

# SPORTS

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## SPORTS OPINION



**Trevor Parks**

## Seniors should end year with Final Four win

The pain finally will go away after one hit by Lisa Reitsma or Allison Weston off a set by Christy Johnson.

The pain that has existed since a little after 9 p.m. on Dec. 10. That is the pain of the Nebraska volleyball team as it plays host to the Central Regional this weekend.

And guess what, in the regional semifinal the Cornhuskers play host to Penn State — the team that caused that pain last season.

The Nittany Lions are the team that took a free trip to Austin, Texas, and the Final Four and left the Cornhuskers at home wondering, "Why not us?" If Nebraska can avenge last year's Penn State loss this time around, some pain can go away.

The road won't be easy because of the other semifinal matches, Ohio State and UCLA. These two teams were in Austin for the Final Four last season, while Nebraska sat at home and pondered next year.

But let's face it. Nebraska should beat those teams and march to Amherst, Mass., and be in this year's Final Four. No falling short and waiting at home for next year.

For the three seniors — Weston, Johnson and Billie Winsett — this is their last shot. All season long, the seniors have been the driving force in Nebraska's quest to reach the Final Four for the first time since 1990.

They don't want to end up with tears in their eyes in the pressroom after any match in Lincoln. They don't want to be forced to sit there and remember another great season that ended in defeat, short of the Final Four.

Last year, Kelly Aspegren and Peggy Meyer found out that feeling all too well, as that is how their Nebraska volleyball career ended.

Coach Terry Pettit knows how important this weekend is. In practice he stressed how the match of the year would be Friday against Penn State. Get by the Nittany Lions and move on to Saturday. Win Saturday and move on to that Final Four.

The identity of the three seniors is that they are Nebraska volleyball players and not just your normal college student walking around campus. But to become a great volleyball player and be remembered years later, you must make the Final Four.

Success defines all athletic careers, and without making the Final Four, these seniors would consider their careers a big disappointment.

For right now, though, Nebraska fans should count on seeing Johnson, Winsett and Weston ending their careers on the court of the Mullins Center in Amherst.

And not in the NU Coliseum pressroom.

Parks is a senior news-editorial major, a Daily Nebraskan senior reporter and columnist.

## Alford wants his shot at hoops

By Derek Samson  
Senior Reporter

As the Fiesta Bowl nears, former Nebraska tight end Eric Alford doesn't want to be out on the field helping the Cornhuskers capture their second consecutive national championship.



**Alford**

Orange Bowl, said he would attempt to walk on Coach Danny Nee's team for the second semester.

"Right now, I'm planning on go-

ing out for basketball," Alford said. "If this semester finishes up all right, I plan to be out on the court. I think I should have stuck with basketball and not football from the start."

But assistant basketball coach Jimmy Williams, who said the Daily Nebraskan report was the first he had heard about Alford's interest, said his chances were slim.

"I know right now it would be very difficult for someone to come out in the middle of the year — having missed most of the year," Williams said. "He would have to play catch-up. I've known guys to come in and be a part of the scout team, but to come in and play would be, not impossible, but improbable."

"Right now, we're having enough trouble getting players with scholarships on the floor."

The 6-foot-2, 225-pounder averaged 30 points and 10 rebounds a

*"I'll talk to Danny Nee about it. Hopefully, if I can play second semester, I could be back to old form by the time the Big Eight season came around."*

**ERIC ALFORD**

Former Nebraska tight end

game as a senior at High Point Central High School in Highpoint, N.C.

He went to Garden City (Kan.) Junior College and played only football his first year. But he returned to his favorite sport as a sophomore, averaging 12 points a game as a full-time starter.

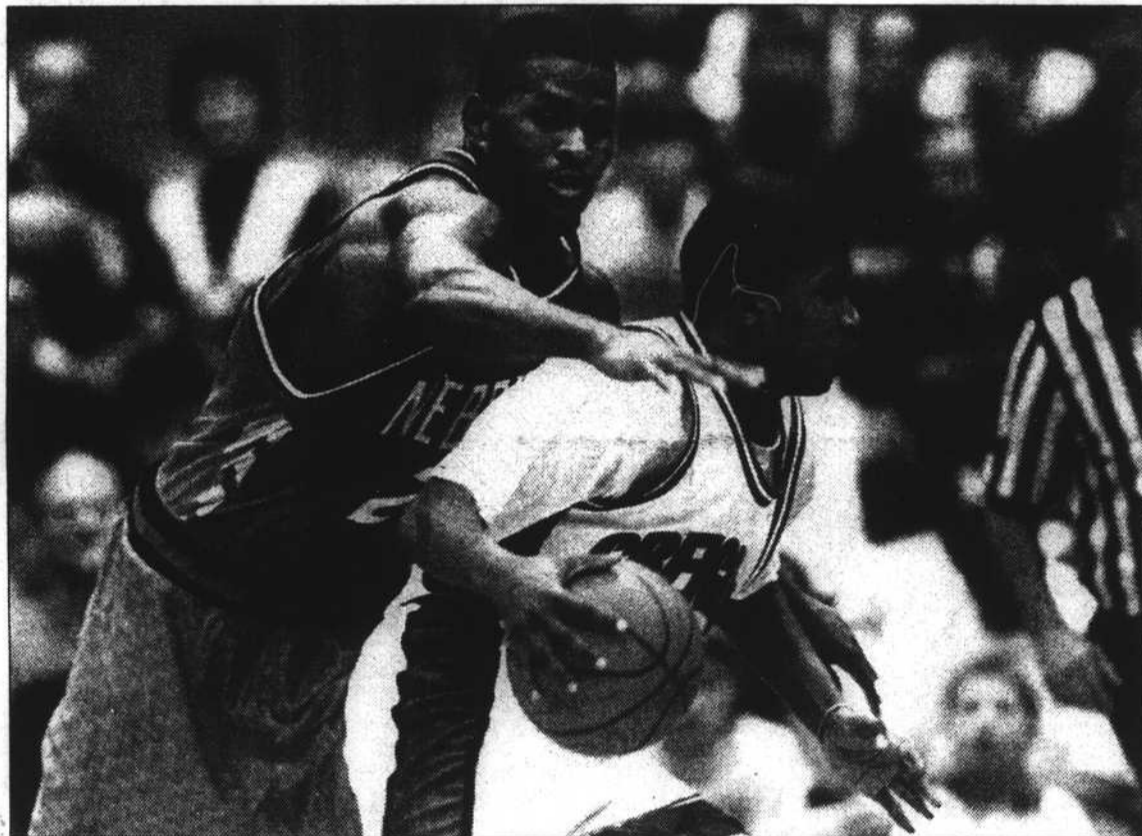
"Football has always just been there," Alford said. "I don't miss it very much. Basketball has always been my love. It doesn't bother me to watch football, but it does basketball."

I don't go to any (Nebraska) basketball games because I would want to be out there too much. I miss basketball a lot more than football."

Alford said it could help his chances that center Chris Sallee's eligibility will expire after the first semester.

"The reason I want to do it isn't because Sallee isn't going to be there," Alford said. "But I think that

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Jay Calderon/DN

Nebraska's Erick Strickland applies defensive pressure during Nebraska's 88-67 win over Creighton Wednesday night.

## NU overcomes another slow start

By Mitch Sherman  
Senior Editor

OMAHA — An early scare from the Creighton basketball team Wednesday night turned out to be nothing more than a short-lived gut check for Nebraska.

Playing before the 14th largest crowd ever to watch a Creighton home game, the Bluejays gave the 9,060 fans in attendance at the Civic Auditorium a surprising treat for about four minutes.

But down 10-0, Nebraska regrouped quickly and blindsided the Bluejays, scoring 44 of the first half's final 57 points en route to an 88-67 victory.

With its sixth straight win over Nebraska's only other Division I school, the Huskers improved to 6-0, their second best start ever in Coach Danny Nee's 10-year career. The Huskers began 7-0 in 1992.

"I was pleased with our ability to get down like we did and come back," Nee said. "It was just a hard-fought game, and winning on the road is very difficult."

After misfiring on its first five attempts, Nebraska hit 17 of its final 26 shots from the field in the first half. The Huskers outrebounded Creighton 51-33 for the game and shot 47.8 percent to Creighton's 37.9 percent.

*"I was pleased with our ability to get down like we did and come back."*

**DANNY NEE**

NU basketball coach

Nebraska was led by its three most experienced seniors, Jaron Boone, Erick Strickland and Terrance Badgett, each of whom grew up in Omaha.

Boone led all scorers with 20 points and dished out seven assists. Strickland added 19 points, four assists and grabbed nine rebounds. Badgett, who has come off the bench in each of Nebraska's six wins, scored 10 consecutive second-half points and finished with a season-high 17 points in 15 minutes.

"We have a silent confidence," Strickland said. "We have started slow all season. I don't know what it is, but we know we will find the groove sometime. We have got to find a way to start off faster."

A media timeout with 15:51 to play in the first half interrupted the beginning of Nebraska's explosion, which was ignited by a Bernard Garner layup 3:59 into the game. After the timeout, Nebraska struck quickly, tying the game at 13 on a

Boone 3-pointer with 13:30 remaining in the half.

From the 14:05 mark to the 2:06 point in the opening half, Nebraska outscored the 2-1 Bluejays 31-3 and led 44-23 at halftime.

"Nebraska is a team that needs a lot of improvement," Nee said. "We have a lot of potential. We have to get that chemistry and work it all together and get going."

Nebraska extended its lead to 28 points at 60-32 after a Strickland 3-pointer with 12:50 left in the game. But behind the play of freshman Rodney Buford, who led the Bluejays with 19 points and Kevin Mungin, a freshman from Papillion, Creighton scored 10 straight points to pull to within 60-42.

But Badgett buried the Bluejays, hitting three jumpers, a tip-in and a layup to put Nebraska up 70-47 with 8:33 to play.

"I had to be able to be a senior and step up," Badgett said. "It was a great feeling."

## Huskers get additional commitment

By Trevor Parks  
Senior Reporter

The Nebraska football team has picked up its fourth oral commitment of the fall season.

David Webber, a 6-foot-2, 275-pound offensive guard from Hazelwood East High School in St. Louis gave an oral commitment Tuesday to play football for the Cornhuskers, his coach said Wednesday.

Nebraska's other three commitments came from Willie Miller, a full-back from Bellevue West, Russ Hochstein, a guard from Hartington Cedar Catholic, and DeAngelo Evans, a running back at Wichita Collegiate (Kan.).

Rich Gorzynski, Webber's coach, said the recent success of the Cornhuskers had a big impact on Webber's decision to play football at Nebraska.

Webber played both offensive

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## NU overcomes Kent St. with tough team play

By Mike Kluck  
Staff Reporter

Before Wednesday night's women's basketball game against Nebraska, Kent State coach Bob Lindsay said he wanted to have Cornhusker junior Tina McClain on his team.

But after 5-1 Nebraska's 80-71 win, Lindsay probably had seen enough of McClain's performance.

McClain scored 16 points against the 2-2 Golden Flashes, while grabbing seven rebounds and dishing out five assists.

But Nebraska coach Angela Beck said McClain's success was not on the offensive end of the court, but the defensive. McClain limited Amy Sherry, Kent State's leading scorer, to 14 points and eight rebounds. Sherry had been averaging 20.7 points and 10.3 rebounds.

"Tina had a great game," Beck said. "This was probably one of her better games ever. We felt we had to keep Amy Sherry down to around 14 points, and Tina limited her to 6-of-17 shooting."

Beck said Nebraska's win, how-

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