

## Sooners sweep Huskers by coming from behind

From Staff Reports

The Nebraska baseball team had two chances to give the defending national champions their second loss of the season.

But the Cornhuskers were swept by Oklahoma Wednesday.

In the first game, the Sooners' Rich Hills belted a three-run home run in the fifth inning to give Okla-

homa a 3-2 win.

The Sooners came back again in the second game as well. The Huskers were up 4-2 in the fifth before Oklahoma rallied for three runs in the bottom of the inning to take a 5-4 lead.

Nebraska fell to 4-4 on the season and 0-2 in the conference. Oklahoma improved to 9-1.

## Fans can choose All-Big Eight Team

By Derek Samson  
Senior Reporter

This season marks the first time in Big Eight history that the fans will have a voice in selecting Big Eight basketball players to the "Sprint InTouch Fans' All-Big Eight Team."

Fans will have the opportunity to choose their own All-Big Eight team by dialing 1-800-229-BIG8 and voting for a center, power forward, small forward, shooting guard and point guard.

Fans can vote from anywhere in the continental United States, anytime between now and midnight on March 11. The team will be announced at half-time during the championship game of the Big Eight Tournament.

Mike Goff, Sprint's director of corporate sponsorship, said Sprint received more than 5,000 calls on the first day the poll was open to fans.

"We have had a far better response than we ever anticipated," Goff said. "This is something that the fans have needed. It's good to see they are taking the time to vote. It allows the

fans to be more in touch with the sport they're following, which they deserve."

In addition to the All-Big Eight team, the player with the most votes will be named Most Outstanding Player. Goff said if the response was good this year, the Coach of the Year might be added next year.

The Big Eight is the only conference offering the fans a vote, but Goff said that might not last too long.

"We're only doing this with the Big Eight because the Big Eight is the only conference that we have a sponsorship affiliation with," Goff said. "But I think this idea will catch on. It gives something back to the fans for following Big Eight basketball all year."

If the poll was going to be offered for any conference, Goff said it would be the Big Eight.

"This could happen in every collegiate sport, but I think it is especially effective in basketball, and especially in the Big Eight," he said. "There is such a good following here, and right now there are five rated teams in the conference."

## Hoopster hopes weekend provides cure for woes

By Derek Samson  
Senior Reporter

Nebraska guard Erick Strickland, who has been looking for something positive for the 17-12 Cornhuskers, thinks he may have found it.

Unless the Huskers win the Big Eight Tournament this weekend in Kansas City, Mo., they will most likely miss their fifth straight trip to the NCAA Tournament.

Considering Nebraska's first-round opponent — Oklahoma State — has beaten the Huskers twice this season by a combined score of 175-118, it would be assumed that Nebraska would spend its post-season competing in the National Invitational Tournament.

According to Strickland, the NIT could be the cure for the Huskers' woes. And a trip to New York for the NIT Final Four would be fine with him.

"I'm a little frustrated right now, but in some ways, it may be good for us," the junior from Bellevue said. "I'd like to be there (NCAA) and do well, but I think it would be stupid if we weren't ready and we didn't play well. If anything, we can go, play well and hopefully win it or at least get to New York."

"That would then carry over into next year. We need something positive to happen right now. We're trying our best, but it's just not happening."

Strickland is one of four starters returning next year, when the Husk-

ers will have back everyone but Melvin Brooks, who averages seven points a game.

None of Nebraska's current players have ever missed the NCAA Tournament in a Husker uniform, but Strickland said this year had been a different story.

"It just seems like it is not meant to be this year, for some reason," he said. "Maybe it's setting us up for something good next year. It just seems like something always happens this year, and we just can't get over the hump."

But Brooks, who tied a career high with 16 points in Sunday's loss to Iowa State, said he didn't want to go out with a trip to the NIT.

"For me, with it being my last season, I'd rather go to the NAAs," Brooks said. "For them, being that they can better themselves, I think it will be motivation next year. They'll come back and not want to go to the NIT their senior years. I think it would be good motivation for them, but I didn't want to go to the NIT as a senior."

Strickland, however, said everyone should not count the Huskers out of the NCAA Tournament so quickly. He said the Big Eight Tournament still gave the Huskers a chance.

"We're going to go in and give it our best shot," Strickland said. "Hopefully, it will turn out for the best. We're not quitting by any means. We're getting down there, giving it our best shot and then just see what happens."

## Pepin gains conference honor again

From Staff Reports

Nebraska track and field coach Gary Pepin was named Big Eight Men's and Women's Coach of the Year — again.

Pepin has won 14 coach-of-the-year honors. Both the men's and women's track teams won the Big Eight Indoor Track and Field Championships in Manhattan, Kan., a week ago.

This is the second consecutive year, Pepin has swept the indoor track honors.

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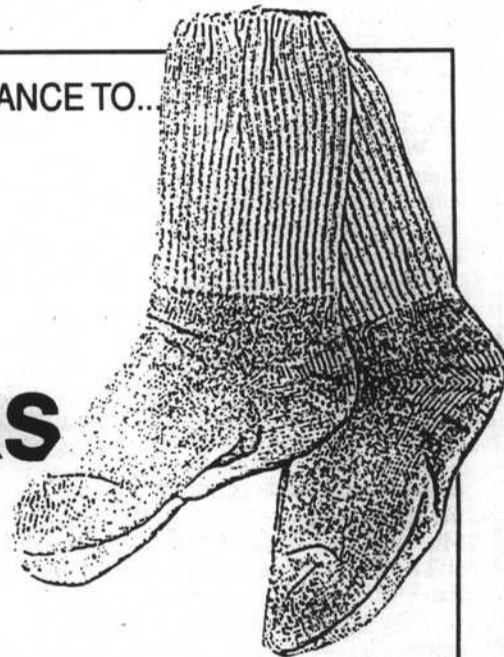
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