

## Sports Opinion



### Mitch Sherman Huskers miss golden moment to see history

Absolutely nothing comes easy for the Nebraska soccer team. Not even watching television.

Monday afternoon at 4:30 p.m., the Big 12 champion Cornhuskers gathered in the Hewitt Center, ready to learn of their seeding in the NCAA Tournament, which begins Sunday.

The selection show began at 5 p.m., and the Huskers couldn't find it. First, they watched the Bill Snyder Show and then the first five minutes of FOX Sports News.

At this point, several NU players, coaches and many of the 50 people who had gathered — excited to hear of Nebraska's position in its first-ever NCAA Tournament — became concerned.

They were missing the selection show, which incidentally was not televised.

"I'm just basically an idiot," said Jeff Griesch, Nebraska's sports information official in charge of coordinating the NCAA Tournament festivities.

So off to the tiny HuskerVision studios ran the Huskers to find the show's direct satellite feed. Soon they viewed a blue screen, the Weather Channel, a county board meeting, the Prevue Channel, a black screen, and best of all, Speedvision, on which a land-speed record may have been challenged.

Not exactly what the Huskers were looking for.

But then again, little has gone as expected this season for Nebraska, the nation's only unbeaten and untied team, which earned the second seed in the tournament's West Region Monday.

In September, the Huskers flew directly into Hurricane Fran during a road trip to North Carolina. But NU left what Coach John Walker called "a terrifying experience" with a win over Duke, and the confidence needed to conquer the Big 12.

In October, following a pair of wins over Baylor and Texas Tech, the team plane was forced to return to Lubbock after encountering an icy runway in Dallas. The team spent an extra night in Texas.

And on Sunday evening, the Huskers nearly missed their flight out of St. Louis hours after defeating Texas A&M 1-0 in the Big 12 Tournament championship game.

After returning a rental van, Griesch sprinted the length of Lambert International Airport, delaying the TWA flight and receiving an brief cheer from the passengers on board once he arrived out of breath.

So Monday's nail-biting fiasco was nothing new for this team, which missed watching its moment in the sunshine. All it can hope for is another chance, possibly next month at the Final Four in Santa Clara, Calif.

If only things could be that easy.

Sherman is a senior news-editorial major and the Daily Nebraskan sports editor.



SCOTT BRUHN/DN

**AHMAN GREEN** rumbles for 70 yards in the third quarter Saturday as Eric Anderson trails. Green ran for a season-high 161 yards in the 51-7 NU win over Missouri.

## Green returns to form

Osborne says sophomore I-back is close to 100 percent.

By DAVID WILSON  
Staff Reporter

After suffering from a severe case of turf toe for more than a month, Nebraska I-back Ahman Green proved Saturday that he is back and ready to lead Cornhuskers into their final two regular-season games.

In Nebraska's 51-7 win over Missouri Saturday, Green rushed 12 times for 161 yards, averaging 13.4 yards per attempt and scoring one touchdown.

"It felt like I was back to where I left off last year," said Green, who ran for more than 100 yards for only the second time this season.

Though he suffered from fatigue Saturday, Green was near full strength, NU Coach Tom Osborne said Monday.

"He's close (to 100 percent)," Osborne said. "He ran better Saturday than he had any time since he was hurt. He ought to be in pretty good shape this week."

A healthy Green will put the Husker offense near full force for the season's stretch run, Osborne said.

"I think right now we're healthier in the backfield than we have been since the first or second game of the season," Osborne said.

Last year, Green averaged 7.7 yards per attempt and rushed for 1,086 yards — the most ever by a freshman I-back at Nebraska.

With three games left this season, Green has compiled 693 yards on 123 attempts, an average of 5.6 yards.

For the first time in his career Saturday, Green twice ran the ball for more than 50 yards. The first was a 56-yard touchdown run and the second came in the third quarter, when he took an option pitch 70 yards before being caught from behind by two MU defenders.

That run marked the longest of

## Altstadt to play for NU

By DAVID WILSON  
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska football team received its 10th verbal commitment Sunday from Steve Altstadt, an offensive tackle from Fort Calhoun.

Altstadt, who accepted a Kansas State scholarship offer after attending the Wildcats' football camp last summer, went back on his word after Nebraska offered him a chance to become a Cornhusker.

The 6-foot-6, 270-pounder is the sixth player and third offensive lineman from Nebraska to commit to NU. Players cannot sign letters of intent until Feb. 5.

Fort Calhoun Coach Bob Dzuris said Nebraska coaches had shown interest in Altstadt all along, but waited to offer him a scholarship until they saw tape of him this season.

Also a lineman on defense, Altstadt finished second on the team in tackles, helping Fort Calhoun to

a 6-3 record in Class C-1 this season.

"His technique is excellent," Dzuris said. "And when you consider his size, it's exceptional. He always maintains good leverage. He really knows how to use his body."

Dzuris said Altstadt was clocked in 5.0 seconds over 40 yards at the Kansas State camp and in 5.3 seconds electronically at the Nebraska camp in June.

Despite his size, Dzuris said, the transition from Class C-1 high school football to the Division-I college level will require a major adjustment for Altstadt.

"It's a huge jump," Dzuris said. "His footwork and his speed will help him, but he will be in awe for a while. He'll get his ass kicked a few times — actually probably more than a few times."

Altstadt, who bench presses 325 pounds and squats 450, has qualified academically to play as a freshman.

"He ran better Saturday than he had any time since he was hurt."

TOM OSBORNE  
NU football coach

Green's career, but the run was not typical Green, Osborne said.

Green, a 6-foot, 215-pound sophomore from Omaha, said limited playing time after his injury has left him short of breath in some situations.

Green suffered the toe injury on an early-third-quarter run against Kansas State, and he did not play the Huskers' next game against Baylor.

In the three games after his return — not including Saturday — Green averaged just 3.7 yards per attempt, including just five yards on

nine carries against Oklahoma.

The injury could end up helping Green in the Huskers' final three games of the season, he said. No. 5 Nebraska (8-1 overall and 6-0 in the Big 12) plays at Iowa State Saturday before a regular-season finale against sixth-ranked Colorado on Nov. 29 in Lincoln.

"Having an injury like that," Green said, "I got stronger mentally and physically. Going into the final couple games of the season, I'm going to have a little bit more energy than some players out there."

## Huskers to face Gophers

By VINCE D'ADAMO  
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska soccer team achieved its preseason goal Monday, qualifying for the program's first-ever NCAA Tournament, and now the Cornhuskers want more.

Fifth-ranked Nebraska (21-0), a third-year program, earned the tournament's No. 6 seed and the second seed in the West Region.

Ratliff

Nebraska will play host to 18th-ranked Minnesota (13-6) Sunday at 1 p.m. at the Abbott Sports Complex.

If Nebraska defeats Minnesota, the Huskers will play either Virginia (12-6-2) or Duke (9-9-3) on Nov. 24. Third-ranked Portland is the West Region's top seed.

Second-round game sites will not be determined until after the first round. However, attendance is a major factor in determining the sites, and NU ranks fourth nationally in attendance, averaging 882 fans per game.

"I'm glad we were able to get it," NU Coach John Walker said. "The players have put in the work."

"I didn't think we'd be at this stage now. But I knew the program would take off very quickly because of the dedication the university put behind it."

In addition to Portland, North Carolina, Notre Dame and Connecticut earned top seeds.

"We've come a long way in three years," said Kim Ratliff, the first senior in NU history. "It's been one of our goals since the beginning."

Minnesota, 3-5 against NCAA Tournament teams, finished the regular season with back-to-back losses, falling to Northwestern 2-1 on Sunday.

Nebraska, which won the first-ever Big 12 Tournament title over Texas A&M 1-0 Sunday in overtime, is 4-0 against tournament teams, defeating A&M twice, Duke and Vanderbilt.

"It's an unbelievable feat," said Al Papik, NU's senior associate athletic director, who is directly in charge of Walker's program. "I sure didn't think we'd be in this position, but John Walker did. When we recruited John as our coach, he was very optimistic."

Tickets for Sunday's game are available at the NU ticket office and cost \$6 for adults and \$4 for students.

## NCAA West Region

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Portland (18-0-2)   |  |
| Washington (12-7)   |  |
| Vanderbilt (11-8-1) |  |
| Kentucky (13-5-2)   |  |
| Duke (9-9-3)        |  |
| Virginia (12-6-2)   |  |
| Minnesota (13-6)    |  |
| Nebraska (21-0)     |  |