

Magic returns to Lakers

INGLEWOOD, Calif. (AP) — Unable to leave the game he loves even to fight for his life, Magic Johnson returned to pro basketball Tuesday.

Less than a year after retiring because he had contracted the AIDS virus, Johnson announced that he will play again this season for the Los Angeles Lakers and said it was only natural.

"That court is where I belong, no matter what happens," Johnson said, speaking in the same room where he

bade his sad, shocking goodbye last Nov. 7.

"I'm playing again," he beamed. "Yeaaaa. Finally."

Johnson probably won't play full time, and he'll be checked and double-checked by doctors who admit they don't know what the grind of professional basketball will do to a man with Johnson's medical condition.

He'll be back, wearing No. 32, flashing that big smile and playing the game as only Magic can.

"It's time to go back to work, it's

time to have some fun," Johnson said. "I think the positives outweigh all the risks. That's not saying there are no risks, because life itself is a risk. But being out there, I won't be worried about that. If I was concerned about that, I'd still be retired."

The mood this time was decidedly different from that retirement announcement 327 days ago.

"This is a lot more relaxed ... better," said Johnson. "It was much tougher then because I was having to say goodbye."

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time.

"I really thought we'd be able to give Nebraska a match down here," he said. "But we weren't really in it. It's frustrating."

The Sooners were the last team to ever challenge Nebraska's Big Eight supremacy. Oklahoma won two matches against NU in 1988, the last of which knocked the Huskers out of the NCAA Tournament.

But since that match, the Sooners have dropped seven straight to Nebraska and have all but disappeared from the national rankings.

Colorado, meanwhile, is headed in the right direction, slowly closing the chasm between the Huskers and themselves.

In a job reminiscent of Bill McCartney's football renaissance, Saindon has breathed life into CU

volleyball, making a win over Nebraska the first priority for his team.

Last season, the Buffs passed out "Beat Nebraska" fliers and drew a record crowd to the CU Events Center.

It didn't help. As usual, the Huskers won in straight games.

This year, Colorado — ranked at No. 16 in the coaches' poll — may be much closer to a win over Nebraska. The two teams play in Lincoln on Oct. 24 and in Boulder on Nov. 4.

But the simple fact is that Nebraska is again Nebraska.

After a rocky start, the Cornhuskers have been rolling as of late. Entering tonight's match, the Huskers have won 10 straight games and five straight matches.

Eventually, Nebraska's talent will gel as it did late last year, when the Huskers thumped Texas in Austin. The Huskers' performance prompted Longhorn coach Mick Haley to say it was one of the best he'd ever seen.

It's that difference in the talent

level that has guys like Pabst and Saindon shaking their heads.

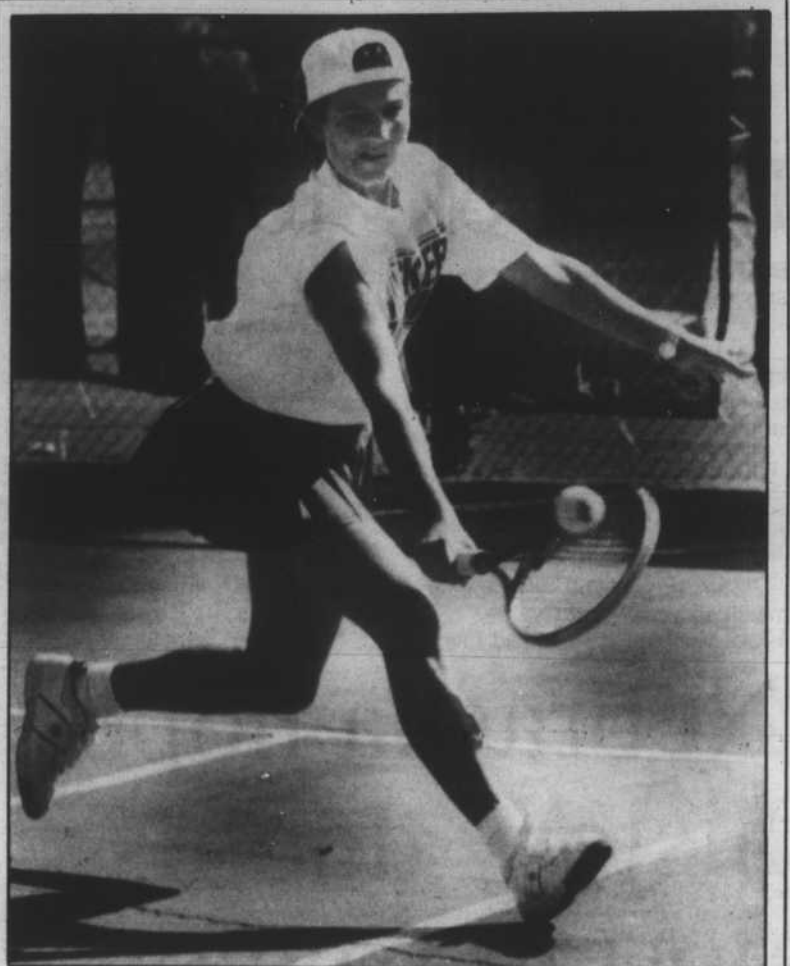
"On top, I think we match up pretty well talent-wise," Pabst said. "It's just that I don't have the depth that (Nebraska coach Terry Pettit) has."

Pabst said he can see OU or Colorado knocking Nebraska off sometime this season, and he said he can also see one of those teams actually capturing a Big Eight crown in the next two or three years.

"The gap has closed a little bit," he said. "It's that way with a lot of the top teams around the country — now you can get beat on any given night by a team in your conference."

But for Nebraska, that night hasn't come in 47 straight tries against conference schools. And unless the stars decide to line up crooked or the NU Coliseum goes up in smoke, there is no reason to think that night is on the foreseeable horizon.

Adkisson is a senior news-editorial major and the Daily Nebraskan sports editor.



Jeff Haller/DN

Reaching out

Nebraska freshman Jane Startin returns the ball to Wichita State's Dana Lomshek on Friday in the Husker Invitational.

NU fans to see new team after time off, coach says

From Staff Reports

The Nebraska football team practiced for about two hours Tuesday because of their first week off this season.

The Huskers won't play again until October 10, when they face Oklahoma State in Memorial Stadium.

"This is decent timing for the week off," said Nebraska coach Tom Osborne on Tuesday.

The Huskers are spending some of their time to recuperate. Senior free safety Tyrone Byrd and inside linebacker Mike Anderson sat out

Tuesday's practice, but both are expected to be back for the Oklahoma State game.

Osborne said the coaching staff may make some minor adjustments to prepare for the conference schedule. "We will change more on both sides of the ball," Osborne said. "We will be a different team in 10 days from now."

But Osborne said a complete overhaul is unnecessary.

"With the time off, we may attempt to change too much," Osborne said. "We don't want to do that, because it could cause some problems."

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