

# SPORTS

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## SPORTS OPINION



Beau Finley

### Love of game disappears; money rules

Regardless of how close sports are to one's heart, it has become uncontested that big-time athletics is a business.

One need only to glance at the escalating salaries of professional athletes to behold first-hand the lucriveness of the ability to catch a ball.

I tell you, vast readership, it is not a rare occasion that brings me into contact with one of the many who feel outrage over the exorbitant salaries, now commanded by even mediocre athletes under the prostitution of free agency.

And believe me, I feel your pain. I'm sensitive that way. I too feel a taint, a blight, a malaise, a mayonnaise, a dark cloud—if you will—has befallen the purity and innocence of sports.

That's why it's so refreshing when the trend is reversed and the spirituality of sports is not forfeited for a nice set of wheels.

I say this in reference to Nilesh Paddle, the current world Parcheesi champion.

For those of you unfamiliar with Paddle, he started playing Parcheesi at the age of nine months and won his first national championship at 12.

But despite Paddle's natural talent, the game and winning never came easy to him.

Paddle has had to overcome both lactose intolerance and a weak bladder to achieve his dice-rolling greatness. He is also a devout follower of an offshoot of Buddhism—known as Theisian Strain—that disallows winning or any display of superiority.

This, of course, presents quite a dilemma to an athlete as successful as Paddle.

Yet Paddle in his infinite wisdom has been able to overcome this dilemma without giving up his religion or his Parcheesi domination.

Now after each victory, Paddle, by the dictates of Theisianism, "punishes" himself for breaking the rules of his faith by slapping his own face 78 times with a fresh halibut.

Paddle states that it appeases his god and surprisingly, also moisturizes his skin.

But beyond his spiritual devotions, Paddle has distinguished himself from other athletes by his refusal to accept any money for his Parcheesi victories.

Paddle says that it would be ridiculous to accept money for something he loves to do. This is why he is so willing to dress as a giant woodchuck for no compensation.

It is clear—Paddle is the essence of a champion. And he also smells like fish.

But it all just demonstrates that he is a true sportsman in an age of sports businessmen.

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

## NU braces for battle in Salina

By Mike Kluck  
Senior Reporter

It may have been a little premature, but Nebraska junior Tina McClain wanted something sweet Thursday night.

And since she'll have to wait until Monday to have a possible shot at a Big Eight Tournament Championship, she settled for a hot fudge sundae.

But the forward on the Nebraska women's basketball team knows winning the first Big Eight championship for 10th-year coach Angela Beck won't be as simple as ordering nuts for a sundae.

First up for the Huskers will be Missouri Saturday at noon at the Bicentennial Center in Salina, Kan. Nebraska, 18-8 overall and 8-6 in the Big

Eight, has beaten the Tigers 12 consecutive times, including both times this season.

But McClain said win No. 13 wouldn't be easy. The Tigers (15-11 and 6-8) feature Big Eight scoring leader Erika Martin, a senior who who averages 19.4 points a game.

"We can't let her get hot or on a roll," McClain said. "She is a dangerous player and is obviously the focus of her team. We need to shut her down."

McClain said the Huskers did a good job of shutting Martin down in a 92-72 victory over the Tigers on Feb. 18 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center. In the first game, the Huskers made 37 of 48 free throws, season-high marks in both freethrows made and attempted.

Besides being in a do-or-die situation, McClain said she thought Martin

"This is a matter of personal pride and honor for myself to take the tournament."

PYRA AARDEN

Nebraska center

might have another reason for wanting to beat Nebraska.

"I'm sure she'll be fired up to beat us because she has never beaten us in her career," McClain said.

But Nebraska senior center Pyra Aarden said the Huskers could not have drawn a better pick than the Tigers. Aarden, who is second in the conference in field goal percentage shooting 58.9 percent, said she was excited for the tournament.

Because the tournament is so wide open, both McClain and Aarden said they weren't looking past the Tigers in the first round. They also said they knew a win against Missouri would probably secure a birth into the NCAA Tournament.

"This is a matter of personal pride and honor for myself to take the tournament," Aarden said. "We know there's risk involved, but that makes us more determined."

### NU needs victory to avoid cellar

By Trevor Parks  
Senior Reporter

In two completely different ways, Nebraska and Kansas State see the importance of Sunday's regular-season-ending basketball game.

The Cornhuskers are hoping to end a nine-game losing streak, while the Wildcats are in the hunt for the school's first NCAA Tournament berth since 1993.

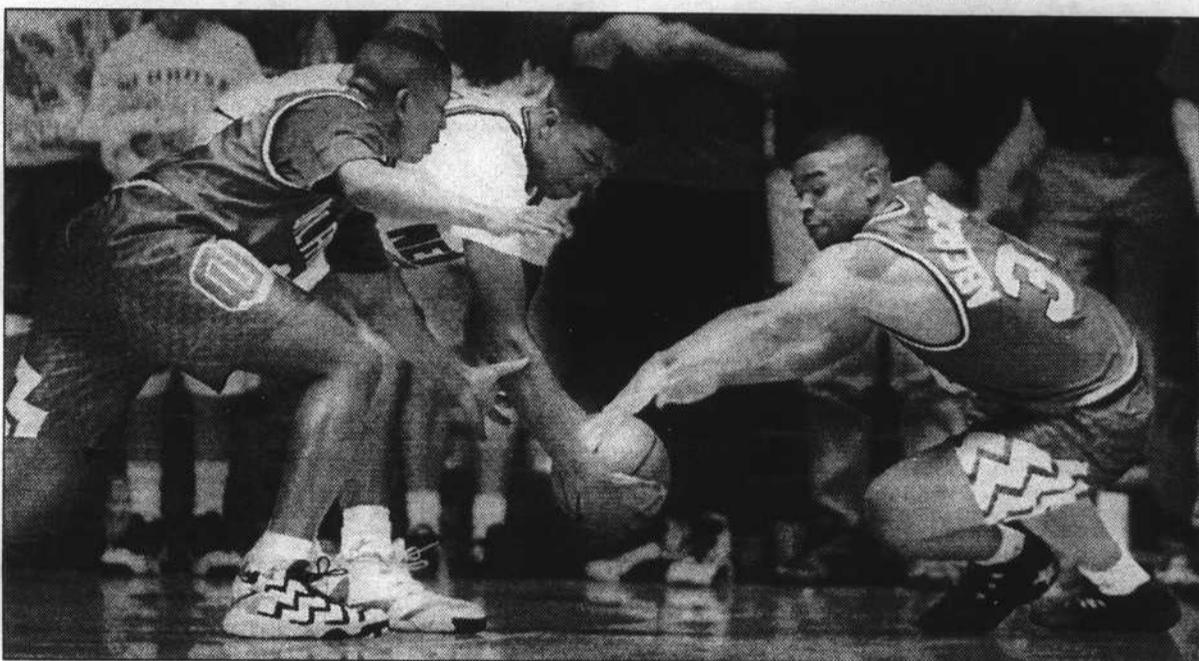
Nebraska, 15-13 overall and 3-10 in the league, will play host to Kansas State (16-9 and 7-6) at 1:05 p.m. at the Bob Devaney Sports Center in the last regular-season game in Big Eight history.

Despite losing nine straight games, Nebraska still can play for something.

Sunday's game marks the final appearance at the Devaney Center for five seniors—Jason Glock, Tom Wald, Terrance Badgett, Erick Strickland and Jaron Boone—who all will be honored before the game.

The nine-game losing skid is the longest since 1963-64. A 10th straight loss would tie the school record for the longest losing streak in one season, set in 1962-63.

A win over the Wildcats, coupled with a Colorado loss to second-place Iowa State on Saturday would make Nebraska the seventh seed at the Big Eight Tournament. If that scenario occurs, the Huskers would play either Iowa State or Oklahoma. If Nebraska loses or if Colorado wins, the Huskers will finish last in the conference and



Jon Waller/DN

Nebraska center Venson Hamilton battles Oklahoma's Dion Barnes (left) and Ernie Abercrombie for a loose ball during the Huskers' 80-76 loss last weekend. Nebraska will end its regular season Sunday against Kansas State.

will play Kansas.

Husker coach Danny Nee said after Wednesday night's 78-64 loss at Colorado that his team was at rock bottom.

"When things are going bad," Nee said, "they are going really bad."

Kansas State will be playing for more than just pride in Lincoln. A win would put the Wildcats in position for an NCAA Tournament at-large bid.

The Wildcats had lost three of four games before a 92-87 overtime win over No. 23 Iowa State on Wednesday night.

The win pulled Kansas State even with Oklahoma for third place in the conference. With a win over Nebraska coupled with a Kansas win over the Sooners, Kansas State would be the third seed at the Big Eight Tournament.

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### Basketball Starters

Devaney Center  
Sunday, 1:05 p.m.

Nebraska (15-13, 3-10)	Ht.	Wt.	Class	PPG	RPG
G Tyronn Lue	6-0	165	Fr.	8.5	3.1
G Jaron Boone	6-6	195	Sr.	14.4	2.8
F Erick Strickland	6-3	210	Sr.	14.8	4.8
F Bernard Garner	6-7	225	Jr.	10.8	6.4
C Mikki Moore	6-9	220	Fr.	8.4	5.4
Kansas St. (16-9, 7-6)					
G Aaron Schwartzendruber	6-2	175	So.	6.9	2.4
G Elliot Hatcher	6-0	175	Sr.	16.4	2.9
G Ayome May	6-6	185	Fr.	7.3	3.8
F Tyrone Davis	6-8	235	Sr.	13.8	8.4
C Shawn Rhodes	6-10	215	Fr.	4.7	3.3

## Huskers open Big Eight play

By Trevor Parks  
Senior Reporter

No matter what happens this weekend, the young Nebraska baseball team will learn from its experience, Cornhusker coach John Sanders said.

The 3-7 Huskers will begin Big Eight play today at 3 p.m. against No. 16 Oklahoma in Norman, Okla. The Huskers will play the Sooners in a three-game series.

Freshman pitcher Jarod Bearer will make his first collegiate start today against the 5-4 Sooners. Steve Fish, Nebraska's ace, will pitch Saturday, and Seth Williams, who never has started a collegiate game, will pitch the final game of the series Sunday.

Bearer has made four appearances this season, recording a 9.00

earned-run average. Fish, who has a 6.62 ERA, will be starting his fourth game, the most of any Husker pitcher. Williams has pitched only two innings.

Sanders said his young team, which starts three freshmen and sophomore first baseman Todd Sears in the infield, would gain valuable experience starting Big Eight play against the Sooners.

"You never can have enough time to prepare," Sanders said. "We are putting them in a tough situation with the Big Eight starting already."

In the outfield, seniors Mel Motley, Matt Meyer and Gene Jenkins will start. The three seniors need to take more of a leadership role, Sanders said.

Catcher Pete Jenkins, second baseman Corey Miller, shortstop Larry Hartzell and third baseman

Josh Dalton all will be playing in their first Big Eight game.

After winning its first two games of the season, Nebraska has struggled, losing seven of its past eight games. The Sooners have gone on a similar streak. Oklahoma won its first five games, but has lost four straight. The Sooners' pitching staff is struggling with an ERA of 6.49.

Because of the Huskers' tough schedule, Sanders said he wasn't discouraged by his team's record. Nebraska has lost to No. 3 Texas Tech and No. 9 Arizona State.

"We have got a bunch of guys working hard right now, but they just aren't putting up the impressive numbers," Sanders said. "I am worried about who is getting better and who is not."

## Lincoln gets hockey team in USHL

From Staff Reports

A press conference has been scheduled for 11:30 a.m. today to announce the debut of the Lincoln Stars, the newest member of the United States Hockey League.

USHL Commissioner John "Gino" Gaspirini will be on hand for the announcement at the Nebraska State Fair Park. The Stars will play at the Coliseum on the fairgrounds.

The Nebraska State Board of Agriculture and the owners of the Lincoln Stars also will announce details about the renovation of the Coliseum and when the Stars will begin play. The Omaha Lancers also compete in the USHL.