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Huskers seeing orange

*Saturday's loss
quells hopes for
3rd championship*

BY TREVOR PARKS
Senior Reporter

Nebraska's road to the Big Easy turned out to be anything but.

Instead of heading to New Orleans and the Sugar Bowl for a shot at a third straight national championship, the Cornhuskers will usher in the new year in warm and sunny Miami.

The sixth-ranked Cornhuskers (10-2) will play the No. 10 Virginia Tech Hokies (10-1) in the Orange Bowl, Dec. 31 at Pro Player Stadium — formerly Joe Robbie Stadium — in Miami at 6 p.m.

After losing 37-27 to Texas Saturday in the Big 12 championship game, NU lost its chance to become the first team to win three straight national titles. Before Saturday, Nebraska appeared to be headed to the Sugar Bowl for a battle with No. 1 Florida State. That task will now fall to the Florida Gators.

Sunday afternoon, the Huskers were selected as one of two at-large teams — Penn State being the other — for the six-team Bowl Alliance. Four conference champions — Florida State, Florida, Texas and Virginia Tech — earned automatic bids.

Nebraska receives 15,000 tickets for the Orange Bowl, which, for the first time, will not be played in the Orange Bowl. The game will be played in Pro Player Stadium, capacity 75,192. Tickets, which cost \$60 and \$75 each, went on sale this morning at the South Stadium ticket office.

Coach Tom Osborne said he was excited the Huskers were making their 15th trip to the Orange Bowl.

"When our game was over (Saturday) I didn't think we would be invited," said Osborne, who will be coaching in his 10th Orange Bowl. "I'm a little surprised we are in it."



SCOTT BRUEN/DN

TEXAS LINEBACKER Tyson King celebrates the Longhorns' 37-27 victory over Nebraska Saturday in the inaugural Big 12 championship game in St. Louis. The loss ended the Huskers' hopes for a third straight national championship and earned Texas a berth in the Fiesta Bowl against Penn State.

Complete game coverage
on pages 8 and 9.



The Hokies knew they would get an alliance invitation after winning the Big East Conference championship. Virginia Tech has won 20 of its last 21 games, with the only loss coming to Syracuse earlier this season at the Carrier

Please see BOWL on 3

"Our players on the team have only experienced the big game. It's still a big game to us, however."

TOM OSBORNE
NU football coach

Cheerleader remains in critical condition

Doctors have not determined the extent of Tracy Jensen's injuries.

BY CHAD LORENZ
Senior Reporter

A UNL cheerleader who injured her neck while practicing last week remains in critical condition in Lincoln General Hospital's intensive-care unit.

Doctors have not yet determined the full extent of Tracy Jensen's injuries.

Jensen, a junior at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, was hurt Wednesday night while tumbling in the gymnastics room of Mabel Lee Hall. She was attempting a round-off to a back handspring to a single back tuck when she fell on her neck, Spirit Squad Director Renee Swartz said.

Jensen's injury was an accident, with no one at fault, Swartz said.

"This is the move Tracy had done a million times over," Swartz said.

"It's just like any other sport. Even when you take all the precautions,

there's still an injury risk."

A Saturday Omaha World-Herald article stated that accounts of Jensen's flip were different. Jensen's grandmother, Donna Jensen, had told the newspaper that Jensen had done a double backflip — a maneuver more dangerous than a single backflip, the article stated.

Swartz said everyone who actually saw Jensen fall told the family and doctors that she was doing a single backflip.

Donna Jensen may have misunderstood the terminology or been confused during the family's turmoil, Swartz said.

Based on Tracy Jensen's gymnastics ability, Swartz said, she would not have attempted a double backflip.

The squad follows national cheerleading safety guidelines for every move, Swartz said.

The squad members are not allowed to practice unless Swartz or Coach Jamie Boling is present, she said. And practices are held on a gymnastics floor-routine mat for safety, Swartz said. The mat, in UNL's Mabel Lee Hall, consists of a spring floor

Please see JENSEN on 3

Holidays can be a struggle for recovering alcoholics

BY ERIN GIBSON
Staff Reporter

The holidays can be happy. They can be bright, joyous reunions of families and friends and brilliant celebrations of faith and tradition.

But for those battling alcoholism, the holidays can be hell.

Rick, a recovering alcoholic and member of Alcoholics Anonymous in Lincoln, said many alcoholics alienate themselves from family and friends while in the throes of active drinking.

So the celebrations and homecomings of the holidays can send both alcoholics and recovering alcoholics spiraling into loneliness, self-pity and

regret, he said.

"I think there's a feeling that we should be happy," Rick said. "There's always a celebration and everything around us makes us wonder, 'Why don't I feel happy?'"

In return, they may treat their disease of alcoholism and cope with their feelings by drinking.

Rick said it's common to hear people in recovery say they struggle around the holidays. It's crucial that they actively treat the disease with AA meetings and practice the AA steps to

Please see ALCOHOL on 7

Song presents unique gift ideas for the 12 days of Christmas

BY DARREN IVY
Staff Reporter

Interested in getting your true love a unique gift this Christmas? How about everything from the "Twelve Days of Christmas?"

Romantic, indeed. But although the gifts are suggested by a holiday tune, they certainly can't be bought for a song — try about \$16,000.

But at least you won't have to travel far — all of the 83 items can be found in Nebraska, if you are willing to accept slight alterations, such as pheasants for French hens and milk-machine operators for milk maids.

So, those warnings issued, let's go shopping. On the first day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, a partridge in a pear tree.

Earl May Nursery and Garden Center in Lincoln has a semi-dwarf pear tree for \$30, and Brandon Finkral of Lindsay will sell you Hungarian Partridges for \$25 each. True loves on a

Holidays

budget can substitute a chukar, a type of partridge, for \$5.75 from Brian Turpitt of Genoa.

On the second day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, two turtle doves ...

The Pet Ark in Lincoln has a pair of doves for \$24.99.

On the third day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, three French hens ...

In Nebraska, you'll have to settle for three American pheasants instead of three French hens. The Nebraska Game and Parks Department verified the similarity between the two birds. And it just so happens that Ed Schuleneberg of Denton sells American pheasants for \$8 each.

On the fourth day of Christmas, my true love

Please see GIFTS on 6

Umm, Santa ...?



LANE HICKENBOTTOM/DN

TREVOR SMITH, 3, of Lincoln, meets Darth Vader Saturday morning near 14th and O streets during the 12th annual Star City Holiday Parade. The parade, which wound through downtown Lincoln, featured more than 70 entries.