

# SPORTS

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## SPORTS OPINION



**Mitch Sherman**

### Sooner coach blowing smoke in Oklahoma

Gary Gibbs is sitting in a room somewhere with a little smile on his face.

Not because the Oklahoma football team is struggling. Not because Howard Schnellenberger hasn't lived up to expectations. Gibbs is smiling because he knows the fans of Oklahoma were wrong.

It has taken us all of 50 days to learn that Schnellenberger is not what the blind folks of the Sooner state had hoped. Schnellenberger is not success in a package. Coaches do not magically turn teams from 6-6 to 12-0. Coaches do not change teams. Players change teams.

The Sooners, who were man-handled by Kansas Saturday at Norman, have looked no better than any Gibbs-coached team in the past month. The major problem with Gibbs, Sooner fans screamed last year, was that he could not beat Colorado, Texas and Nebraska.

Nobody said anything about Kansas.

False expectations were built after Oklahoma drubbed San Diego State, Southern Methodist and North Texas to open the season. Those expectations were shattered on Sept. 30 when Colorado trashed Oklahoma 38-17.

"Overall our football team has pleased me very greatly," Schnellenberger said of the 4-2-1 Sooners on Monday. "We have made some individual errors that have been a problem. It is disconcerting that we have a veteran team with the exception of the quarterback position, and we still have these inconsistencies."

Gibbs, who coached Oklahoma through the six most miserable years of Sooner football in the past 40 seasons, was mistakenly blamed with the full responsibility of tearing down the Oklahoma tradition. Maybe it wasn't Gibbs. Maybe it was the probation and the stigma that came along with a program that won from cheating.

Since his exile following last year's embarrassing Copper Bowl loss to Brigham Young — dubbed by Schnellenberger as "the low point of Oklahoma football" — Gibbs' name has hardly been heard in Norman. Schnellenberger has spoken only of the "new era of Oklahoma football."

Refusing to mention Gibbs by name, Schnellenberger compared the Copper Bowl to Pearl Harbor. Imagine the bombs that must have exploded around the Sooner Nation as the loyal followers of the crimson and cream realized that their new coach was simply blowing smoke.

"It's no secret that I've said we intend to win the national championship as quickly as is humanly possible to do it and as often as is humanly possible to do it," Schnellenberger said way back in July.

Looks like it might be a while.

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

## Rival CU promises rousing action

By Mike Kluck  
Staff Reporter

Former Colorado football coach Bill McCartney finally has gotten his wish.

When McCartney became the Buffaloes' coach in 1982, he designated Nebraska as Colorado's rival, a term the Huskers never accepted — apparently until this year.

Because of a new rule this year in the Big Eight, each team can designate one road opponent as its rival. The team then will be able to take all of its senior players on the trip.

The new rule means that the Cornhuskers can take 85 to 90 players to Boulder, Colo., said Dan Young, Nebraska's offensive line and special teams coach. For any other conference road game, the Huskers could take only the conference maximum of 66 players with them.

"McCartney should be happy to

### Countdown to the Showdown

5 4 3 2 1 Days

know they're the designated road rival," Young said at the Extra Point Club Luncheon Monday. "He always wanted us to be his rival. He'll be happy to know that we finally kind of consented."

Nebraska coach Tom Osborne said he did not know why Colorado was chosen as the designated rival, but he said the decision was up to the players.

"It isn't because of any special reason, but I guess the players would rather fly to Colorado than ride a bus to Kansas," Osborne said. "I think that (Colorado) was their wish, although

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### Hell week to psych Buffs for upcoming Husker match

By Mike Kluck  
Staff Reporter

AMES, Iowa — There is going to be hell to pay for the Colorado football team this week.

But it won't be because of the Buffaloes' sluggish performance in their 50-28 victory over Iowa State on Saturday. Instead Colorado's persecution will come in preparation for No. 2 Nebraska.

"Everyone's going to be fired up, and it's going to be hell week," Colorado quarterback John Hessler said. "It's the week when every senior gets on the scout team guys, and everyone goes hard. It's kind of crazy."

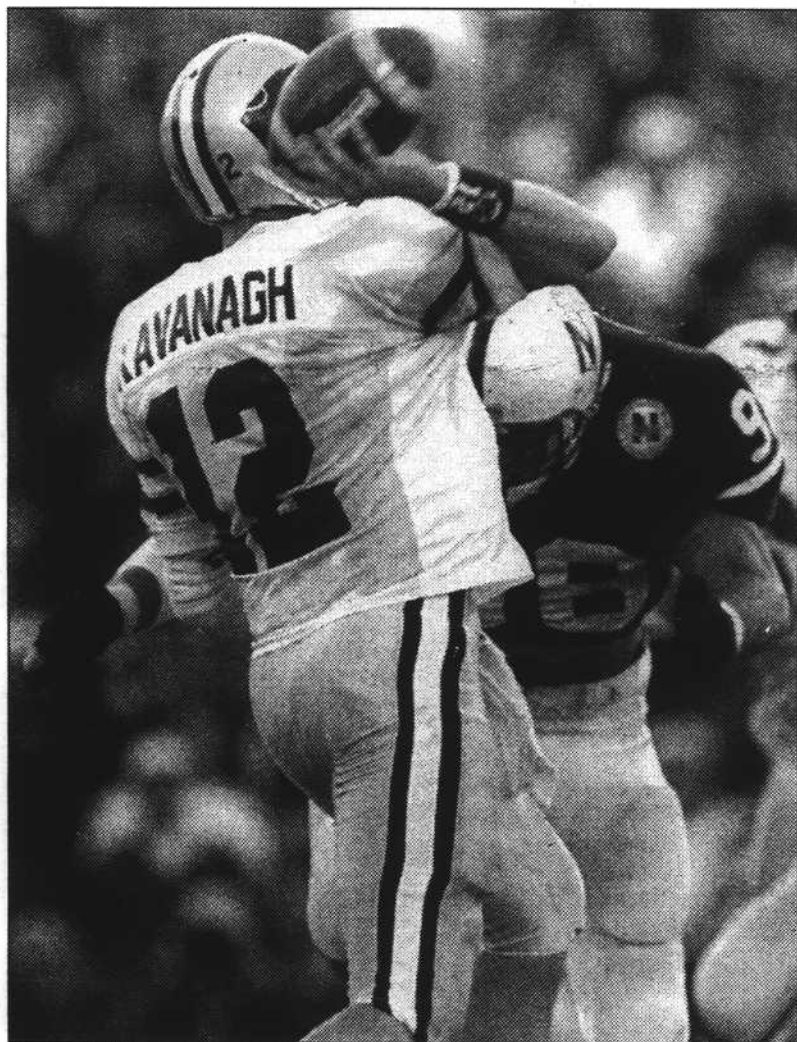
For Buffalo junior middle linebacker Matt Russell, hell week comes after the two worst weeks of Colorado's season. The Buffaloes lost to Kansas 40-24 on Oct. 7, a team they had beaten the last 10 years, and then had two weeks to prepare for the Cyclones.

With just 14 minutes left in the game, Iowa State tailback Troy Davis ran 45 yards for a touchdown to give the Cyclones a 28-27 lead.

"I was nervous when they jumped ahead of us," Russell said. "I started thinking to myself, 'Man, we can't let this happen to us again.'"

"We were just waiting for a

See COLORADO on 8



Jeff Haller/DN

Nebraska linebacker Grant Wistrom closes in on Kansas State quarterback Brian Kavanagh in Saturday's game. Wistrom and fellow end Jared Tomich combined for eight tackles and four quarterback sacks against the Wildcats.

## Linebackers test QBs, honor Husker tradition

By Mitch Sherman  
Senior Editor

Broderick Thomas started the tradition. Mike Croel, Jeff Mills, Travis Hill and Trev Alberts established the dominance. Dwayne Harris and Donta Jones won a national title.

Now it's time for Jared Tomich and Grant Wistrom to shine. And Saturday against Kansas State, that's just what the pair of bookends on the Nebraska defensive line did.

Nebraska outside linebackers have become notorious for turning up the heat in big games, making life uncomfortable for quarterbacks.

"For the first time this year," Tomich said after Nebraska's 49-25 win over Kansas State Saturday, "the front line did a good job of getting in there. We were getting in the quarterback's face all day."

Wildcat quarterbacks Matt Miller and Brian Kavanagh were sacked a season-high nine times for 82 yards in losses on Saturday. This week against No. 7 Colorado, the Cornhusker defense will face another inexperienced signal caller, John Hessler, who has started just three games in his career.

"That has always been our defensive philosophy, to get to the quarterback," said Wistrom, who sacked Miller twice on Saturday. "As long as it is clean, we want to knock him down and make sure he knows every time he steps back in the pocket, there is going to be somebody breathing down his

neck." Wistrom, a sophomore from Webb City, Mo., was one of two freshmen last season not to redshirt — Octavious McFarlin was the other — and was named Big Eight defensive newcomer of the year.

Tomich has taken a different path to the top of the Nebraska depth chart. The junior walk-on from St. John, Ind., sat out his first season and redshirted his second year in Lincoln.

As a sophomore last year, he earned a scholarship backing up Harris, and made 23 tackles, including one sack. This season, he leads the team with six sacks.

"I haven't seen very many college rush ends that are better than Jared," Wistrom said.

True freshman Chad Kelsay, Wistrom's backup, said he had learned a lot from watching Tomich, Wistrom and senior Luther Hardin this fall.

"Our two starters are probably the best in the nation," Kelsay said. "Just talking to them, you know if it's a big game, it's time to step it up."

Tomich said he would have his eyes on Hessler while watching film this week, and also during the game at Boulder on Saturday.

"It's probably our most important goal to get in the quarterback's face every time he comes up to the line," Tomich said. "We want him to know where we are, and to worry every time he passes the ball that one of us will be coming up behind him."

## Wrestler dismissed for 'couple of boo-boos'

By Tim Pearson  
Senior Editor

The Nebraska wrestling team will have to do without senior Mike Eierman this season.

Before the start of practice this fall, Eierman, who wrestled at 142 pounds last season, was dismissed from the team for breaking training rules, Cornhusker coach Tim Neumann said.

Neumann wouldn't elaborate on the circumstances surrounding the dismissal of Eierman, who was an All-American as a freshman.

"He made a couple of boo-boos," Neumann said.

Eierman, from Chicago, finished fifth at the NCAA meet in 1993 to gain All-American honors.

But in the past two years, Eierman has not fared as well at the NCAA meet. Two years ago, he did not compete in the meet after Justin Ware beat him out for the starting spot at 142 pounds, and last year he lost in the first round.

"Last year, Michael was not the real Michael," Neumann said.

Even though Eierman is not wrestling, he is still attending classes at the university and is doing well, Neumann said. Neumann said he still talked to Eierman three times a week.

"Michael's been one of my favorite people," he said.

Neumann said Eierman probably wouldn't return any time this season.

"It's not like that if he does A, B, C and D, he'll be back on the team," he said. "The chances are not good, but I'll never say never."

Three redshirt freshmen are battling for Eierman's spot at 142 pounds. Jake Roe, Dusty Morris and Ryan Bauer are dead even right now, Neumann said. All three wrestlers were part of Nebraska's third-ranked recruiting class two years ago.

Roe, from Whitney Point, N.Y., was named a

10th-team high school All-American at 135 pounds by Amateur Wrestling News. Morris, from Cody, Wyo., was an eighth-team All-American at 140 pounds, while Bauer, from Bismarck, N.D., was a ninth-team All-American at the same weight.

"We haven't had any real matches," Neumann said, "but all three of them have improved a ton."

### NOTES:

● Nebraska has four wrestlers rated in the top three at their respective weight classes. Both junior Tolly Thompson at heavyweight and junior Temoer Terry at 150 pounds are ranked No. 1 in the country. Junior Ryan Tobin at 190 pounds and sophomore Brad Canoyer at 126 pounds are ranked No. 3.

● Neumann said Terry spent part of the summer in Atlanta working out with the World Team, and Thompson, the defending national champion at heavyweight, added 25 pounds over the summer.