

SPORTS

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SPORTS OPINION



Trevor Parks

Huskers' Lue earns respect, redeems NU

LAWRENCE, Kan. — In a season full of dark moments for the Nebraska basketball team, one small point guard shined brightly Monday night.

Freshman Tyronn Lue stepped up big and made a name for himself in one of the most difficult places to play in the country during the Cornhuskers' 81-71 loss to Kansas.

Lue dazzled the crowd at Allen Fieldhouse, making one of the best point guards in the country, Jacque Vaughn, look as if he were the second-best point guard on the court.

Lue scored a game-high 21 points and made a career-high five 3-pointers in six tries to gain everyone's attention.

In the first half, he gained notice by pushing the ball up the court so fast that he had to wait for his Cornhusker teammates to catch up. When they didn't, Lue's lightning quick first step helped him around Vaughn for an easy layup.

"I played pretty good against him," Lue said. "The fact that he might be an All-American makes it more special."

And Lue was playing with a heavily-taped left ankle after he suffered a high sprain that caused him to miss the second half of Saturday night's 72-57 loss to Oklahoma State.

But at a crucial point Monday, Lue sat on the bench holding a cup of water instead of trying to help his team rally.

With 8:16 left and Nebraska trailing by one point, Coach Danny Nee substituted senior Tom Wald for Lue. Lue returned a little more than two minutes later, but the Huskers were trailing by four and they had just turned the ball over.

By the time Lue got the opportunity to take another shot, Nebraska was behind by 11 points, but that didn't stop him from making a 24-foot 3-pointer.

With his performance Monday, he should earn a spot on the Big Eight's all-freshman team even though he has been inconsistent at times, turning the ball over 71 times.

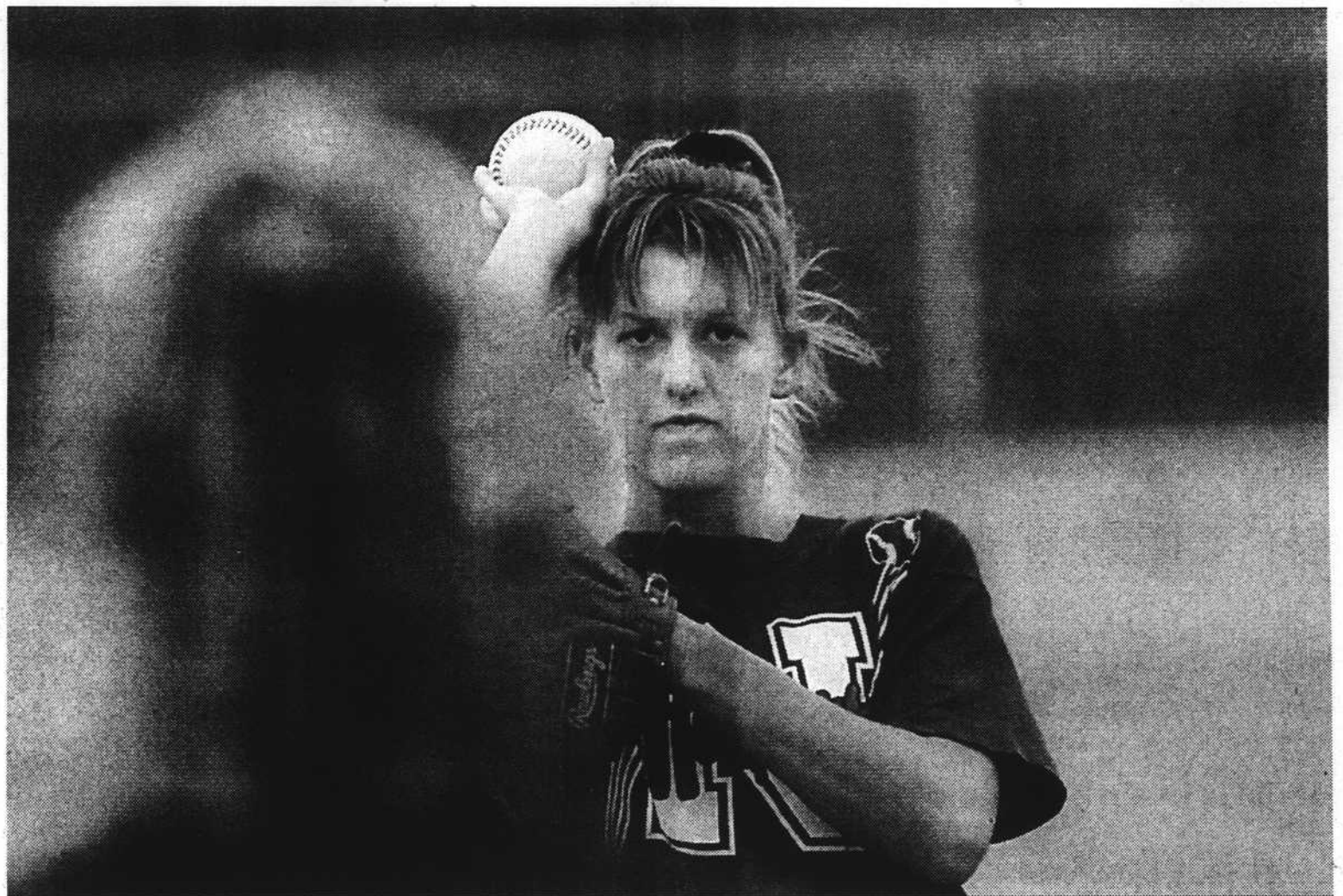
Lue also earned the respect of the No. 5 team in the nation and made a name for himself in front of a national television audience.

With 1:16 left, Vaughn was knocked to the floor along the baseline. As Erick Strickland sank a 3-pointer, Vaughn lay in front of the Nebraska bench grabbing his ribs. After being treated by the Kansas trainers, he walked slowly to the Kansas bench, but not before shaking hands with Lue.

At least Lue — who will be Nebraska's true court leader next season — has been gaining some respect. And when it comes to crunch time this season, maybe he should be the one his teammates turn to.

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

Aiming to win



Matt Miller/DN

Nebraska junior outfielder Sarah Sinclair practices Tuesday at the NU Softball Complex. The 5-1 Huskers will play a doubleheader this weekend in Omaha against Creighton.

Huskers hope to remain on track

By Mike Kluck
Senior Reporter

The philosophy behind the Nebraska softball team has not changed, but this season, there is a new emphasis on success in the Cornhusker program.

Third-year coach Rhonda Revelle said the team's immediate goal of consistent hard work and improvement had taken on an added significance this year.

"The emphasis of improving from game to game has always been there," Revelle said. "It has just jumped up on the ladder. It has surfaced as the team has come to surface."

Maintaining the team's focus is important if the Huskers want to contend for the first Big 12 Championship, Revelle said. Nebraska finished last season ranked No. 15 in the nation, its highest ranking ever.

Because of the team's talent and experience, Revelle said, Nebraska will not have a problem staying on

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RHONDA REVELLE

Nebraska softball coach

track.

"This would be an empty goal if we had no talent," Revelle said. "If we do what we need to do consistently and do it consistently, then we'll have success. We have the talent to back up what we talk about. We have to work on being fundamentally sound in our heads."

The Huskers have 14 players returning this season with playing experience, including standout pitcher Angela Blackwood, All-American shortstop Ali Viola and All-American third baseman Tobin Echo-Hawk, who is also the team captain.

Viola, who hit .437 with 13 home runs and 72 runs batted in last year, was named the Big Eight player of

the year as a freshman.

Last weekend in Arlington, Texas, the Huskers compiled a 5-1 record in their season-opening tournament, the Pepsi InterCollegiate Classic.

In the tournament, Blackwood, a sophomore, won three games, including a four-hit shutout in the quarterfinal game against Texas-Arlington. The Huskers won the game 1-0.

Junior pitcher Melanie Raimondi recorded a win against New Mexico, and senior Stacie Stafford went 1-1 with a 7-2 win over Oregon State and a 2-1 loss to Oklahoma.

"Our pitchers had a great weekend," Revelle said. "This needs to be a standard weekend for them.

We don't expect them to do a whole lot more and not a whole lot less. But there is no reason they can't perform consistently."

In the victory over Oregon State, Echo-Hawk went 4-for-4 with two doubles and drove in two runs. But the Huskers suffered a setback to another infielder during the tournament.

Second baseman Heather Hanselmann broke the middle finger on her right hand and severed a tendon against Oregon State. Revelle said the injury would require surgery.

The injury to Hanselmann will require Nebraska to shift its lineup. Gloria Von Rentzell will move from first base to second base, and Blackwood and Rachel Dunham will split time at first base.

"All of the players we moved have experience at their new position," Revelle said. "But it's still going to be a challenge to us right away."

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Pitchers need to improve, Sanders says

By David Wilson
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska baseball team returned home Monday after a last-place finish in the Fiesta Bowl Diamond Classic in Tempe, Ariz.

The Cornhuskers, who were outscored 47-24 in the tournament, dropped all four games, one to Texas Tech, one to Arizona State and two to Northwestern.

Sanders

"In the Texas Tech game, we played competitively," Nebraska coach John Sanders said. "In the Arizona State game, their pitcher dominated us."

But Sanders said he felt that the Huskers' offense had been the team's strength so far this season. Nebraska, 2-5, scored enough runs to beat Northwestern, Sanders said, but the Husker pitchers did not throw well.

"We have a lot of work to do. At this point, after seven games, we're averaging 10 runs per game," Sanders said. "Our defense is acceptable, but our pitching is just not good."

The Husker pitching staff has allowed almost 11 runs per game. The

starting pitchers have maintained a 7.07 earned-run average, while the rest of the staff has combined for a 11.10 ERA. "We're playing hard and we're trying hard, but our pitchers just aren't executing. We're not getting it done."

Junior pitcher Melvin Fish opened the tournament on Thursday starting against sixth-ranked Texas Tech. Fish was pulled after allowing six earned runs in five innings, raising his ERA to 9.31. Fish held the Red Raiders to six hits and walked five in the Huskers' 7-3 loss.

Junior Jonas Armenta made his first start of the season against No. 5 Arizona State on Friday and allowed the

Sun Devils to score seven runs in six innings, raising his ERA to 11.05. Backed by only 11 hits, the Sun Devils defeated Nebraska 14-2. Although Armenta has struck out eight hitters in 7 1/3 innings pitched this season, he has allowed opposing teams to bat .345 against him.

In the Huskers' first meeting with Northwestern on Saturday, freshman Jay Siriani made his second start of the year. He allowed seven runs in six innings, raising his ERA to 8.10. Despite giving up 11 hits to Husker hit-

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