

Sports Opinion



Mike Kluck

Coach needs new guidelines for NU success

After the Nebraska basketball teams' quick exit in the Big 12 Tournaments a couple of weeks ago, I decided to listen to the Sports Nightly Show — a local radio talk show — to see what people had to say about the Cornhuskers' postseason possibilities.

Throughout the course of the evening, people called in and complained about the likelihood of another trip to the National Invitation Tournament as well as complimented the Huskers on a successful season.

But then I was surprised by one of the callers — Nebraska Coach Danny Nee — who sounded surprised at some of the fans' reactions.

At one point Nee said, "I don't know what the people want any more."

Because I'm a basketball fan and former high school coach I figured I would give Nee my criteria for what I would like to see in the Husker basketball program:

1. A team that cares for each other and its coach. Obviously, there have been times in the last couple of years this caring attitude hasn't been there. If it had, there wouldn't have been the over-publicized walk-out incident last year, and three players wouldn't have left last year's squad.

2. A team that hates losing but is gracious in winning. Members of a Nebraska team should get upset when they lose. Yes, it's a great accomplishment to play Kansas close at Allen Fieldhouse, but it's still a loss and a disappointment.

3. A team that is ready to play no matter what. No NU team should ever need an excuse for losing to an inferior opponent. Once the whistle has blown, Nebraska should be ready to play whether the opponent is Kansas or Coppin State.

4. A team with high goals and expectations. Nebraska's goal each season should be winning the Big 12 Conference title and making the NCAA Tournament. I don't believe NU should be in the Final Four or win the league every year, but there's no problem with having a realistic goal.

5. A team that has no off-court problems, graduates its athletes and creates role models for the community. Enough said.

This is where I want to see the program go.

But again it's what I want, and I want to know what you want from your basketball program.

Mail your ideas to the Daily Nebraskan or send them to our e-mail — DN@unlinfo.unl.edu. I will publish your suggestions in the future and I hope not after another NIT title.

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

Russell highlights Huskers charge

By JAY SAUNDERS
Staff Reporter

It is time for the Nebraska women's swimming and diving team to quit talking about the NCAA Championship meet and get into the pool.

The Cornhuskers — fresh off their upset win over Texas in the Big 12 Conference Championships — are in Indianapolis for the NCAA Championships, which begin today, hoping to make a statement to the rest of the country.

"We have been focused on this meet all season," NU Coach Cal Bentz said. "We have gone through and put everything together so we can have the fastest meet of the year."

Putting everything together for

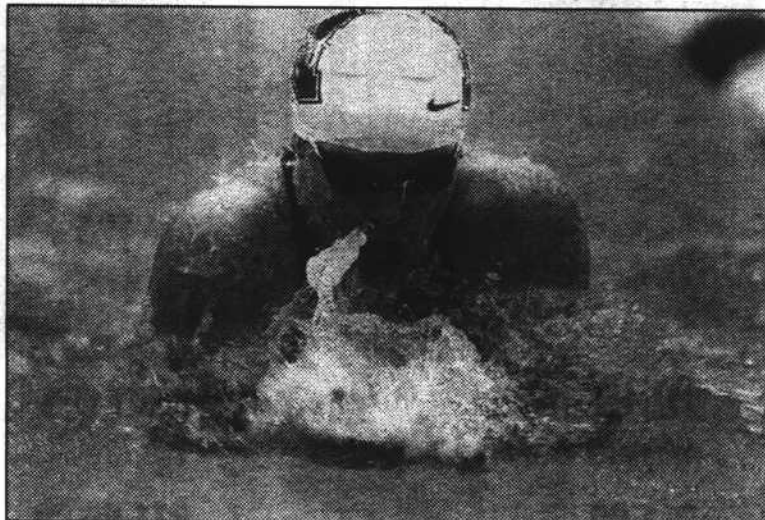
four days did not leave the Huskers with a feeling that there is no improvement to be made. Bentz said as soon as the team arrived back in Lincoln, it went straight to work.

"The yardage in practice was increased for a couple of days," Bentz said. "Then we went through and cut back on the yardage and worked on race technique and relay starts — the things that prep your team for fast competition."

After the Big 12 meet — in which the Huskers entered ranked 16th in the nation and left ranked ninth — Bentz said the conference championship would be an eye-opener for the rest of the country.

"We felt we ought to have been ranked higher most of the season,"

Please see SWIM on 11



SCOTT BRUHN/DN

JULIA RUSSELL holds the nation's fastest time in the 200-yard breaststroke and is second in the 100-yard breast entering today's NCAA Championships.

Huskers bash Mavs

NU has won five straight after taking two from UNO.

By DAVID WILSON
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska baseball team continued its winning ways Wednesday, sweeping a doubleheader from Nebraska-Omaha at Buck Beltzer Field.



BANUELOS

Despite being out-hit by UNO in the first game, the Cornhuskers pulled out a 13-6 victory before 225 fans. NU won game two 11-2.

"We're playing better baseball," NU Coach John Sanders said. "We have to keep this going. We're starting to pull together."

After losing 13 consecutive games, the Huskers (10-14) have won four straight — including two conference games against Missouri last weekend.

Nebraska will look to extend its streak this afternoon when it plays host to South Dakota State in a doubleheader beginning at 1:30.

UNO Coach Bob Gates, whose team fell to 5-6, said the Huskers played better than their record indicated.

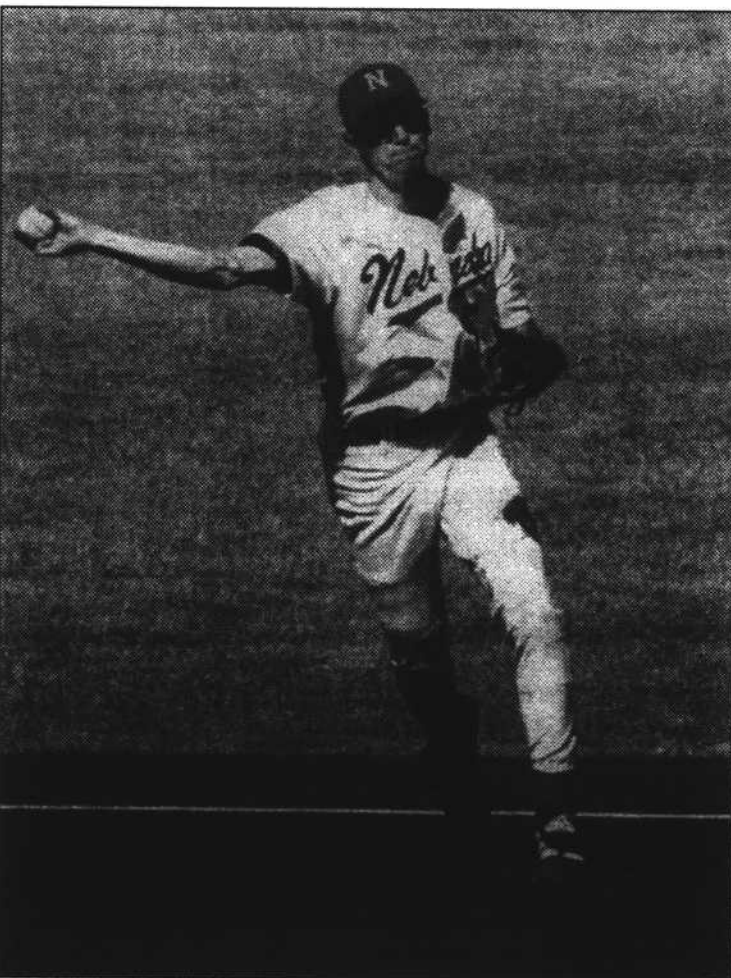
"I think they're coming back," Gates said. "They're swinging the bats."

But Nebraska won the second game backed by a strong pitching performance from right-handed starter Brandon Banuelos (1-1).

"Brandon pitched well," Sanders said. "We need him to step up."

The junior threw six innings, allowing two runs on three hits while striking out six. Though the two runs he allowed were officially recorded as earned runs, they were both scored because of errors.

NU jumped to a 5-0 lead in the



MIKE WARREN/DN

NU SHORTSTOP Kevin Harrington throws the ball in the first game of NU's doubleheader with Nebraska-Omaha. Harrington left the second game with a sprained ankle.

first inning backed by RBI singles from Todd Sears, Kevin Harrington, Andrew Sawyers and Bryan Schmidt.

Junior Clifton Durham, who scored NU's second run of the game, extended his hitting streak to 10 games with an infield single in the first inning.

NU added another run in the third when Harrington drove a 3-2 pitch over the left-field fence, across Avery Avenue and into the weeds. The 350-foot blast was his fifth home run of the season.

"I've been feeling good at the plate all year," Harrington said.

The junior second baseman, who finished the nightcap going

3 for 4 with three RBIs, left the game in the sixth inning after twisting his left ankle sliding into second. Harrington's injury, Sanders said, is not serious.

Nebraska repeated its first-inning feat in the fourth when it manufactured another five runs on four hits to take an 11-2 lead.

Five right-handed pitchers followed Banuelos allowing just one hit in the final three innings. Sanders said he hoped to give his staff some experience before the Rainbow Easter Tournament March 24-30 in Honolulu.

"We would rather get an out on

Please see UNO on 11

Thompson's last chance is near home

By ANTONE OSEKA
Staff Reporter

Nebraska heavyweight Tolly Thompson calls himself a wrestling junkie. He's addicted to the high he gets after winning something as big as a national title.

Two years ago, he had that high as a sophomore when he won the national championship, but two years has been a long wait for another title.



THOMPSON

This weekend, only five miles from his hometown, Thompson will try to reach that high again. The senior from Janesville, Iowa, has come a long way for a final chance that comes at this year's NCAA Championships in Cedar Falls, Iowa.

"The first one's easy," Thompson said. "The second one's tough. You have to do what you did before. I want that feeling, knowing I'm a national champion."

Thompson's quest starts today at the NCAA Championships at 11 a.m. at the UNI-Dome on the Northern Iowa campus in Cedar Falls.

Nebraska qualified six wrestlers for the championships, with Thompson the highest seed of the NU qualifiers. The Huskers also qualified 118-pounder Todd Beckerman, 126-pounder Jeramie Welder, 134-pounder Brad Canoyer, 158-pounder Jason Kraft and 177-pounder Charles McTorry.

Thompson is NU's best chance for a national title. He's seeded third and owns a record of 36-3.

His only losses are to the two wrestlers seeded ahead of him. Thompson's lost twice to Penn State's Kerry McCoy and once to Stephen Neal of Cal State-Bakersfield. Thompson said, however, that he will win the national title.

It's the only goal he's had all year.

"I've been straight on this for a year now," Thompson said. "Every day I've thought about a national title 10

Please see NCAA on 11