

NU athletes learn from O.J.'s acquittal

By Mike Kluck
Staff Reporter

Many Nebraska athletes were surprised by the acquittal of O.J. Simpson Tuesday, but said they could learn from the eight-month trial.

Nebraska basketball player Erick Strickland said the case of Simpson, a Hall of Fame football player, already had taught him a lesson about how he conducted his life as an athlete in the spotlight.

"You have to be careful," Strickland said, "because you never know what could happen to you. The more you stay out of the public eye, the better off you are."

Larry Townsend, a Cornhusker defensive tackle from San Jose, Calif., said he learned from the case about how impartial the public is toward famous athletes.

Townsend said he was happy with the outcome because he thought Simpson was innocent.

Strickland said he wouldn't have been able to convict Simpson because too much of the prosecution's case was based on unproven evidence rather than solid facts.

"I thought they were going to convict him," Strickland said. "I was in between on their decision because I had some reasonable doubts about that. The evidence they gave me was

not based on full knowledge that he did it."

Strickland said he felt former Los Angeles detective Mark Fuhrman's testimony was what killed the prosecution's case. Fuhrman testified early in the case about finding a bloody glove on Simpson's estate that matched the one at the scene of the murders of Ron Goldman and Nicole Brown Simpson.

While on the stand, Fuhrman said he never used racial slurs, but later a tape was played for the jury where Fuhrman used racial epithets.

Defense attorneys used the tapes to portray Fuhrman as a racist and give him a motive to plant evidence in the case.

"I think if a police officer can get up on that stand and take an oath and completely lie, then he could (plant evidence)," Strickland said. "It's possible, and that's what blew it for them."

Strickland said he was worried the Simpson case might cast a bad image on athletes. Simpson was a former college and professional football player.

"I think violence is everywhere; it's not just the athletes," Strickland said. "I don't like the stereotype that all athletes are like that. I've heard over campus that athletes are violent or troublemakers, and that's not necessarily the case."

Athlete who was near O.J. chase voices disappointment with verdict

By Mike Kluck
Staff Reporter

Erica De Vitis felt a stronger connection to the O.J. Simpson verdict than most people in Nebraska.

De Vitis, a freshman on this year's Nebraska soccer team, was extremely close to the Simpson case last year.

On June 17, 1994, De Vitis was driving on the interstate to her home in Irvine, Calif., a city about 45 miles south of Los Angeles. Upon arriving at her home, she learned she was just a few miles ahead of the most watched chase in the world involving O.J. Simpson.

Because of her close proximity, De Vitis said she had felt a closeness to the Simpson trial unlike most other people who paid close

O.J. Simpson



THE VERDICT

attention to Simpson's acquittal on Tuesday. She also said the proximity made it harder for her to accept the verdicts.

De Vitis was not pleased after watching the jury's decision on television at the Hewitt Athletic Academic Center.

"I'm upset because I think he's guilty," De Vitis said. "It's sad because he's spent over \$1 million on the trial and was able to come up with a not guilty decision."

De Vitis said reaction was mixed among the more than 100 athletes

who stopped what they were doing to watch the announcement of the decision.

Many people in the crowd, De Vitis said, were angry and disappointed with the decision. She said one of her friends was so upset that she was unable to eat.

But De Vitis said some people in the Hewitt Center crowd did cheer and were happy with the decision of the 12-member jury.

"It's hard to believe (Simpson) could go home right after all of what has happened."

But if Simpson had been convicted, De Vitis said, there would have been rioting in Los Angeles.

She said the year-long coverage of the case was much more intense in California than in Nebraska.

"People aren't into the trial here like they were into it in California," De Vitis said. "Friends and parents of friends were really into it. I think with the people in Nebraska, the case really didn't matter to them because they didn't live in it."

Huskers to play Jayhawks

From Staff Reports

Nebraska will attempt to extend its winning streak to 13 against Kansas as four Big Eight matches are slated for tonight.

The Cornhuskers, ranked No. 1 in the country, play the Jayhawks in a 7:30 p.m. match at the NU Coliseum. Iowa State plays at Kansas State; Oklahoma is at Missouri.

Colorado, which has lost four in a row, takes a break from Big Eight play

with a match against Colorado State, where Katherine Pettit, the daughter of Husker coach Terry Pettit, verbally committed Monday.

Nebraska is 2-0 and on top of the conference. The Nebraska-Kansas match will pit Pettit against his former player, Karen (Dahlgren) Schonewise. Schonewise, an All-American at Nebraska in 1986, is in her second year as coach of the Jayhawks. She still holds the Nebraska career record for solo blocks with 132.

Hawks sign ex-Colorado Boyce

ATLANTA (AP) — Tuesday, the Atlanta Hawks signed Colorado guard Donnie Boyce, second-round draft choice guard, of Colorado, to a two-year contract.

Terms were not disclosed.

Boyce, 6-foot-5 and 195 pounds, broke his leg in the first round of the

1995 Big Eight tournament. He left Colorado as the Buffaloes' leading scorer with 1,995 career points.

He averaged 18.5 points, 6.5 rebounds and four assists as a senior. February, in his final game against Nebraska in Lincoln, Boyce shot a game-high 28 points in the Colorado win.

Research gave him a future

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