

Get off it. Exercise.

Daily Nebraskan

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Football

Continued from Page 1

Phillips' arrest generated a massive amount of national media attention. At least 40 reporters watched when Phillips entered an innocent plea at his arraignment last week.

His court appearance Tuesday occurred at the same time Osborne was praising prosecutors at his weekly press conference for not filing charges against Benning.

Lancaster County Attorney Gary Lacey said Tuesday that there was not enough evidence to press formal charges against Benning.

"After a careful review of the evidence presented in this case, I have concluded there are insufficient grounds to believe that a crime was committed by Mr. Benning," Lacey said in a statement.

Benning spoke to reporters after the press conference. He said he was pleased, but not surprised that his Sept. 9 arrest did not bring about formal charges.

"I knew a lot of inaccuracies were out there. We weathered the storm. We knew the truth would come out," Benning said Tuesday. "I'm just glad to get back to what I love—football."

The Omaha junior was arrested on suspicion of misdemeanor third-degree assault. Police reports indicate Vonetta Bowden, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln sophomore, reported that she was assaulted by Benning when she went to his apartment to

retrieve pictures.

Benning said he had spoken briefly to Bowden, his former girlfriend, since the incident.

"She let me know that she would set the record straight," Benning said. Bowden could not be reached Tuesday for comment.

Osborne said he was thankful Benning's name was cleared.

"I was hoping it would have happened last week," Osborne said. "The problem is the legal system takes time. You folks (reporters) don't take time. Once someone is charged, it's nationwide immediately."

Police arrested Benning while his teammates were in East Lansing, Mich., for the football game against Michigan State. A pulled hamstring kept Benning from traveling with the team.

Benning said the 10 days since his arrest seemed like an eternity.

"It was a deal that was blown way out of proportion," Benning said.

Benning's father, Don, who is an assistant superintendent in the Omaha Public Schools, said he was relieved his son's name was cleared.

"On the other hand, we are outraged by the chain of events in which a fine young man's character and reputation have been damaged," the elder Benning said in a statement Tuesday, "and far beyond the borders of his home state and his community."

"The fact remains that the only information that millions of Ameri-

cans will get in this matter is the first story following the incident."

Lately, Osborne has spent more time during his weekly press conferences discussing crimes than touchdowns.

Sims, a sophomore from Omaha who graduated from West Memphis, Ark., also has a pending legal case. He was cited in July on misdemeanor assault and vandalism charges.

The charges stem from a July 3 incident in which Sims and his former girlfriend, Sarah A. Price, had an argument over his possessions. Sims said Price fell and cut her leg. A witness called police, Sims said, but neither Sims nor Price wanted to report the incident.

Price missed a Sept. 7 court date. Sims said prosecutors then tried to talk him into pleading guilty to a lesser charge.

"I said, 'No, I don't want to plead guilty to disturbing the peace,'" Sims said. "Because I didn't do anything."

Osborne said he talked with Sims Monday evening. The coach said he was convinced of his player's innocence.

"What I'm interested in is not what plays out in court, but what really happens," Osborne said.

In addition to the tailbacks' legal cases, NU wingback Riley Washington is awaiting trial on an attempted second-degree murder charge. His jury trial is scheduled for the week of Oct. 23.



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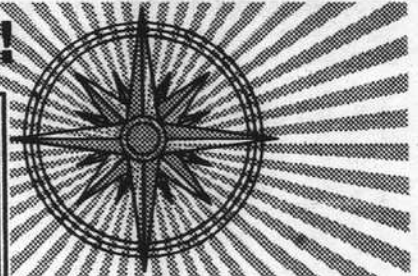


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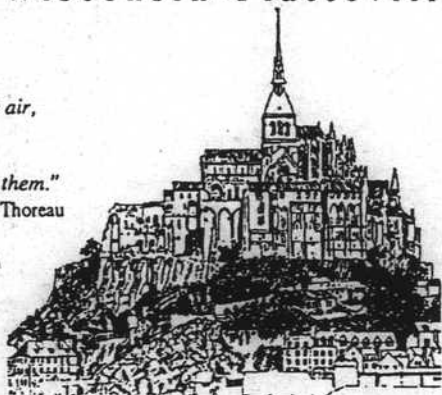
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—Henry David Thoreau



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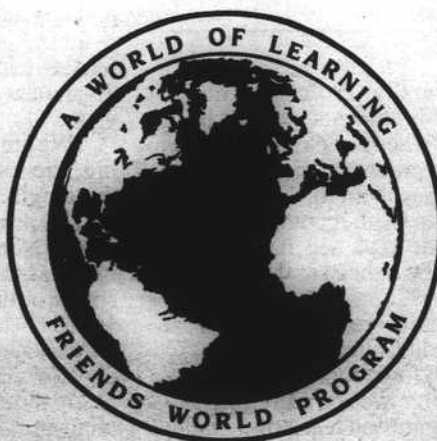
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