

SPORTS WEEKEND

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SPORTS OPINION



Beau Finley

Athlete's life shines—even in tragic death

I saw Jimmy Davis kick a few months ago.

It was an awful night to play football, not to mention watch it.

The temperature hovered near freezing, and the wind was absolutely howling through the bleachers, making it seem much colder. Yet here was this 16-year-old junior from Roncalli High School in Omaha banging extra points so far that the balls sailed into the shrubbery outlining the field some 40 yards beyond the end zone.

I always remember the unlucky ball boys who were assigned to retrieve the kicks, looking contemptuously back at Jimmy before they waded into the bushes.

Jimmy was having an excellent year.

He was among the top three or four scorers in the conference and had booted a field goal of 46 yards earlier in the season. To get an idea of the strength of that kick, the longest field goal in the history of Nebraska football is only 9 yards longer.

After watching him that night, I would occasionally step into my sports writer role and pronounce that this kid had some big-time talent. The only problem was that everyone already knew it. The truth was that the talent of Jimmy Davis, as a player and as a person, was no secret to anyone.

Perhaps that is what hurts the most.

On Jan. 12 of this year, Jimmy died in an automobile accident as he drove to school.

The days that followed saw a massive collection of people gathered to remember Jimmy for who he was, a passionate young man; one who knew only one way to do the things that truly mattered to him—with diligence, sensitivity and the utmost caring.

Whether it be loving his family and friends or playing sports, Jimmy did it with a passion.

At Jimmy's funeral, I walked through a display of his awards, jerseys and memorabilia. I saw pictures of him in full pads, grinning the grin that only he had. It formed a mosaic of the honor and love that permeated his life, as well as the loss that now plagues ours.

But as I looked at this display, I realized that football was one truly accessible way to witness firsthand the talent, both athletic and spiritual, possessed by Jimmy Davis.

Football was a sort of canvas for Jimmy. The sport was an expression. Success was not simply an accolade. It was a genuine display of self.

When an excellent player plays the game with passion and love, there comes a sense of artistry in his performance. It is a gift that all who watch share.

Jimmy gave many people that gift. It was a gift that was truly from the bottom of his heart, and one uniquely his own.

Finley is a third-year law student and Daily Nebraskan sports columnist.

Boone's status unknown for Saturday

By Trevor Parks
Senior Reporter

The Nebraska basketball team is spiraling downward as it plays host to the Big Eight's second-place team this Saturday.

Iowa State is off to a torrid start in the Big Eight, winning four of its first five games.

Meanwhile Nebraska, 15-6 overall and 3-3 in the Big Eight, enters Saturday's 12:45 p.m. game at the Bob Devaney Sports Center having lost two straight games after a three-game winning streak.

The Cyclones (15-4 and 4-1) come in having won four Big Eight games in a row, something they haven't done since 1979. Nebraska coach Danny Nee said Iowa State coach Tim Floyd had done a great job in his second season. Iowa State beat Nebraska 79-77 in Lincoln last season, the Cyclones' first win at Nebraska since 1990.

"I really feel that Iowa State has come together," Nee said. "They've been playing very solid, very effective

basketball."

The Cornhuskers, on the other hand, might be falling apart.

In Wednesday night's 77-68 loss at Kansas State, Nee made the decision at halftime to bench senior guard Jaron Boone for disciplinary reasons.

Boone, a preseason All-Big Eight pick, has been struggling throughout the conference season, averaging only 11.7 points per game and shooting 38.8 percent from the field.

In 10 games this season, Boone was the Huskers' leading scorer, but in the past three games, he failed to score in double figures. A year ago, Boone scored in double figures in all but one game.

Nee said Thursday in a statement that Boone was indefinitely suspended from the team, but his status for Saturday's game would be determined just prior to tipoff.

"I will continue to evaluate his status on a day-to-day basis," Nee said.

Boone has started 78 consecutive games. If Boone does not start, he likely will be replaced by senior Terrance Badgett, a starter for most of

Basketball Starters

Devaney Center
Saturday, 12:45 p.m.

Nebraska 15-6, 3-3	Ht.	Wt.	Class	PPG	RPG
G Tyronn Lue	6-0	165	Fr.	8.1	3.0
G Erick Strickland	6-3	210	Sr.	15.8	4.6
F Terrance Badgett	6-6	227	Sr.	6.3	2.8
F Bernard Garner	6-7	225	Jr.	10.6	6.2
C Mikki Moore	6-11	205	Jr.	8.7	5.2

Iowa State 15-4, 4-1

G Jacy Holloway	6-0	160	Jr.	4.2	2.2
G Dedric Willoughby	6-3	180	Jr.	20.5	4.1
F Kenny Pratt	6-4	215	Jr.	5.9	13.5
F Shawn Bankhead	6-6	215	Jr.	2.9	7.9
C Kelvin Cato	6-11	245	Jr.	9.8	8.7

last season. Badgett would play small forward, and Erick Strickland would move to shooting guard, Boone's spot.

On Wednesday night, Boone played a little more than 12 minutes in the first half, and after being replaced

with three minutes remaining, he did not return to the court for the remainder of the game.

Following the game, Boone did not

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Tanna Kinnaman/DN

Cornhusker senior triple jumper Nicola Martial will lead Nebraska into battle Saturday at the National Elite Track and Field Invite in Fayetteville, Ark. Martial is a four-time All-American and the 1995 NCAA outdoor champion.

Track star jumps into lead role

By Vince D'Adamo
Staff Reporter

Being an All-American demands a high performance level. Cornhusker long- and triple-jumper Nicola Martial has been there and achieved that four times.

She has rewritten the Nebraska record book in the triple jump, breaking the Husker outdoor record and earning All-American honors.

Martial will lead the Husker women into the National Elite Track and Field Invite on Saturday in Fayetteville, Ark. The women will face Arkansas and North Carolina.

On the men's side, Nebraska will be up against Texas, North Carolina and 12-time defending national champion Arkansas.

"It'll be the biggest meet before nationals," Martial said. "The top three girls in the triple jump will be there."

"You can't ask for much more. I'd like to win the Husker Invite (Feb. 9-10), win the indoor national championship and set the indoor school record."

Martial, who already has accomplished one goal by qualifying for the

See MARTIAL on 8

All-state linebacker to walk on

From Staff Reports

Noland Urban, a 6-foot-2, 225-pound linebacker from Stromsburg, said Thursday that he would walk on at Nebraska next fall.

Urban, a first-team all-state pick, tested second among nearly 500 players in an agility drill last summer at Nebraska's football camp, said Stromsburg coach Dennis Koinzan. Urban led Stromsburg, a class C-2 school, to a 9-2 record last fall.

Much like current Cornhuskers Joel Makovicka, Brendan Holbein and Brian Schuster, Koinzan said Nebraska coach Tom Osborne told Urban he would have an opportunity to earn a scholarship.

NU to open against Aggies

By David Wilson
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska baseball team will open its season today in the 60-degree weather of Presley Askew Field in Las Cruces, N.M.

New Mexico State will play host to the Cornhuskers in a three-game series this weekend, beginning today at 2 p.m.



Sanders said.

Thanks to sub-zero temperatures, the Huskers have practiced outside only once since the beginning of the semester, giving the Aggies an edge, Nebraska coach John Sanders

"They're going to have more of an advantage because they've been practicing outside," Sanders said. "They have a fly ball coming out of the sky. We have it coming out of the ceiling."

Despite losing 17 letterwinners last season, New Mexico State returns six starters to its lineup.

A strong Aggie infield returns three starters, including senior second baseman Carlos Licon, a 1995 second-team All-Big West selection.

In the first-ever meeting between the two teams last season at the Hampton Inn/Sahara Desert Classic, Licon helped the Aggies defeat the Huskers 15-7, going 4-for-6 with a home run. Nebraska came back two days later to even the series with a 14-4 win.

New Mexico State coach Elliott Avent notched his 200th career vic-

tory on April 30 last season. Avent, who begins his eighth season with the Aggies, will be opening the season with one of the nation's top recruiting classes this season, according to Collegiate Baseball.

After losing nearly all of last season's starting rotation, the Aggies are expected to start three pitchers with no Division-I experience.

Sanders also will start three pitchers with very little experience.

Steve Fish, a right-handed junior transfer from the College of the Redwoods, will start for Nebraska. Freshman Jay Sirianni, who redshirted with Texas A&M last season, and senior Jason Allen are expected to throw for the Huskers in Saturday's doubleheader.

Allen, who appeared in six games

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