

## Tobin

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He finished eighth at the NCAA Championships and claimed All-American honors last year. He said he was a little disappointed that he was a second-team academic All-American instead of a first-team pick. Tobin would have been on the first team if he had finished seventh at the NCAA Championships. He said that was one of his goals for this year.

Right now, Tobin has his sights set on finishing the season. He said he

planned to redshirt next year to improve before his senior season.

"I wouldn't consider myself a technical wrestler in any aspect compared to some of the athletes out there," he said. "If I could improve in technique, then I think that my fifth year when I come back, I definitely have a shot at the title."

Tobin, who will wrestle at heavy-weight when Nebraska wrestles at Wyoming on Saturday night, said he liked the switch. Thompson, the second-ranked heavyweight in the nation, will sit out the dual.

"I don't have to make weight,"

Tobin said. "I just don't want to get hurt for later on in the season. That's my main concern."

Tobin doesn't have much wrestling time left this season. Nebraska has only two meets left after Saturday's Wyoming dual.

The Big Eight Championships in Stillwater, Okla., will be held March 9, and the NCAA Championships in Minneapolis are March 21-23.

That's where Tobin expects to stand on top of the pedestal.

"I just want wrestling to be fun," he said. "As long as it's fun every day for you, you keep coming back."

## Pearson

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State, Creighton won the first game before dropping the last three.

With four starters returning from last year's team, Creighton now has a chance to be a force in the Missouri Valley, and maybe someday, in the Top 25. As far as challenging Terry Pettit and Nebraska for bragging rights, Creighton will have to wait — for a long time.

"Everybody uses Nebraska volleyball as a model. Certainly, they are the standard," Rasmussen said. "They have increased the awareness of college volleyball, and the caliber of play has risen dramatically. The primary reason for that is Coach Pettit."

But Creighton is not in the same league as Nebraska — not even close. Ben Guiliano is not Terry Pettit. The Missouri Valley Conference is not the Big Eight Conference. The country's

top recruits aren't knocking on Creighton's door.

"After you restart a program, it takes at least four or five years," Noth said. "We're recruiting different levels of players than they are."

If Creighton wants to move up a level by modeling itself after Nebraska, the university should start by looking for a better place to play its home matches. For the past two seasons, Creighton has used the Kiewit Fitness Center on campus, which seats 1,000 fans and has virtually no parking nearby.

Nebraska has developed a huge homecourt advantage at the NU Coliseum, while Creighton is attracting 300 to 400 fans a match.

"We have a facility that is not user-friendly," Rasmussen said.

One option is the Civic Auditorium, which attracts about 3,000 fans to the Big Eight volleyball tournament each year. Creighton also is looking at

AKsarben and Boys Town.

For now, Creighton uses Nebraska as a model. Maybe sometime, The Lady Jays will use Nebraska as a springboard into major college volleyball. Wouldn't it be nice if Nebraska and Creighton developed a healthy in-state rivalry?

"I'm sure down the line we'll see a Creighton-Nebraska match," Rasmussen said. "Right now, I'm not sure we can offer the competitive match that Nebraska looks for in its nonconference schedule."

Nebraska should give Creighton a chance. Let the Lady Jays into the First Tier Invite or Arby's Classic. Or even spring ball.

Sure Creighton would endure more bumps and bruises, but why not give it a try?

It couldn't hurt Nebraska.

**Pearson is a senior news-editorial major and the Daily Nebraskan copy desk chief.**

## Erstad

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ond largest bonus in baseball history behind only the \$1.6 million received by Josh Booty, the fifth overall pick of the Florida Marlins in 1994.

"It was tough to turn down," Erstad said. "My goal was to be a pro baseball player, and I wanted to sign after my junior year. It worked out pretty well."

Erstad eliminated football from his future plans after signing with the Angels. It was a difficult decision, he said.

"Sometimes you just can't have the best of both worlds," Erstad said. "It would have been great to play football, but I made my decision, and I am very happy with the decision I made."

Erstad worked out with the Nebraska baseball team for two days earlier this month before heading to Arizona for spring training in Mesa, Ariz.

Although he said his newfound fortune didn't change him as a person, his on-field performance had exceeded the expectations set by the Angels.

After signing on July 26, Erstad reported to Mesa to play rookie ball in the Arizona League.

The transition from college to professional baseball came easy for Erstad, who was the most valuable player of a prestigious wooden bat league the summer of 1994. He made the adjustment quickly, recording 10 hits in his first 18 at-bats and earning himself a promotion to Class A Lake

Elsinore of the California League.

"He's made a lot of adjustments," Lachemann said. "He's somebody that we think is going to be a very good player. It's a tribute to the job that Coach Sanders did at the university to get him ready to play."

At Lake Elsinore, Erstad posted a .363 average with five home runs in just 113 at-bats. He was voted the top prospect in the league by its 10 managers.

"He just dominated down there," said Matt Santos, who coached the Modesto Athletics of the California League last summer. "It wasn't even funny. He was like a man among boys."

Modesto played Lake Elsinore just two weeks after Erstad signed, Santos said. Erstad, who typically batted third in the order, ripped three home runs in the three-game series.

"He smoked the ball, and he didn't take any bad swings," Santos said. "The ball just carries off his bat."

Santos said he was told by Doug Davis, Lake Elsinore's first-base coach, that Erstad already had the talent to play in the big leagues without embarrassing himself.

After helping Lake Elsinore to a 44-25 first-place finish in the second half of the season, Erstad was selected to play in the Arizona Fall League. His .344 average ranked second in the highly competitive league of top prospects and a handful of young major-leaguers.

"Normally, the next progression step from where he was in Lake Elsinore would be Double-A," Lachemann said. "But what he did

during the winter enabled him to jump that step."

Erstad was one of 21 non-roster invitees who reported to the Angels' major league spring training camp in Mesa, Ariz., last week. Of the 10 outfielders in camp, Lachemann said, only four or five would begin the season in Anaheim.

Tim Salmon and Jim Edmonds have secured spots in the Angel outfield and Garret Anderson's .321 average last season should enable him to keep the starting job in left field this year. Utility player Rex Hudler should start the season as the Angels' fourth outfielder, Lachemann said.

The Angels begin their spring schedule March 1 against Oakland.

"I'm sure I'll be put in my place a few times, but it will be a great learning experience for me," Erstad said. "I'll see what I need to work on because I'm sure they will exploit my weaknesses."

Erstad said although he didn't feel he would have an opportunity to begin the season with the major-league club, a September promotion to California would be a realistic goal.

Lachemann said that was a possibility.

"We've got a very good outfield and a relatively young outfield," he said. "Obviously we're going to have to make some room pretty soon."

"Right now, we don't have to rush him. We have the opportunity to give him a chance to get his feet on the ground at a higher level, but it's not going to be long and he's going to be a big-league player."

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