

SPORTS

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SPORTS OPINION



Derek Samson

Super Bowl a super bore with Cowboys

They're back. Hop back on that bandwagon.

After a one-year absence from the annual Super Bowl Blowout, the Dallas Cowboys have returned to demolish another inferior AFC team on Jan. 28.

And I couldn't feel any sicker. After watching the Cowboys taunt their way past Green Bay 38-27 on Sunday, I noticed plenty of Dallas jackets back on campus Monday.

I'm sure all those same fans had Packers shirts (bought during Christmas break) waiting in the closet — just in case.

But I can't blame anyone for jumping all over the Cowboys; after all, aren't they "America's team?"

Shouldn't America adopt a team that does more dancing during one game than the entire cast of *Solid Gold* did in a decade?

And isn't it the American way that anytime a co-worker (in this case, a teammate) gets a raise, you must go in and demand more money? If you don't get it, you don't go back to work.

Even if I'm 80 years old, I hope to see the day when a true "team" like Green Bay (they actually jump into the crowd on touchdowns) wins the big one against America's favorite bandwagon team.

But I must face the fact that the 'Boys are back,' and will win their third Super Bowl in four years — even if Emmitt Smith does yell at Barry Switzer on the sidelines.

Unfortunately, no *Knight Rider* reruns are scheduled for Sunday. So I'll either have to watch Dallas moonwalk all over Sun Devil Stadium or tune in to some bowling.

I already know what I'll see in the game.

There will be Michael Irvin pushing off the cornerback, dropping the pass, then complaining to the officials, coaching staffs, teammates and angels from above that there should be a flag on the opponent.

Then there will be Smith getting hurt on his first run, only to come back and rush for five touchdowns and have Fox commentator John "I-love-Dallas" Madden proclaim him the toughest man alive.

There will be Deion Sanders, who will have yet to make a tackle, high-stepping out of the huddle up to the line of scrimmage and all of the way for eight yards on a reverse.

And there will be Troy Aikman finally connecting with Irvin, who will again push off, for a 40-yard touchdown. Aikman will raise his arms in the air, thinking, "I hope I look pretty," while Irvin will dance in the end zone for 16 days.

And all the fans of America's Team will celebrate.

Meanwhile, I will be wondering why professional bowlers can't get a strike on every throw.

Samson is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan sports columnist.

Huskers' inside game comes to life

By Trevor Parks

Senior Reporter

The Nebraska basketball team might not be too kind in welcoming Missouri-Kansas City to Lincoln tonight after a tough loss to Oklahoma in three overtimes on Saturday.

The Cornhuskers, 12-4 and 1-1 in the Big Eight, play host to the 4-6 Kangaroos at 7 p.m. at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

After the 117-100 triple-overtime loss to the Sooners, Cornhusker coach Danny Nee said his team should be focused for UMKC, a team to which the Huskers have never lost. But Nebraska has beaten the Kangaroos by three points or fewer in three of the past four seasons.

"We're in a rugged part of the season where you will be playing on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and if you

win one or lose one, you have to leave it behind you and take care of the next one," Nee said.

The Huskers' inside game, dormant for much of the past two years, has been showing signs of coming to life recently. In the past two games, forward Bernard Garner, center Mikki Moore and center Venson Hamilton have had increased success.

Garner, a transfer from Western Nebraska Community College, showed signs of why he was chosen as the National Junior College player of the year last season with 21 points and 12 rebounds against the Sooners. That marked Nebraska's first double-double of the year.

"It was a breakthrough game for him," Nee said. "He played to his

See UMKC on 8

Stai aims for second straight title

By Mike Kluck

Senior Reporter

All of his life Brenden Stai has dreamed about playing in a Super Bowl.



Stai

But the 6-foot-4, 305-pound Pittsburgh rookie from Nebraska never expected his chance to come this early in his professional career.

In a 13-month period, Stai has won a national championship, been a third-round NFL draft choice and earned the opportunity to play in Super Bowl XXX on Jan. 28.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," Stai said Tuesday from his home in Pittsburgh. "There are guys in this league who have never played in a Super Bowl or a national championship, and here I am having done them both in just over a year. I'm pretty lucky."

But luck alone isn't the reason Stai said he had earned the start in Pittsburgh's first Super Bowl appearance in 16 years. Stai said some of his success this season had been a result of his work ethic and dedication, both at Nebraska and in the pros.

But it was a combination of luck and hard work that earned Stai a starting position just seven weeks into the season. After Steeler left tackle John Jackson injured his knee in the seventh game, right guard Justin Strzelczyk moved to Jackson's position, which opened a spot for Stai.

After Jackson returned, Stai, who made the AFC all-rookie team this season, had made a good enough impression on the Pittsburgh coaches to keep his starting position.

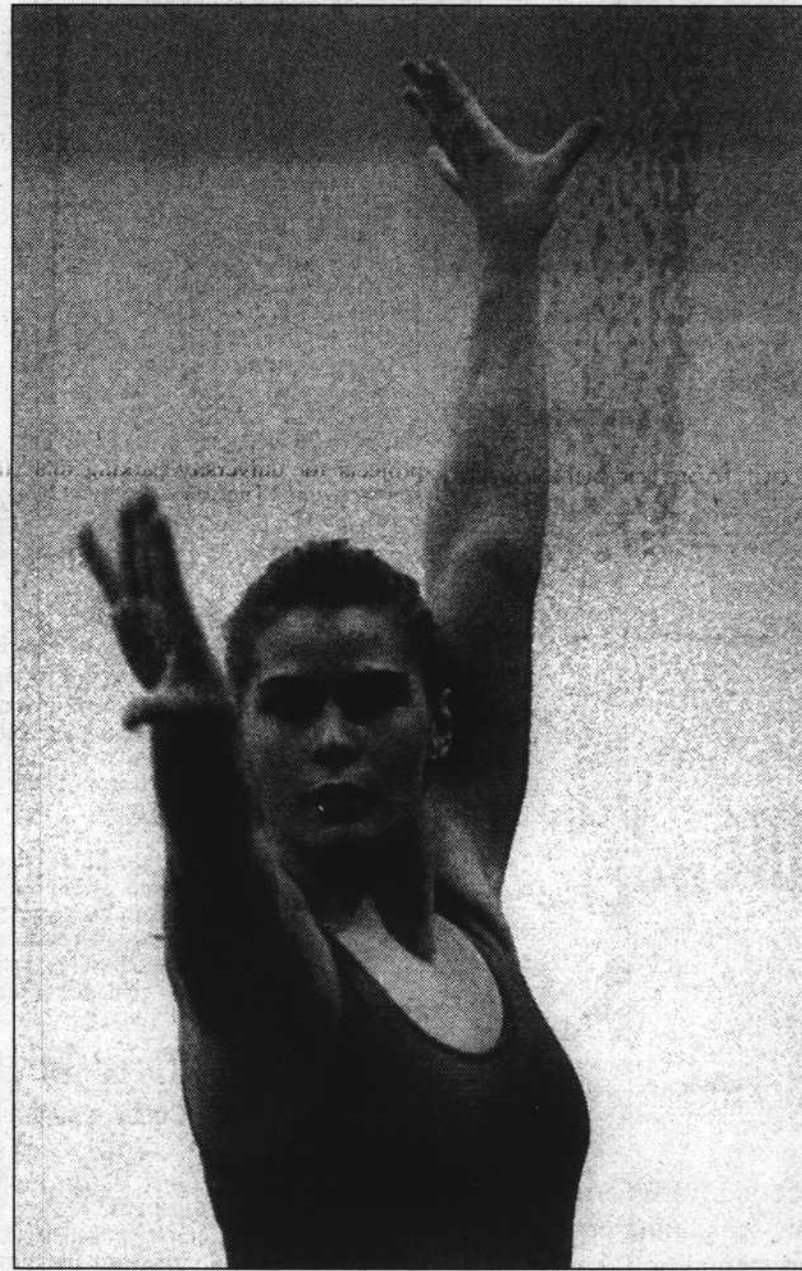
"Obviously they were very pleased with what I was doing," Stai said. "I've put a lot of hard work into what I have done this year."

After Stai earned a starting spot, the Steelers, who started the season 3-4, won eight of their next nine games to finish 11-5 and qualify for the AFC playoffs.

Pittsburgh received a first-round bye and defeated Buffalo in a divisional playoff game. The Steelers then faced Indianapolis for the AFC Championship.

Even though Pittsburgh led 20-16 with 97 seconds remaining in the con-

See STAI on 8



Scott Bruhn/DN

Nebraska gymnast Shelly Bartlett practices her balance beam routine. The junior is Nebraska's top all-rounder.

Gymnast scores high in class, competition

By Gregg Madsen

Staff Reporter

Shelly Bartlett's love of gymnastics can be traced back to her older sister's dance classes.

"We used to go pick them up at their dance studio," said Bartlett, a 5-foot-4 junior from Spokane, Wash. "They had gymnastics on the side, and I used to kind of run around and be wild."

When her family moved to Idaho, she joined a gymnastics program and began competition. She was 6 1/2 years old.

Fourteen years later, gymnastics is

Basketball Starters



Devaney Center
7:05 P.M.

Nebraska	Ht.	Wt.	Class	PPG	RPG
G Tyronn Lue	6-0	165	Fr.	9.1	2.8
G Jaron Boone	6-6	195	Sr.	17.6	2.8
F Erick Strickland	6-3	210	Sr.	15.4	4.9
F Bernard Garner	6-7	225	Jr.	10.4	6.4
C Mikki Moore	6-11	205	Jr.	9.5	5.3

Missouri-Kansas City	Ht.	Wt.	Class	PPG	RPG
G Travis Salmon	6-5	200	Sr.	11.0	4.9
G Erin Washington	5-10	160	Sr.	10.0	3.4
F Darecko Rawlins	6-5	185	Sr.	16.4	9.5
F Chris Johnson	6-6	230	Sr.	11.0	7.6
C Rick Muller	6-10	225	Sr.	6.8	3.4

Nee delays his decision about Surles

By Todd Walkenhorst

Staff Reporter

Despite third-degree assault charges being dropped against Chester Surles, Nebraska basketball coach Danny Nee said Tuesday that it would take some time to evaluate the forward's situation.



Surles

Lancaster County Attorney Gary Lacey dropped the charges in exchange for Surles' participation in a pre-trial diversion program. Surles was arrested Jan. 2.

"The charges have been dropped," Nee said. "He's filed for pre-trial diversion, and he has to go through that process. His status will not change until after that process and evaluation."

Surles, the sophomore forward from Saginaw, Mich., attended his first pre-trial diversion meeting on Monday. Nee said he was not sure of the exact process that Surles would have to go through.

"We're still in the evaluation stage," Nee said. "He's going through the process of pre-trial diversion. My understanding is the next (meeting) is the 29th."

Despite not playing since Dec. 30 against Mississippi State, Nee said Surles was handling the situation well.

"I think he's handling it good under the circumstances, or as well as you can expect under the circumstances," Nee said. "He regrets what happened, but he has a real positive attitude."

Nee said he had allowed Surles to participate in most aspects of the team's practices.

"He practices every day," he said. "We don't keep him in the parts that have to do with the preparation for the team, but all of the other parts of the practice he's in."

Until the pre-trial diversion program is completed, and more facts are compiled, Nee said he would not make any final decisions on the status of Surles.

This season, Surles averaged 12.2 minutes in six games and scored 6.5 points per game.

"I don't have enough information to make a decision today," Nee said. "When I get all of the facts, he's either going to be in with us and back on the team, or he's not going to be back on the team. I don't know."

See BARTLETT on 8