

# SPORTS

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## NBA looks at Strickland, Boone

By Trevor Parks  
Senior Reporter

Former Nebraska basketball player Erick Strickland spent one day with the Cornhusker football team earlier this month, which was one day too long, according to advice Strickland received.

The 6-foot-2, 210-pound Strickland, who practiced with the football team on April 8, said at that time he would try football for one week. He did not return for the final two practices of the week.

On Tuesday, Strickland said his practice with the football team did not go over well with the NBA. But he did not rule out a possible return next fall.

"I talked to some scouts and I talked to my dad, and they didn't think it was a good idea," Strickland said. "They thought I might get hurt some-

how."

Strickland, who hopes to hear his name called in the June 26 National Basketball Association draft, said he was looking to find an agent, but had not signed with one yet.

Nebraska basketball coach Danny Nee said he wasn't sure of Strickland's motives for trying football. But Nee said he didn't discourage the move.

Before strapping on the shoulder pads, Strickland took part in a Portsmouth, Va., college all-star camp, in which he was asked to stay an extra day because of an injury to a player on another team.

Former Husker Jaron Boone, a 6-6, 195-pound guard, was invited to the 29th annual Desert Classic NBA try-out camp, in Phoenix this week. The camp, sponsored by the Phoenix Suns, began Monday and will run until Friday.

Strickland was not invited to the Phoenix camp, Nee said.

"It's very unusual to have two players from the same team asked to go," Nee said.

A good camp, Nee said, will help Boone's draft status greatly. At the 1994 Desert Classic, former Husker Eric Piatkowski was named the most valuable player. Piatkowski later was selected in the first round of the NBA draft by the Indiana Pacers. He was then traded to the Los Angeles Clippers, for whom he now plays.

"Eric had a great tryout, and that certainly left a good impression," Nee said. "Jaron can do the same thing."

Marty Blake, director of scouting for the NBA, said both players had a chance to be selected in the draft.

"They both have a chance," Blake said Tuesday from Phoenix. "But all these guys down here are prospects,

and you have no idea where these guys are going to be selected. There could be eight or nine guys chosen as the top pick."

Twice before, Nebraska has had two players selected in the draft. In 1968, Stuart Lantz went to Houston in the third round, and Tom Baack went to the Detroit in round No. 10. In 1971, Marvin Stewart was picked by Philadelphia in round No. 2, and Leroy Chalk was Boston's 13th-round pick.

Blake said he knew that Strickland thought about playing football, but didn't know why Strickland decided to call it quits.

Blake, who was at the Portsmouth camp, said Strickland appeared tired after playing a 35-game season, which ended with the National Invitation Tournament championship. Strickland

See STRICKLAND on 8

## Kansas squeaks past NU

By Todd Walkenhorst  
Staff Reporter

LAWRENCE, Kan. — The Nebraska baseball has finally found a diamond in the rough in its pitching staff.

Junior Pat Driscoll pitched his third complete game of the season Tuesday night at Hoglund-Maupin Stadium in front of a crowd of 507. And despite allowing no earned runs, five Cornhusker errors gave Kansas a 3-2 win in 10 innings.

"It hurts to lose like that," said Driscoll, who struck out five and allowed eight hits. "Our team committed a few errors and I committed a couple myself. But otherwise it was a good effort."

The Huskers fell to 17-20-1 overall and 6-10 in the Big Eight. Kansas, in snapping its seven-game losing streak, improved to 17-20 and 7-12.

See KANSAS on 8

## Berringer eager for NFL draft

By Mike Kluck  
Senior Reporter

Turkey season could not have come at a better time for former Nebraska quarterback Brook Berringer.

With the start of the season April 8, Berringer has been able to escape the solitude of the woods near his home in Goodland, Kan.

Away from the hunt, Berringer also has to worry about when and where he will be heading after Saturday's National Football League draft.

"I'm looking forward to this process getting over with," Berringer said. "And it will be nice to have a little direction on where I'm going."

Draft experts have disagreed on Berringer's potential. He has been forecast to be chosen everywhere from the third round to nowhere at all.

Ken Kremer, Berringer's agent and vice-president of Team Sports for International Management in Kansas

See BERRINGER on 8

## Still waiting



Travis Heying/DN

Damon Benning was Nebraska's No. 5 leading rusher last season as a junior. Injuries have plagued the I-back throughout his career and continue to bother him this spring.

## Benning battles injuries

By Mike Kluck  
Senior Reporter

When Nebraska I-back Damon Benning injured his right shoulder during the Cornhuskers' second spring scrimmage two weeks ago, he felt fate was playing a bad joke on him.

Benning, who has been hampered by injuries over the last two years, finally had a chance to leave an impression on the Husker coaches.

But during the scrimmage, in which he ran for 40 yards on six carries, Benning bruised his shoulder and missed the following two practices and last Saturday's third spring scrimmage.

"He really got off to a great start this spring," Nebraska running backs coach Frank Solich said. "He was doing things very strong, and to a high rate where I was really satisfied. He was really playing his best football prior to getting hurt."

Injuries are becoming a habit for Benning, a 5-foot-11, 210-pound senior-to-be from Omaha Northwest High School.

Nebraska's No. 2 I-back behind Ahman Green, Benning missed most of 1994 spring drills with a

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**DAMON BENNING**  
Nebraska I-back

bruised bone in his right foot. He missed 1994 winter conditioning with a pulled hamstring and 1995 spring drills with a sprained ankle.

With Lawrence Phillips suspended and Clinton Childs out with an injury last season, Benning earned a start against Pacific. In only his third start of his career, he rushed for 173 yards and three touchdowns on 10 carries.

The following week against Washington State, in his second start of the season, Benning had 63 yards on 20 carries before pulling a hamstring.

His injury allowed Green, a freshman last season, to take over. Green kept the starting duties until Phillips returned to start the Fiesta Bowl.

"I'm through with that," Benning said of the injuries. "I'm going to come out here and get some things accomplished. I know that I have

had some bad luck, but that's part of it.

"I just have to adjust. All I can do is go in the weight room and prepare, and hope I can start catching some breaks."

Battling back from injury after injury is disheartening for a player, Solich said.

"It gets discouraging for a player when he has a series of injuries," Solich said. "But sometimes that can be part of the game, and you have to work your way through it."

Benning said the thrill of competition and his teammates' support had helped him continue to fight through the injuries.

Although Benning's shoulder still is not 100 percent, he will play in Saturday's spring game.

"I love the game," Benning said. "I want to be out there and help my team. I can't do that by sitting on the sidelines and being hurt."

## Big 8 Notebook

The beat goes on for Nebraska center fielder Francis Collins. Collins extended his hitting streak to 22 games Tuesday night against Kansas, marking the third-longest streak in school history and 11th-best in Big Eight history.

Collins owns the longest current streak in league play. Kansas State's Chris Hess had a 25-game hitting streak snapped earlier this season.

Missouri entered Tuesday night's game against Kansas State with 26 victories, four more than last year's Tiger output. It is not difficult to figure out why Missouri has made such a turnaround. The Tigers are second in the Big Eight in earned-run average at 5.03 and third in the conference in batting average at .309. Missouri ranked last in the conference in both categories a year ago.

Last week was a big week for Nebraska shortstop Ali Viola. The Novato, Calif., native went 11 for 18 with two home runs and three doubles in five Husker games, earning the honor of Big 12 softball player of the week. The second of Viola's home runs came in the 10th inning Sunday against Texas A&M to give the Cornhuskers a 4-1 victory over the Aggies. Viola has seven home runs and 46 RBI, leading Nebraska in both categories.

Kansas' standout point guard Jacque Vaughn was named the male athlete of the year by Black Issues in Higher Education. The award is one of several given by the publication as part of its annual Arthur Ashe Jr. Sports Scholars Awards Program. The All-American point guard piloted the Big Eight champion Jayhawks to the NCAA West Regional finals.

Kansas will be the host university for the first and second round of the 1997 NCAA Tournament at Kansas City's Kemper Arena, March 14 and 16. The Big Eight was scheduled to play host to the subregional, but because the Big Eight becomes the Big 12 in August, a host change was necessary.

The Oklahoma State men's golf team kept its No. 1 spot in the latest Collegiate Rankings released by the College Golf Foundation. Two other Big Eight teams have a top 50 ranking, Oklahoma at No. 16 and Colorado at No. 45.

On the women's side, five Big Eight teams are ranked in the top 50, Oklahoma State at No. 20, followed by No. 36 Oklahoma, No. 38 Nebraska, No. 42 Missouri and Iowa State at No. 45.

Nebraska teams continued their excellence in the classroom by placing 10 members of the Husker tennis teams on the academic All-Big Eight teams. The Husker men named to the team were senior Adrian Maizey, junior Fredrik Riesbeck, sophomores Markus Bergerheim and Henrik Andersson and freshman Peer Goepfrich.

The Nebraska women honored were senior Michelle Waldhauser, juniors Annie Yang and Kristie Bilecky and sophomores Lisa Hart and Jennifer Thoste.

Notebook compiled by staff reporter Vince D'Adamo.