

Predictability reigns in NBA

There are three things a person can consistently count on during his or her lifetime: taxes, death and the two best basketball teams playing in the NBA finals.

When it comes to the finals of the National Basketball Association, the league is FAN-tastic — if predictability is what fans are looking for.

This year's finals feature the Chicago Bulls and Portland Trail Blazers, the two teams with the best records in the regular season who are coincidentally competing for the league title — what a surprise.

Not since the Houston Rockets upset the world champion Los Angeles Lakers in the 1986 Western Conference championships has a true underdog advanced to the finals.

And not since the New York Knicks won the title in 1973 has the league champion been much of a surprise. Not only have 19 years passed since the Knicks victory, but also four Olympics, four presidents and two shots by the Nebraska football team at a national championship have since passed.

No other sport can be forecasted as well as the NBA.

Major League Baseball had its worst-to-first series last year between the Minnesota Twins and Atlanta Braves.

The New York Giants were a big surprise when they defeated the San Francisco 49ers and then the Buffalo Bills in the 1991 Super Bowl to take home the National Football League's championship.

And the National Hockey League had its Cinderella matchup last year, when usual NHL cellar-dwellers Pittsburgh and Minnesota battled for the Stanley Cup.

Then there's the NBA, in which the only thing that might be unexpected during the playoffs is how many times sportscaster Marv Albert can say "Yes" during a regu-

lation game.

If anybody outside of Cleveland, Utah, New York and maybe Boston thought the Bulls and Blazers wouldn't be meeting this month in the finals, they were either naive, half-witted or both.

But predictability doesn't have to remain on the courts of the NBA, as there are other areas closer to home that are presumptive as well. Let's start in our own backyard — Nebraska athletics.



Jeff
Singer

- The Nebraska football team will win nine games as usual, and consequently get thumped in their bowl game.

- Nebraska football fans will talk national championship as the season begins, and consequently whine from New Year's Day to the first day of spring football practice about how outdated Tom Osborne's offense is. Remember, this is the same offense that had made fans so happy just months before when the team blasted Northeastern Utah State by 50 points in the season opener.

- The Nebraska basketball team will once again go above and beyond expectations during its regular season with some big upsets, and will then be literally upset following another early exit from the NCAA Tournament.

- The Nebraska volleyball team will leave a space empty in its trophy shelf to place a national championship plaque, only to have to place another Runza Challenge championship trophy in its spot following an exit in the NCAA playoffs.

- Bob Devaney will complain

until the day he leaves about why he has to depart his position as athletic director, therefore having to clean out his desk and bar in his office, only to have members of the NU Board of Regents realize what a mistake they made by letting him go to take over the always challenging position of fund-raising consultant to the chancellor.

And there are still more predictable items that occur in the Big Eight Conference that can be counted on year after year.

- Kansas Basketball Coach Roy Williams will continue to dispel the myth that he is the human equivalent of Droopy the Dog.

- Missouri Basketball Coach Norm Stewart will continue to validate the myth that he is the human equivalent of a nice, honest man.

- The Oklahoma football team will be investigated and consequently placed on probation for NCAA rules violations. (After all, the Sooners have been off of probation for a whole year now).

- The Oklahoma State football team will actually win a game. This will lead to the cardiac arrest rate to triple in Stillwater minutes following the victory.

- Iowa State will again try to explain how they got that ugly, red bird as their mascot when their nickname is The Cyclones.

Although these items are foretelling, none are as predictable as the NBA, as the league's three-letter abbreviation should be better known as "Nothing But Anticipation."

By the way, has anyone noticed that the series-favorite Bulls are just about ready to order their championship rings from Zales?

Singer is a senior news-editorial and political science major and is the Summer Daily Nebraskan's copy desk editor and a senior sports reporter.

Recruits to star

By Jeff Singer
Senior Editor

If Nebraska basketball fans are eager for the Cornhuskers to start posting wins in the NCAA Tournament, they shouldn't have to wait much longer.

Although the Huskers have never won a game in the NCAA tourney, this year they have four recruits signed and another player pending, who should all have an immediate impact on ending Nebraska's drought in the postseason. The Huskers are 0-3 in the tourney following last March's first-round defeat to Connecticut.

The recruiting class includes three early signees from last fall. The high school standouts who signed with Nebraska early on have all received accolades for their performances in their senior seasons.

Andre Woolridge is a 6-2 guard from Omaha's Benson High School, who led the Bunnies to a state championship by scoring 50 points in the class A final last March at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Another Nebraska prep star who signed on to be a Husker this season is 6-3 guard Erick Strickland of Bellevue West. Strickland was recently named Nebraska's high school Athlete of the Year, and his talents carry over to the baseball diamond, as he was drafted by Major League Baseball's Florida Marlins in last week's amateur draft.

Rounding out the Huskers' guard threesome is 6-5 Jaron Boone of Salt Lake City. Boone, who was heavily recruited by numerous schools before choosing Nebraska, was recently named Utah's basketball Player-of-the-Year.

With the loss of 6-8 forward/center

Dapreis Owens to graduation, the Huskers needed some help on the front line and got it when they signed 6-8, 270-pound Amos Gregory of Aquinas (Tenn.) Junior College.

Finally, 6-9 Chicago prep standout Ben Coupet will apparently sign with the Huskers, but Coupet is waiting to commit until he finds out if he is a casualty of Proposition 48. If a player does not receive a 2.0 grade point average as well as a 700 on his Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores, he will be forced to sit out a year according to NCAA regulations.

Nebraska Assistant Coach Gary Barga said Coupet will still be willing to sign with the Huskers even if he doesn't meet the Proposition 48 guidelines.

The Huskers' last Proposition 48 player was Jamar Johnson, who as a sophomore last season, played his first minutes for Nebraska and was consequently the only Husker to be named to the Associated Press' All-Big Eight team (Johnson was on AP's second team).

"We're very, very satisfied," Barga said. "These are some quality players and quality people."

This class has already had an impact on the preseason hype. Recruiting analyst Bob Gibbons has listed Nebraska's class in his top ten list, and The Sporting News named Nebraska Coach Danny Nee as one of five coaches who can't wait for next season to start.

Barga said it would be premature to call this Nebraska's best class ever.

"You can evaluate it in two or four years after being able to see whose helped raise the program," Barga said. "I wouldn't want to say this is the best; you just have to wait."

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Tennis team sets sights on title

Recruits and redshirts offer hopes of conference championship

By Lori Stones
Staff Reporter

Two new faces plus two returning red-shirt players equal a promising upcoming season for the Nebraska men's tennis team, Nebraska Coach Kerry McDermott said.

McDermott said although last season's record was 8-15, the addition of these players could put Nebraska in a position to contend for the Big Eight title, which the Cornhuskers have never won.

This fall, Jan Frode Anderson of Hamar, Norway will be joining the team. Anderson is a two-time National Doubles champion in Norway.

In the spring, another impact

player, Anthony Cunningham of Perth, Australia will come to Nebraska. Cunningham is currently ranked 15th in Perth.

"This was one of my best recruiting years," McDermott said. "I put these players into the ranks with some of the best players I've ever had, such as Matthias Mueller, Robert Sjolholm and Steve Jung."

In addition to the two new players, redshirts Matthias Mueller and Anthony Kotarac will be returning to the lineup.

Mueller is a two-time Big Eight Champion. He won the No. 3 singles title in 1989 and the No. 1 doubles championship in 1990.

"I feel like we can compete with

the two best teams (University of Colorado and Drake) returning this fall," McDermott said.

McDermott said he was confident of the team, despite the loss of Joseph Rahme, who decided to forego his senior year at Nebraska to turn professional.

Assistant Coach Ken Feuer said the fall season will be a good indicator of what the lineup will be.

Instead of having one team leader this year, McDermott said, he decided to have the seniors on the team — Mueller and Karl Falkland — serve as co-leaders.

Implementing co-leaders will allow for better team unity, McDermott said.