

SPORTS

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Page 7

SPORTS OPINION



Todd Walkenhorst

Fans shafted by baseball's televised state

The Major League baseball playoffs are upon us. This is the time when crisp autumn nights mean only one thing. Finally there is quality baseball in the quest for the World Championship.

And it did not take long for memorable games to be played. Did you see game one of the divisional playoff when Cleveland's Tony Pena hit a home run in the fifteenth inning to beat Boston?

No, of course not. It wasn't televised here.

How about the next night when the Yankees defeated Seattle in 15 innings as well?

I guess you didn't see that one either.

Did you see Cleveland clinch its series?

No. Did you see Atlanta win its series after being forced to watch the first three games of its series with Colorado?

Nope. Did you suffer through Pete "I love the Braves" Van Wieren's play-by-play of the Braves-Rockies series?

Unfortunately, yes. Did you even know the Dodgers and Reds were in the playoffs?

That was a shock to me. If you did not see these events, you're not alone. And you can thank the owners and their creation of the Baseball Network.

The idea was to play all the divisional playoff games simultaneously and broadcast games regionally based on fan interest.

Problem number one. The national pastime is not a regional attraction.

This was supposed to be a healing year for Major League Baseball after alienating practically every fan in the nation with last year's strike. So what do the owners do? They repay the fans by showing fewer playoff games than ever before.

It's like Christmas, and the owners put lumps of coal in our stockings.

It can't be that hard for the owners to figure out, and I developed this formula for them to see how asinine this idea is.

In 1993 we saw every playoff game on television. That's 100 percent of them.

In 1995 we are not seeing every playoff game on television. That's less than 100 percent. In the divisional playoffs, we witnessed five of 15 games played, that's 33 percent.

I'm not a mathematics major, and really, I'm not as dumb as everybody thinks I am, but it's not that hard to figure out. The bottom line is that the fans are getting screwed.

The diehard fans who have not left the game yet just might leave now. If not, maybe they will when the World Series becomes a pay-per-view event.

Walkenhorst is a senior advertising major and a Daily Nebraskan sports reporter.

Weekend off helps Huskers heal

By Trevor Parks
Senior Reporter

With the injury problems that have struck the Nebraska football team, having last Saturday off couldn't have come at a more important time.

If the 5-0 Cornhuskers would have had to travel to Oklahoma State as originally scheduled when the year began, they would have been without their backup quarterback, three offensive linemen, a co-No. 1 I-back, a defensive lineman, and starting MIKE linebacker Phil Ellis at full strength.

But the game at Oklahoma State was moved to Aug. 31 for television and so No. 2 Nebraska would have a game under its belt before traveling to

Michigan State. So the Huskers used their Saturday off to heal.

Coach Tom Osborne said at his weekly press conference that having a week off during the season was a good idea.

"I think we still could have won, but we'd have been a lesser football team," Osborne said. "That's a terrible grind to have to go straight through from August 3rd or 4th to January 2nd."

"It's kind of nice to have at least one weekend when they don't have to do anything."

Nebraska has had an off week in late September or early October in four of the last five seasons. Last year, Nebraska did not have a week off during that time.

Osborne said if Nebraska would have had to play the Cowboys in Stillwater, Okla., last Saturday, the injury situation might not have been too bad.

"If we'd have had a game on Saturday, a lot of those guys would have gotten well, and they'd have been out there," Osborne said, "but they really wouldn't have been able to play very well."

Osborne said he hoped backup quarterback Brook Berringer could practice toward the end of the week, and in the meantime freshman Frankie London, who is redshirting this season, would get some snaps. London will be the third-string quar-

See OSBORNE on 8

Huskers to battle Wildcats

By Mitch Sherman
Senior Editor

Listening to Nebraska volleyball coach Terry Pettit, one would have no idea that the Cornhuskers have rolled through 13 straight matches, winning a school record 39 consecutive games.

Pettit said the top-ranked 14-1 Huskers needed an attitude adjustment after simply going through the motions during sweeps of their first four Big Eight foes.

"We are at a point in our season where, as coaches and players, we are challenged to try to get better," he said. "I didn't feel that last week we got better."

Last Wednesday, Nebraska drilled Kansas, holding the Jayhawks to 12 points and a .080 hitting percentage. On Saturday night at Ames, Iowa, the Huskers defeated Iowa State 15-4, 15-11, 15-11, but hit .270, Nebraska's third lowest percentage this year.

Against the Cyclones, two-time All-American middle blocker Allison Weston hit only .125, far below her .405 season hitting percentage.

"We weren't as motivated," Pettit said, "or didn't have an edge to us. We addressed that in practice, and I think we got everybody's attention. You can play real well, even against teams that aren't as strong as you are, and we haven't done that in the last week and a half."

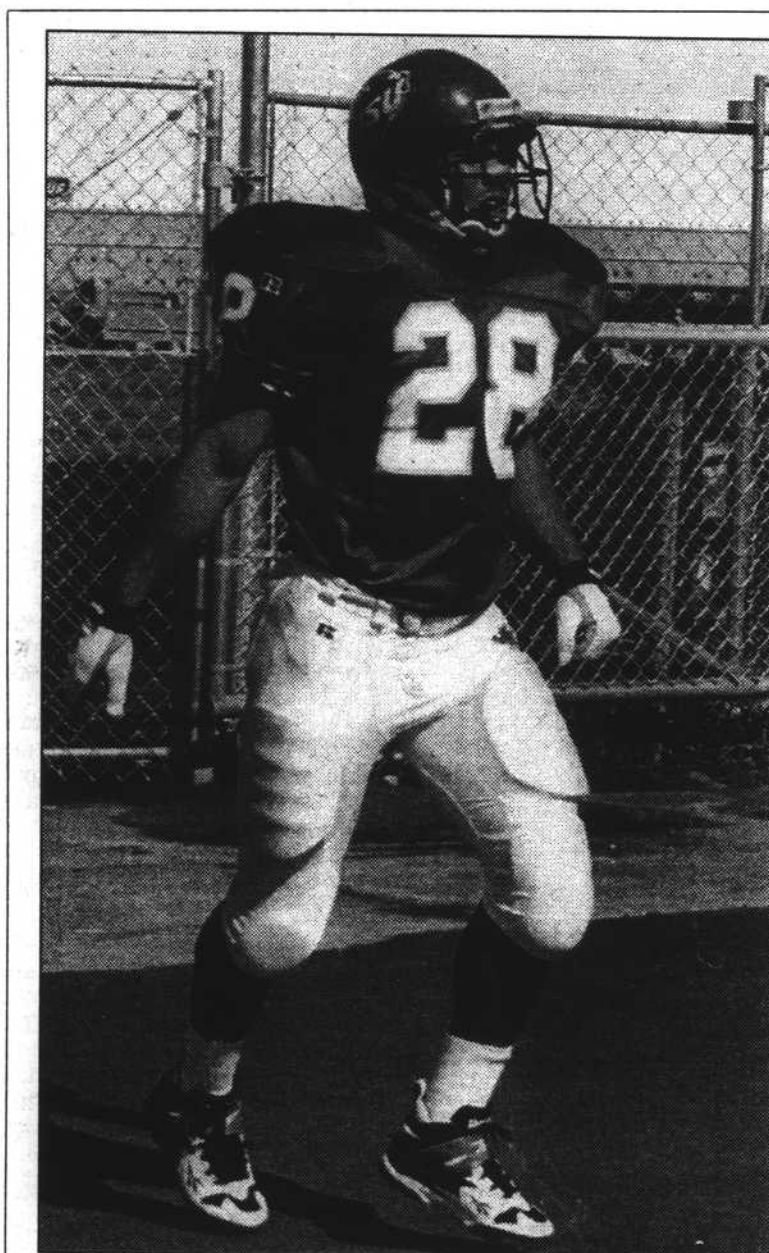
Tonight, Nebraska travels to Manhattan, Kan., to challenge 13-4 Kansas State at 7:30 p.m. in the Ahearn Fieldhouse. Despite suffering two straight losses, Pettit said Kansas State, coached by Jim Moore, was playing as well as any Wildcat team he had seen.

"What they have is a coach who has really brought them a disciplined system," Pettit said. "They are winning, and when you win, your confidence is up. They believe that they can compete. They are two levels above where they have been the last two or three years."

Nebraska, which is 50-0 against Kansas State since 1975, dropped one game to the Wildcats last season, the first time the Huskers needed four games to beat Kansas State in the past 10 years.

"We need to get better," Pettit said. "You have to do that because come November, we play No. 2 Florida, No. 7 Notre Dame, and Texas, who is one of the better three or four teams in the country. If we don't get better, we are not going to have any success against those teams."

"We need to stay sharp for three games, or five games, whatever it takes, and come out of there with a win," Pettit said. "But more importantly, we need to be a better volleyball team than we were last week."



Trevor Parks/DN

Iowa State running back Troy Davis takes the field as the Cyclones prepare for Oklahoma Saturday. Davis became the first sophomore running back in NCAA history to rush for more than 1,000 yards in five games with a 89-yard performance against the Sooners.

Cyclones' Davis makes college football history

By Mitch Sherman
Senior Editor

What Herschel Walker, Tony Dorsett, Barry Sanders, Marcus Allen and Marshall Faulk could not do, Troy Davis did on Saturday.

The Iowa State tailback — in running for 89 yards on 21 attempts during the Cyclones' 39-26 loss to Oklahoma — became the first back in college football history to gain 1,000 yards in the first five games of his sophomore season.

The 5-foot-8, 185-pound native of Miami has been a pillar of consistency in Coach Dan McCarney's first-year attempt to resurrect the Cyclone program, which failed to win a game last season.

"I am sick about losing today," said McCarney, who has directed

Iowa State to a 2-3 record, defeating Ohio and Nevada-Las Vegas.

"But I am very happy for Troy. It's a major accomplishment. We'll build on it, and Troy Davis will build on it. He'll want to improve on it, and he can finish with a sensational season. You are measured on a season, not any one game."

After rushing for no fewer than 139 yards in Iowa State's first five games, Davis appeared to be on track for another record-setting day. He carried the load on the Cyclones' opening drive in the first quarter, scoring his conference-leading 10th touchdown of the season.

Davis — who became only the fifth player ever to run for 1,000 yards in the first five games of a

See DAVIS on 8

Lineman will sign with NU

By Mitch Sherman
Senior Editor

An offensive lineman from Hartington Cedar Catholic High School on Monday became the second player in less than a week to verbally commit to play football for Nebraska next year.

Russ Hochstein, a 6-foot-4, 245-pound guard told the Cornhusker coaches he would sign a letter of intent in February, joining Wichita, Kan., Collegiate running back DeAngelo Evans, who committed last week.

Hartington Cedar Catholic coach Terry Kathol said Tuesday that Hochstein, who has attended Nebraska's summer football camp each of the past two years, was offered a scholarship last Thursday.

"He is really excited about Nebraska. They have been calling him on a weekly basis since the season started," Kathol said. "That is something that has really impressed Russ. One night, (Nebraska assistant coach) Dan Young called him the same night as a Kansas State coach, and I could tell Russ really favored Nebraska."

Kathol said Hochstein played center during his first two seasons at Hartington Cedar Catholic, a Class C-2 school that is 2-4 this season. Last season, he switched to tackle, and this year, he moved over to guard. He chose Nebraska over Kansas State, Iowa State and Wayne State, Kathol said.

Hochstein has played defensive end and linebacker on the defensive side of the ball, but Kathol said Hochstein would play offense in college, possibly center.

"For us, he is a pretty good-sized kid," Kathol said. "He has got a good frame and can definitely put on some weight. He understands what his role is, and is very understanding of the game."

Hochstein, a team captain, is one of four senior starters on the Hartington Cedar Catholic roster. He has been timed at 5.3 seconds in the 40-yard dash, Kathol said, and is academically eligible to play next fall.

A two-year starter on the Cedar Catholic basketball team, Kathol said Hochstein, who also plays baseball, put in long hours of work this summer to improve his chances of being recruited by a Division I school. Hochstein lifted weights for two hours at 5:30 a.m. every day, and works on his deep-snapping after football practice each evening.

"He has been a very influential player for us since his freshman year," Kathol said. "He is a positive role model. He is a very mature player, and is smart on the field. He has worked very hard to get where he is now and will continue to work hard in college."