

Sports Opinion



Mike Kluck

Rutz to play second fiddle one more time

Poor Ben Rutz. The Kansas/Northeastern Oklahoma A&M/Nebraska quarterback just can't seem to get a break. He was highly recruited out of Oklahoma City by Nebraska and came to Lincoln in 1992 with high expectations. But after coming "within a hair" of winning the starting quarterback job — as NU Defensive Backs Coach George Darlington put it earlier this week — Rutz settled for a redshirt year. Some young man named Tommie Frazier won the job. During spring drills of 1993, Rutz split time with Frazier running the first-team offense. Rutz tore his anterior cruciate ligament in a non-contact drill, and even though Rutz was ready to play that fall, Cornhusker Coach Tom Osborne and the entire state had already fallen in love with this Frazier kid. So after playing four games as a Husker, Rutz read the writing on the wall and transferred. After a season of junior college ball in Miami, Okla. — where he led the Northeastern Oklahoma A&M to the National Junior College Athletic Association championship game — Rutz found a new home with the Jayhawks. Once he landed in Lawrence, Rutz played mop-up duty as Mark Williams became KU's No. 1 man and led Kansas to an impressive 10-2 record last fall.

This year, all the bad luck was supposed to change. This was the season for which Rutz had dreamed his whole life. He was to be the starting quarterback at a Division-I school in his senior year.

However, fate had a different plan. Rutz tore his ACL again during spring drills. Determined not to let it get him down, he made a quick recovery.

But not quick enough. Junior Matt Johner moved into Rutz's job, and this season Rutz has had to settle for the backup spot — again.

Last week in KU's 20-7 loss to Colorado, Rutz may have finally wrestled the job away from Johner. And this week, Jayhawk Coach Glen Mason has hinted that Rutz may start his first game ever on Saturday night.

What a fitting reward that would be for Rutz.

But like a new page from an old book, Rutz's chance to shine Saturday will have to wait a few minutes longer. Nebraska is retiring Frazier's jersey before the game.

Kind of fitting, isn't it? Cheer up Ben, that may not be as bad as the punishment you take the rest of the day from the Blackshirts.

Kluck is a graduate student in journalism and a Daily Nebraskan senior reporter.

KU threatens streaks

Jayhawk star back Henley will not play Saturday night.

By **MIKE KLUCK**
Senior Reporter

Through Nebraska's current 26-game conference winning streak, the Cornhuskers have defeated their opponents by an average score of 38-11.

During that span, only two conference teams have come within 10 points of defeating the Huskers, Colorado 21-17 and Kansas 21-20, both in 1993. Only an incomplete two-point-conversion pass prevented the Jayhawks defeating Nebraska in Lawrence, Kan.

Saturday, the Jayhawks (3-3 overall and 1-2 in the Big 12) try once again to end the Husker streak when they face Nebraska (5-1 and 3-0) at 6 p.m.

The game will be the fifth-ranked Huskers' second night game this season and first at Memorial Stadium since Nov. 9, 1992, when the Huskers defeated Kansas 49-7. Nebraska lost to Arizona State 19-0 earlier this season, a night game in Tempe, Ariz.

A win for Nebraska would be their 34th consecutive at home and break a school record for consecutive home victories.



Henley

The Jayhawks, meanwhile, are trying to end a 27-game losing streak to Nebraska. They will have to do it without senior running back June Henley, their leading rusher.

Henley was suspended Thursday by Coach Glen Mason after being ticketed for driving under the influence of alcohol and various other violations.

Henley ranks fourth in the Big 12 and seventh nationally in rushing, averaging 131.7 yards per game.

"Naturally, it doesn't help them to lose him," Nebraska Coach Tom Osborne said. "I wouldn't say Kansas is diminished by that much. We played one game without Ahman Green."

In three games against NU, Henley has rushed for 248 yards and two touchdowns on 60 attempts.

Without Henley, running the ball

Starting lineups

may become difficult for Kansas. The Jayhawks will start junior Eric Vann, who has 125 yards and one touchdown this season.

In addition to playing without their top back, the Jayhawks will also face a Husker defense that ranks in the nation's top 10 in all four major defensive categories.

The Husker defense hasn't allowed a touchdown since its 65-9 win over Colorado State on Sept. 28. Despite their success, the Blackshirts still have room to improve, Osborne said.

"The defense made some great plays and certainly kept (Texas Tech)

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JARED TOMICH and Terrell Farley stop Texas Tech tailback Byron Hanspard last Saturday in NU's 24-10 victory.

SCOTT BRUHN/DN

Soccer team can clinch league title

By **VINCE D'ADAMO**
Staff Reporter

The fifth-ranked Nebraska soccer team (15-0 overall and 7-0 in the Big 12) looks to clear its biggest remaining hurdle in its quest to win the first-ever Big 12 regular-season title.

The Cornhuskers take on Baylor (12-1-1 and 5-1-1) today at 3 p.m. in Waco, Texas, and closes out the Big 12 regular season against Texas Tech (11-5 and 4-3) Sunday at 1 p.m. in Lubbock, Texas.

"It's what we need," NU Coach John Walker said. "We're looking forward to playing two tough games. We're going to have to play well defensively."

With a win today, NU can clinch the league title and earn the top seed in the conference tournament.

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NU concentrates on Baylor, Tech

By **SHANNON HEFFELFINGER**
Staff Reporter

No matter who the Nebraska volleyball team faces each week in the Big 12, Coach Terry Pettit said, the possibility of a competitive match is much greater than it was just one season ago in the Big Eight.

"We would sometimes go three or four weeks without a competitive opponent," Pettit said. "Now, we have to play hard every week just to stay competitive."

"People shouldn't be surprised if every match we have on the road is competitive."

No. 5 Nebraska (16-2 overall and 8-0 in the league) travels to Texas this weekend to take on Baylor (14-8 and 3-5) tonight at 7:30 and Texas Tech (19-2 and 6-2) Saturday at 7 p.m. The

Volleyball

at Baylor, today, 7:30 p.m.

at Texas Tech, Saturday, 7 p.m.

Cornhuskers, who own an 11-match winning streak, are making their first-ever appearances in Waco and Lubbock.

NU is riding high after claiming the conference lead last weekend by defeating No. 10 Texas and No. 11 Texas A&M. But the Huskers know the dangers of looking past Baylor — which owns a 7-1 record at home — and No. 20 Texas Tech, winners of a league-high 19 matches this

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World Series

Yanks shock Braves; snag Series lead

ATLANTA (AP)—The New York Yankees might miss this ballpark even more than the Atlanta Braves.

Andy Pettitte outpitched John Smoltz in a classic duel Thursday night, and the Yankees moved within one win of the World Series championship by hanging on for a 1-0 victory over Atlanta in Game 5.

In the last game ever to be played at Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium, the Yankees finished this postseason 8-0 on the road, dramatically shifting the momentum of a World Series thought by many to be over after two games.

They got the 3-2 Series lead by working around a leadoff double in the ninth inning by Chipper Jones.

Now, they'll return to Yankee Sta-

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