

# SPORTS

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## Surles wants to redshirt, wait for his year

By Derek Samson  
Senior Reporter

Nebraska forward Chester Surles wasn't comfortable with his role last season. And he doesn't expect his role to change much next year with the Cornhuskers returning everyone except Melvin Brooks.



Surles

That is why the 6-foot-7 freshman from Saginaw, Mich., wants to redshirt next year.

If Surles does sit out the year, he will play his sophomore season without the six players who will be seniors next season.

"If I redshirt, I will have three years all to myself, rather than just two years," Surles said. "It's mostly because Jaron (Boone) and Erick

(Strickland) are this team's primary scorers, and I know they will be next year, too. I'm a scorer, too, and I know I could be the primary scorer for three years.

"If I don't redshirt, I'd be a junior when it would be my year. But if I redshirt, I'd be a sophomore when it's my year. It gives me an extra year to practice, and then I'll be playing full-time for three years."

Surles said he didn't redshirt this year because he wanted to get a taste of Big Eight basketball.

"I'm glad I played this year and didn't redshirt," he said. "I thought I would play more, but it was still good for me to get some game experience. Now, if I redshirt, when I come back from that redshirt season, I will already have had experience, and I'll be ready."

Surles said he planned to talk to Coach Danny Nee sometime this week and hoped to make his decision in the next two months.

"It's going to be my decision," Surles said.

"But it's something I have to seriously consider. If I do, I'll spend my whole season next year practicing. I think I can improve a lot. I'll work on things that my high school coach emphasized, like my ball handling and shooting."

As a four-year starter for Coach Norwaine Reed at Buena Vista High School, he led his team to a No. 12 ranking in the USA Today high school poll by averaging 21 points, eight rebounds and six assists a game as a senior.

But things went much differently for Surles as a freshman at Nebraska as he averaged only 2.9 points and 1.5 rebounds a game, while averaging a little less than 10 minutes of playing time a game.

"I know I didn't play as well as I'm capable of playing," he said. "It was a disappointing year for the team too, but I know I didn't play well personally. We had high expectations as

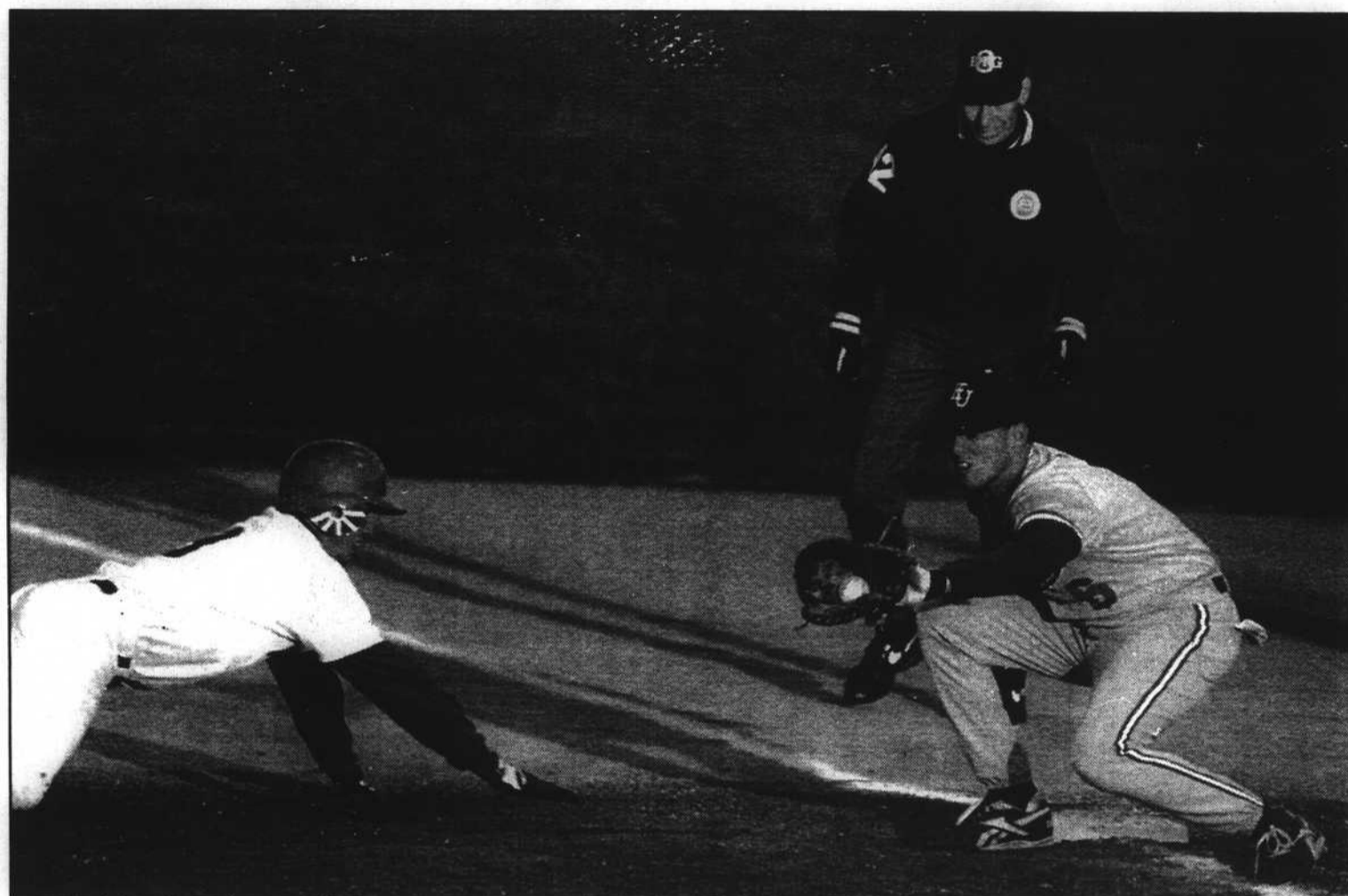
a team, and I had high expectations for myself, and they weren't met."

Surles said his lack of playing time contributed to his poor performance.

"I felt comfortable, but I didn't feel like I could play freely," he said. "If Coach Nee would see a mistake, he'd take me out. That makes you kind of frigid and tight when you're on the court because you're trying not to make a mistake. That's why I didn't take many shots because if you missed your first one, you might be out."

Surles said sitting out next season may help him gain back something that he seemed to lose last season — confidence.

"The more you play, the more confidence you have," he said. "If I redshirt, I know I'll be ready to have three very strong years. But even if I decide not to redshirt, I will average in double figures next season. I just think it might be better for me if I redshirted."



Travis Heying/DN

Nebraska third baseman Jed Dalton gets picked off by Kansas first baseman Alex King in the first inning of the Huskers' 6-5 win over Kansas at Buck Beltzer Stadium Tuesday night. Dalton scored the winning run in the bottom of the ninth inning when Alvie Shepherd walked with the bases loaded.

## Baseball team refused to be burned by KU

By Mitch Sherman  
Senior Reporter

A sixth-inning fire in the dugout of the Nebraska baseball team couldn't provide the spark.

A near-perfect relief performance from pitcher Gus Castro wasn't quite enough.

It took patience, and it took discipline, Coach John Sanders said, for the Cornhuskers to pull out a come-from-behind 6-5 win over Kansas Tuesday night at Buck Beltzer Stadium.

Playing in front of 322 fans with temperatures hovering in the upper 30s, Nebraska scored two runs in the seventh inning and one in the ninth to improve to 17-11 and 6-5 in the Big Eight.

Kansas fell to 10-21 and 2-8 in the conference.

"It was a tough evening to play baseball," said Sanders. "Both teams competed hard considering the conditions. This was the classic case where discipline paid out."

With Matt Meyer at the plate in the bottom of the sixth, the Nebraska dugout scattered on to the field because of a blaze in the Husker dugout. One of Nebraska's heaters, Sanders said, caught fire, causing the Husker panic. But the Nebraska bats did not catch fire.

The Huskers scored a run in the sixth inning and two in the seventh to tie the game at five.

To open the ninth inning, Husker third

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## Major-league strike damaged past, future of college ball

Baseball is a mess. And that mess could have long-ranging implications.

The fans have had to go 232 days without Major League Baseball. The players have had to go 232 days without playing, and the teams will certainly not be ready for a 144-game season after only three weeks of spring training and two weeks of exhibition games.

A 144-game season — instead of the regular 162-game season — will forever put an asterisk by the 1995 season, just as an asterisk will forever remain with the 1994 season, which ended almost two months early.

And those two asterisks will be hurting the major-league players of the future.

The future of Major League Baseball — those playing collegiate baseball now — is being damaged by the MLB itself.

Major League Baseball has reduced its funding to the NCAA for summer baseball leagues. But that makes no difference to

baseball fans.

The fans are still flocking to the nearest stadium to purchase tickets for major-league baseball games, which will begin April 26.

Teams all across the board have been selling tickets like wildfire. The Baltimore Orioles sold more than 25,000 tickets on Monday. People lined up outside Fenway Park in Boston.

At least one team, however, has the fans in mind. The Minnesota Twins are offering tickets for their opening series against Baltimore at half price.

In the end, though, it could be the fans who get hurt the most.

Check that — it could be college baseball players who get hurt the most.

Not only is Major League Baseball a mess after the eight-month strike, but collegiate baseball now will get the mess dumped on it.

Sure, college baseball was the only ticket in town until the players ended the strike.



Tim Pearson

But college players eventually will be hurt by the strike — even though it's now over.

Most baseball players use college as a kind of breeding ground for the majors — essentially a minor league that uses aluminum bats.

And a lot of college players depend on not only the spring baseball season but also on what they do in the summer.

Summer baseball leagues have helped college players hone their skills. But more importantly, they offer a chance for the players to

show off their skills to the many major-league scouts in attendance.

But now maybe Major League Baseball is sending collegiate baseball players a message — a message that the players don't want to hear.

The NCAA was given \$500,050 for summer leagues by Major League Baseball in 1994. This year, funding has gone down 65 percent to \$175,000. Funding is being reduced significantly because of circumstances associated with the strike.

Summer leagues such as Cape Cod, Central Illinois, Great Lakes, Northwestern, San Diego and Valley will be hurt by the cuts.

And that means that players like Nebraska's Darin Erstad may not get as much preparation during the summer as he needs and wants.

Erstad passed up an invitation to the U.S. National Baseball Trials in Millington, Tenn., to play in the Cape Cod League last summer.

And at Cape Cod, all Erstad did was hit .340 to win the MVP award

— despite leaving early to report to fall football practice.

Last summer, Erstad proved that he was deserving of being mentioned as a top-five pick in the major-league draft by opening some eyes.

But because of the major-league players' strike, other talented players won't have as good of an opportunity to improve their chances of being a high draft pick. They won't get a chance to realize their dreams of a major-league career.

But most of all, Major League Baseball hasn't been able to realize that the future of professional baseball is somewhat dependent on collegiate baseball.

And that would just make Major League Baseball into a much bigger mess.

Not only was the present destroyed by the strike, but the future was damaged as well.

Pearson is a junior news-editorial major and the Daily Nebraskan sports editor.