

SPORTS

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Huskers work out spring practice glitches

By Derek Samson
Senior Reporter

When Nebraska returned to the playing field Monday for the first time since Jan. 1, its weakest spot was an unexpected one.

Nebraska practiced without three I-backs during the first day of spring practice in Cook Pavilion.

Lawrence Phillips and Damon Benning sat out of Monday's workouts with pulled hamstrings, while Brian Knuckles missed practice because of car trouble while returning from spring break.

Coach Tom Osborne said Phillips and Benning would likely miss the remainder of this week and possibly even longer.

"We were handicapped at some positions today, especially I-back, where we practiced without three of our top four," Osborne said. "We're a little thin at some other spots also. Overall though, we're not too bad."

Osborne said for the first day of spring practice, the players who did practice were ready for spring ball.

"I thought for the first day of spring ball, it went pretty well," Osborne said. "There was good retention on the part of the older players. They really didn't make very many mistakes."

Nebraska practiced in helmets and shoulder pads because of a new rule,

Osborne said.

Previously, the first five days of spring practice had to be in sweat clothes, but the rule change now allows helmets and shoulder pads to be worn.

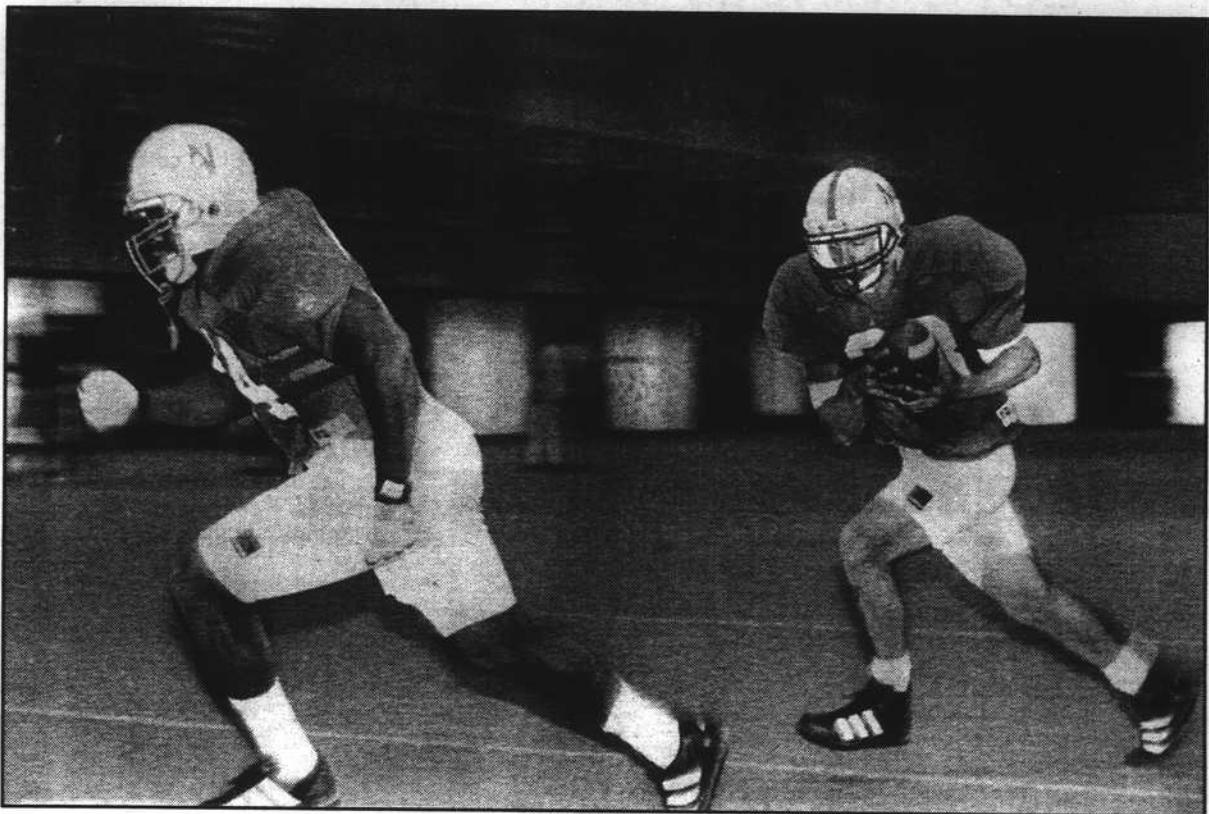
Osborne said the rule change would help certain positions greatly during the spring.

"That means you can get a lot more done with your linemen and linebackers," Osborne said. "A day in sweat clothes is almost a wasted day of practice for linemen. We'll probably get more done now in the spring on the non-conditioning days."

Osborne said the attitude of the 1995 Cornhuskers would emerge in the spring.

"Attitude is always critical, and every team has a little different chemistry and leadership," he said. "Teams tend to draw together and move forward or pull apart and move backwards. So we're anxious to see how they respond, and we hope they maintain their edge."

"Sometimes when you've had a real good season there is a tendency to decide you've got it made. It makes you a bigger target. You have to be a better football team sometimes to come up with a real good season and have another great season."



Scott Bruhn/DN

Nebraska fullback Vershan Jackson looks to make a block for wingback Sean Wieting during the first day of spring practice Monday in Cook Pavilion. The Huskers practiced without three of their top four I-backs.

New commissioner faces concerns, expectations

By Derek Samson
Senior Reporter

When Southwest Conference commissioner Steve Hatchell was announced Sunday to be the first Big 12 commissioner, Nebraska football coach Tom Osborne had some questions.



Hatchell

"The thing that I'm concerned about and a lot of the Big Eight coaches are concerned about is that when the Southwest schools joined us," Osborne

Osborne voiced the concerns of many of the Big Eight coaches Monday after practice and said he hoped people remembered it was the Big Eight that was expanding, and not the Southwest Conference.

said, "it was the Big Eight they were joining and they would play by the Big Eight rules."

"All of the sudden, you begin to see people wanting things the way they were in the Southwest Conference."

Osborne said he was mostly fearful of the schools falling from the Big Eight's rule.

"I don't understand that because they joined us with that in mind—that they would play by our rules," he said. "I hope that is the way it is. We took them in. We weren't part of a crumbling conference. They came in with the understanding that they'd play by Big Eight rules."

But Hatchell said he didn't foresee any big conflict between the Big Eight and SWC schools.

At his press conference Monday, Hatchell did his best to alleviate any fears the Big Eight schools might have.

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A little bit of rotten luck gives gymnast pot of gold in Mizzou

By Mitch Sherman
Senior Reporter

COLUMBIA, Mo. — For Martha Jenkins, the Big Eight Championships last weekend were the perfect ending to a not-so-perfect regular season.



Jenkins

score of 194.45. Saturday's meet and the Hus-

kers' home victory over Minnesota last week — in which she won the all-around with a personal best score of 39.10 — were the good parts of Jenkins' 1995 season. The rest of the year, she said, did not produce many fond memories.

On Jan. 30, while competing in a dual meet against Missouri, Jenkins fell from the uneven bars during warm-ups, hyperextending her elbow. For the next month, she sat on the sidelines and watched. At one point, she said she thought her season would come to a premature end.

"There was talk that I might not be back at all," Jenkins said. "We thought I might have to redshirt. I would have had to had surgery on it, so that scared me a lot."

But after consulting with doc-

tors, she decided to try to come back. It was a risky move, Jenkins said, because had she competed in one more meet and re-injured her elbow, the possibility of a medical redshirt year would have been eliminated.

"I definitely didn't want to end my career by coming back and competing once more and getting hurt again," she said.

For most of March, Jenkins participated sparingly and sported a brace that immobilized her arm during competition.

"There were three or four weeks that I didn't do anything," she said. "But even when all I could do was just go to meets and pull a board for my teammates, that was a reward."

See JENKINS on 8

Baseball house of pain to law weenie, as is hockey

Things are different now.

It was only 15 years ago when I saw life through eyes of wonderment. The world was a panorama of opportunity, and I gauged my existence solely on what I was regarded as and never upon who I was.

I saw things through degrees of acclaim and self-fulfilling grandeur. Now I see things through degrees of pain and avenues for its minimization.

I saw my future with only unyielding expectation. Now I've yielded. My life now is marked with guarded hope that those things essential to my existence will either always be there or arrive with time and patience.

And 15 years ago, I lived to be like Pete Rose, Keith Hernandez, Steve Garvey and George Brett. These men — some of the best professional baseball players in the late 1970s and early 1980s if you did not recognize the names — were more than heroes to me.

They were me.

I didn't want to be like them — I wanted to be them. I wanted to be able to hit the ball as far as Jim Rice, to field like Hernandez, to throw like Goose Gossage.

Now, of course, the logical flaw of my pre-pubescent fantasies was that I considered all of these baseball greats as baseball players.

That was all.

They weren't men; they were a sub-species of men who somehow, on their 18th birthday, metamorphosed from normal guys into baseball greats.

I guess I am bringing all of this up to reflect upon my own feelings about the baseball strike.

Like all baseball fans, I feel betrayed and angry that the two sides cannot and/or will not resolve this squabbling and play baseball.

But then I realize that these people are just men. They are subject to the same obstinance, the same passions, the same anger and the same greed we are all subject to.



Beau Finley

The fact that they hit or throw a white ball really hard doesn't make them any better arbitrators, negotiators, or, quite frankly, human beings.

I don't condone the baseball strike. I think it's about pettiness and greed. But sometimes I'm petty and greedy, too.

Perhaps I'm being too easy. Perhaps we should expect more from those in the public eye.

But the bottom line is that if you take away the youth and the ability, the players are just people.

Maybe that's why I'm most

disappointed.

Omaha Lancers Update: Now, vast readership, I know I haven't covered hockey before, and that's exclusively because I wouldn't have the first friggin' clue about what I was talking about.

Yeah, as if that has stopped me before.

Anyway, I decided to take in my first-ever hockey game over spring break so I could strip away this veil of sporting ignorance. Plus, beer is served.

Thus, myself and a friend — I would call her a "date," but she said that would be an incredibly expansive interpretation of the term.

Actually, she said I could call her about anything I wanted as long as I bought her beer at the game — took off to see the USHL playoff game between the Omaha Lancers and the Rochester ... um, Sissies. I can't remember their damn nickname.

The game was never close. The Lancers scored four goals in the first period and cruised to an

easy 9-0 victory.

It was also an extraordinarily physical game — for me.

Every time I would ask my date what's going on, she would look at me real sincerely and say, "You wanna see?"

Of course I wanted to know, so I said, "Um, yeah."

She then screamed "Hip check!" and then threw her entire body against me, knocking me into the aisle and into the cotton-candy vendor. I would then have to buy some candy from the vendor freak so he wouldn't beat me up. I still have 121 bags of that pink crap.

I knew I shouldn't have dated someone who could bench press more than me or, moreover, who could actually bench press me.

Anyway, my date ditched me after the first period to "sit with her mother." Yeah, like I haven't heard that excuse 16, wait, no, 17 times throughout my life. How stupid does

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