

## Sports Opinion



**Trevor Parks**

### Apprehension, harmony open Big 12 season

Shafted. Jobbed. The Texas schools were going to run this thing without caring for us — the guys from the Big Eight. That was the consensus viewpoint of the northern division plus two (Oklahoma and Oklahoma State) about the new Big 12 Conference. It was a viewpoint decided about the same time that the Big 12's birth was announced. Whether you traveled from Norman to Boulder to Ames, every fan seemed a little apprehensive about what the Big 12 would do to a great conference like the Big Eight. But people are now realizing that in most aspects, the Big 12 is a good deal. That's obvious since many are calling it the best football conference in the country. Forget Texas A&M's embarrassing loss to Brigham Young Saturday. As two teams from the north — Missouri and Kansas State — meet up with two from the south — Texas and Texas Tech — this weekend, enough is enough. It's finally time to play the games instead of the complaining about who should run them. When the conference started, everything from the Big 12 office's location to the commissioner to the championship game was debated. At least they made the title game debate easy by putting it in St. Louis, a neutral site. Preseason last-place Missouri certainly won't be visiting the TWA Dome anytime soon. The Big Eight teams argued for this; the Southwest Conference teams argued for that. I'm sure they even argued over the logo, which I could draw with a dull crayon. For those of you who don't know, the logo looks like this: XII. Now as the Big 12 becomes reality, it seems like everything is moving along in a harmonious way. No bickering. Just excitement and good feelings. Kansas State's game against Texas Tech is sold out. And, although a lot of end zone seats remain for the Missouri-Texas game, a member of the athletic Longhorn ticket office said a record number of season tickets were sold this year. Texas Tech Coach Spike Dykes, whose love for the state of Texas runs as red as Nebraska's jerseys, said if people don't like the Big 12, they should have their heads examined. "If you can't get excited about this conference, you all need to find another job," Dykes said last month. Hey Spike, this conference is big time. But one 13-hour drive from Lincoln to Texas nearly every year is plenty for me. Parks is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan senior reporter.

### NU's Holbein bounces back from injury

By **TREVOR PARKS**  
Senior Reporter

Despite not missing any game time, Brendan Holbein is disappointed he missed the final three days of the Nebraska football teams dreaded two-a-day workouts.



**Holbein**

"For me, getting injured — especially during two-a-day — is bad because that is the time to get the timing down with the offense and for everybody to get coordinated," Holbein said. Holbein, a 5-foot-9, 190-pound split end, was running a one-on-one drill against a defensive back on Aug. 20. He felt a twinge in his right hamstring, a tough break for Holbein, who had been doing well after the fall's first ten practices. Jack Nickolite, NU's head football trainer, said Holbein is checked daily for stiffness. Right now, Nickolite said, Holbein's hamstring is about 90 percent healthy.

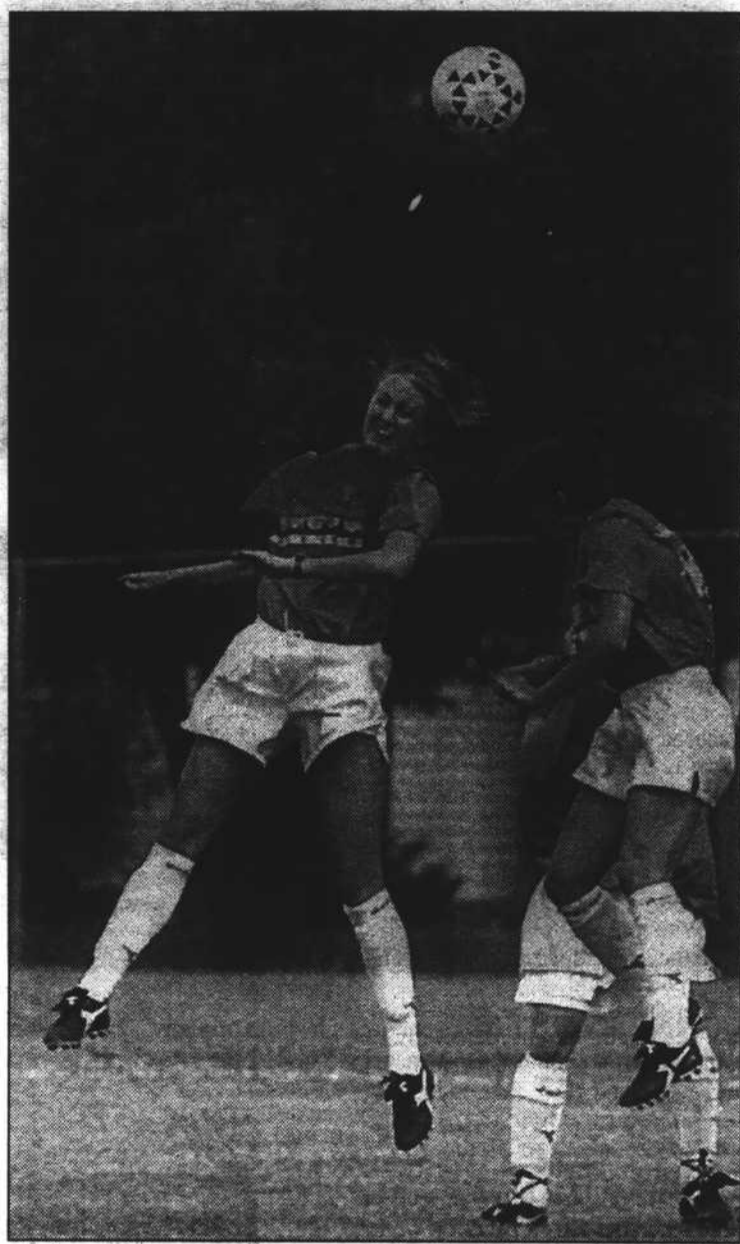
"The coaches are letting him do things out there, and we are trying to keep him in situations where he's not really doing explosive things or full speed sprints," Nickolite said. "It's important for him to be out there doing some things to maintain his timing and conditioning." Monday, Holbein returned to practice at a little less than half speed. Tuesday, Holbein practiced again, but still was not completely recovered. With his recent progress, Holbein said he expected to be ready for NU's season opener against Michigan State, Sept. 7 at Memorial Stadium.

He will fill an important role as the only split end with any major playing experience. After Holbein's injury, split ends Kenny Cheatham and Jeff Lake — who have caught a total of five passes in their careers — have had a chance to get more practice time with the top offensive units.

"It will get them more reps in practice and get them used to seeing different coverages," Holbein said. "But practice is practice and a game is a game. So as far as maturing, we need guys to grow at a fast pace before the first game." Holbein, who started nine games last year, remembers well the season opener two years ago against West Virginia in the Kickoff Classic, a game in which he said he was extremely nervous.

In 1992, Holbein, who is from Cozad, walked on at Nebraska. He redshirted his first season and played in just four games as a redshirt freshman in 1993. His career took flight the next year, when he played in all 13 games of NU's run to the first of two straight national titles. Holbein earned five starts and a scholarship, catching nine passes for 88 yards and two touchdowns. Last fall, he started nine games while alternating with Reggie Baul. Holbein's 151 yards receiving were fifth on the team. This fall, he and wingback Jon Vedral will lead a young group of receivers.

Though he has not been practicing full time with his teammates, Holbein has been running and walking steps. "The conditioning coaches do a good job of keeping my conditioning up," Holbein said.



**KARI UPPINGHOUSE** (center), a junior on the Nebraska soccer team, is a returning first-team all-region midfielder.

### Uppinghouse leaps into starring role

**Co-CAPTAIN** will lead the Huskers into action Friday night against OU.

By **VINCE D'ADAMO**  
Staff Reporter

Every team has a player it looks to as a difference-maker. Although the Nebraska soccer team is loaded with talent, junior midfielder Kari Uppinghouse is the rock on which the team will lean when a big play is needed this season.

Last year, Uppinghouse earned first-team all-region honors and shared team most-valuable-player honors with Heather Brown. Nebraska opens its season Friday at the Abbott Sports Complex against Oklahoma at 7 p.m.

While some players are reluctant to be in the spotlight, the 5-foot-11 Uppinghouse thrives in such situations, and she knows how to take advantage of them.

"The main thing is playing hard all the time and setting a standard for the other players as far as practicing," Uppinghouse said.

Another key to Uppinghouse's success is controlling the midfield and quickly moving down the field. Last year at this time, Uppinghouse was just getting to know her teammates after transferring to Nebraska from George Mason.

Uppinghouse, from Littleton, Colo., went on to score 17 points

on seven goals, starting every game. One year later, she is a co-captain and feels a solid rapport with her teammates.

"It's helped as far as transition," Uppinghouse said. "It will be better as far as gelling as a team."

In only their third season, the Huskers, ranked 18th by College Sports Magazine, appear ready for a run at the NCAA Tournament. But instead of focusing on personal achievements, team success matters most, Uppinghouse said.

"I've thought more about the team-oriented goals," she said. "I like the team achievements a lot better than individual achievements. Being recognized as a top 20 team has helped a lot."

While a freshman at George Mason, Uppinghouse helped the Patriots advance to the NCAA championship game and was selected as a Colonial Athletic Conference first-team member.

Freshman striker Lindsay Eddleman played with Uppinghouse this summer for the Denver Diamonds.

The entire NU team will benefit from playing with Uppinghouse, said Eddleman, the 1996 Colorado high school player of the year from Lakewood, Colo.

"It makes you want to strive to be that good," she said. "I look up to her. She's like my big sister."

Having played with Uppinghouse's this summer, Eddleman is in a position to attest to Uppinghouse's value.

"It was totally rewarding because we learned about each other," Eddleman said.

### Groin injury can't knock down Fullman

By **MIKE KLUCK**  
Senior Reporter

Mike Fullman is no longer going to worry about the groin injury that has sidelined him since the beginning of fall camp.

Instead, the senior cornerback is going to concentrate on playing football again.

"If it's going to happen, it's going to happen," Fullman said. "Hopefully, it doesn't, but that's the only way I can look at it. There's nothing I can do to prevent it, because I have to practice and get ready for game situations."

Fullman, who's in just his second year with the Huskers since transferring from Rutgers, was looking forward to starting fall camp. But an injury he first noticed in last year's Fiesta Bowl has slowed his progress for the start of this season.

Fullman said the pain in his groin region went away after the Fiesta Bowl but returned during spring football. During the summer, he said, he felt fine, but before two-a-day workouts started earlier this month, the pain returned and was more severe.

"I couldn't put any pressure on my left leg," Fullman said. "It's driving me nuts. I was really looking forward to coming in healthy helping the team out. Now this happens. I'm getting better, and hopefully I'll still be able to help them out."

Jerry Weber, Nebraska's head

Please see **FULLMAN** on 14

### Kansas eyes repeat of 1995 season

By **MIKE KLUCK**  
Senior Reporter

If it wasn't for Northwestern, Kansas may have been the surprise of the college football world last season.

Coming off a 6-5 season in 1994, the Jayhawk roster consisted of 99 players, 68 of whom were freshmen and sophomores.

However, those freshmen and sophomores bonded with the upperclassmen, and Kansas produced the school's first-ever 10-win season.

The Jayhawks finished the season 10-2, tied for second in the Big Eight and ranked ninth in the final Associ-

Please see **KANSAS** on 14

## BIG 12 CONFERENCE

This is the third of a 11-day series on football in the Big 12 Conference.

**Kansas**

KU