charlie McBride's heads on a platter. People will write letters to the editor telling the "fair-weather Husker fans" to move to Colorado, if they don't like the way Osborne does things.

Things have become way too predictable around here lately.

Green is a senior news-editorial major, the Daily Nebraskan's assistant sports editor and a columnist.