

Husker effort falls short against Creighton

By Peter Theoharis
Staff Reporter

OMAHA — Nebraska's baseball team's effort at a late-inning rally fell short Wednesday, as Creighton took an 8-6 victory at the Creighton Sports Complex.

Nebraska trailed by three runs entering the ninth inning, scored a run and had the bases loaded with two outs on Bluejays' closer Rick Heiserman. But Heiserman was able to work his way out of the jam as he struck out Jeff Murphy to end the game.

"We got it down to our five-hole hitter with bases loaded," Cornhusker coach John Sanders said. "But, give (Heiserman) credit, he struck out our man."

Bluejay coach Todd Wenberg said he was calm until Nebraska loaded the bases.

"(Heiserman's) been so consistent all year, you don't get nervous until the tying run is at second," Wenberg said. "We haven't been able to get him enough work lately to keep him sharp."

The save was the ninth of the season for Heiserman.

While the Huskers, 24-14, looked to rally late, the Bluejays did most of their damage in the early innings. Creighton jumped out to a 3-0 lead in the first, with four hits, including a two-run double by Chad McConnell.

The Bluejays added another run in the third and two in the fourth as they built an early 6-2 lead off Husker starter Josh Bullock.

The early start by 23-10-1 Creighton enabled it to beat the Huskers for the second time this season. Creighton dumped Nebraska 19-1 earlier this season in Lincoln.

Bluejay first baseman J.J. Gottsch, who went 2-for-4 with three runs batted in, said beating Nebraska is important to Creighton.

"It gives us a lot of confidence," Gottsch said.

Wenberg agreed with Gottsch. "(The series) is real important," Wenberg said. "The kids love to play them and we don't want to lose to Nebraska."

Nebraska put together a big inning in the fifth as it scored three times to narrow the score to 6-5. Murphy had a two-run double, and Sean McKenna had a run-scoring single in the inning.

By the end of the inning, Nebraska had chased Bluejay starter Mike Browning from the game.

Wenberg said Browning didn't seem to have

the same velocity on his pitches he had displayed against Wichita State on Saturday.

Brian O'Brien relieved Browning and improved to 6-0 as he picked up the win.

The Bluejays scored two insurance runs in the bottom of the seventh inning, as they knocked Bullock out of the game.

Bullock pitched 6 1/3 innings and took the loss. He gave up seven runs — five earned — on 11 hits.

Steve Boyd relieved Bullock and gave up a two-run double to Jon Dunlop.

Nebraska then mounted its rally in the ninth inning that fell two scores short.

Sanders said he was pleased with the Huskers' performance and said he believed they are ready to resume Big Eight Conference play at Missouri this weekend.

Solid play NU softball team's aim, coach says

By Jason Bruhn
Staff Reporter

This weekend could be the turning point of Nebraska's softball season, Coach Ron Wolforth said.

The Cornhuskers leave today for a four-day, nine-game road trip.

"We're at the stage of the year where we are looking for consistent, quality performance and wins," Wolforth said. "It's as simple as that. If we do that we're going to win six or seven of nine."

The Huskers open with a doubleheader against Wichita State today.

After Wichita State, the Huskers will play in the Oklahoma State Tourney at Stillwater, Okla., Friday and Saturday. On the way back to Lincoln, the Huskers will stop in Kansas City, Mo., to play a doubleheader against Missouri-Kansas City Sunday.

Wolforth said the Shockers had given the Huskers problems at Wichita in the past, but if the Huskers played solidly, he said, they should win both games.

Earlier this month, Nebraska swept Wichita State 5-0 and 3-2 in Lincoln.

"We've had a very difficult time sweeping them in Wichita," he said. "We swept them here, but it always seems we've had a little difficulty down there. We have been, in my estimation, a better team almost every single year we have played against them, but they always seem to find a way to get one game of the four."

Wolforth said the game plan against the Shockers was simple.

"To sweep Wichita, all we have to do is play a basic, sound game two times and I think we'll win both games," he said.

"My main concern is that we take Wichita too lightly. If we don't do anything in the first inning, nothing in the second, and by the fifth they are thinking, 'Hey, we can play with these folks,' and then you're in a dogfight,"



Kiley Timperley/LN

Nebraska's Lila Kephart slides into second base past the tag of Colorado State's Kim Johnson last Friday during the Cornhusker's doubleheader sweep of the Rams. The Huskers will play nine road games during the next four days, beginning with a doubleheader at Wichita State today.

he said. Wolforth said the Oklahoma State Tourney could be an opportunity to further the team's recent success.

"We've won six of our last seven, and we are at the stage where we need to start building momentum heading into the Big Eight," he said. "Our players need to be ready from the first pitch of the first game, and if we do that we make things easy for ourselves."

"Quite honestly we haven't done that very often. We have made things difficult for ourselves this year."

Other teams playing at Oklahoma State include Texas A&M, Southwest Missouri State and Wichita State.

Wolforth said he was concerned with the attitude his players had assumed this season.

"There are times you need to turn it up a level, and you don't turn it up being loosey-goosey, and that's the personality of this team."

"Loosey-goosey is not going to beat Oklahoma State."

Wolforth said Oklahoma State had been a national power in recent years and the Cowgirls offered the Huskers a chance to gain confidence.

"Oklahoma State has been one of the top four winningest programs in Division I softball the last four years," Wolforth said. "But they have an Achilles' heel, and that Achilles' heel is the University of Kansas and the University of Nebraska. Kansas and

Nebraska have given OSU almost 75 percent of their losses over the last four years."

Regardless of the outcome of the games against Oklahoma State, Wolforth said the Huskers could make an impression on the Cowgirls.

"If we go out there like a junkyard dog and really take a bite out of them, then we send a message to them that every time we play it's going to be different."

"That helps your confidence."

Golfers' pure talent deserves more respect, attention

"You're watching golf?"
"How can you stand to watch these so-called 'athletes' hit a tiny ball into a hole? And why are the announcers always whispering?"
"Golf is lame."

These are the comments and ridicule I took from my roommates when I tried to enjoy the coverage of the Masters Golf Tournament last weekend.

Okay, so golfers are not the best athletes in the world. That's obvious. But the hand-eye coordination, talent and practice it takes to get to the pro ranks puts golfers in a class all their own.

For anyone who has ever golfed, the sport is not as easy as it seems on television.

Golf can be enjoyable, or it can be the most frustrating exercise ever invented. But the strangest thing about golf is that even if you haven't golfed well all day, one hit will make you want to come back and try again.

Then you see Fred "Boom Boom" Couples slide through one of his graceful, effortless swings, and you instantly want to hit the fairways.

Couples, who eventually won the Masters, has a swing that looks simple and smooth, but the end result is often spectacular.

"Boom Boom" is currently the top-



Thomas Clouse

ranked golfer in the world, and justifiably so. This past weekend was a testament to his ability.

But, the one thing that overshadowed Couples' ability in the Masters was Ray Floyd's longevity.

Floyd had the lead at the end of CBS's Friday coverage. He eventu-

ally lost to Couples by two strokes.

"Boom Boom" and Floyd were paired together for the third round. It was evident that their quality of play was higher than the rest of the field.

Time and time again, Couples would make a charge and Floyd would answer with a monster putt.

Or Couples would hit the flag with his second shot, and Floyd would find a way to strike back.

Big deal. So Floyd had a good tournament.

Yes, but consider he will turn 50 on Sept. 4. He has remained competitive in the PGA since he joined the tour at the age of 19.

Floyd has not lost his fire after 30 years of competition at the highest level of concentration, talent and practice.

Early this year, Floyd beat Couples by two strokes in the Doral Open. This was his first tour victory in six years.

With the victory, Floyd became

the oldest player to win a tour event since Art Wall won the 1975 Milwaukee Open at age 51.

He also became only the second player since Sam Snead to win golf tournaments in four different decades.

Floyd's accomplishments never will be compared to other "old" athletes such as Nolan Ryan or even George Foreman, because golf has been labeled a "recreation" sport.

Baseball and boxing are sports known for tremendous athletes who are great for a few years, then for the most part, they fade into anonymity.

Golf has no world championship or world series. Any golfer on the tour has a chance to win on a given day.

This is one reason golf is so appealing as a sport. Fans can have many favorite golfers as opposed to one favorite team.

A golf tournament is won with concentration, patience and talent. Not by how fast you can run, how high

you can jump or how badly you can hurt someone.

Golf also can be enjoyed by players of all sexes and ages, unlike professional football, baseball or boxing.

The PGA also gives its older players an option other than retirement — the Senior tour.

At 49, Floyd would seem a likely candidate to be a force on the Senior tour.

But why should he switch? Floyd has proven he can push the top-ranked player to the limit, even after 30 years on the tour.

Watching golfers like Couples, who display talent in its purest form, is exciting. But competitors like Floyd put professional golf on a different level than any other sport. You have to tip your hat to the "old" guy.

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