

## Sports Opinion



**Mitch Sherman**

### Message left by Robinson still survives

Fifty years ago today, Jackie Robinson shattered a nationwide barrier and changed the face of sports forever. Robinson died 25 years later, but his message lives on today, carried by thousands of athletes — black and white — at every level of competition.

In his first game as a Brooklyn Dodger on April 15, 1947, Robinson went hitless in three at-bats. He scored the winning run in a 5-3 Dodger win over the Boston Braves and a run much bigger in an American triumph.

As the first black to penetrate baseball's color barrier, Robinson set an amazing precedent. Many athletes today fail to recognize Robinson's significance, and although the world of sports has taken great strides since 1947, it still has a long way to go.

"As time goes on, our memoirs of history have shrunk," said Ron Brown, receivers coach for the Nebraska football team. "We don't go back as far as we need with as much detail as we need to. There are things that are forgotten, and we take things for granted."

Brown grew up in a poor family and fought adversity to graduate from the prestigious Brown University in 1979. Since joining the Husker staff 10 years ago, he's passed over several offers to leave Lincoln, last year turning down a coaching position with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

His perseverance and resiliency represent everything that's right about sports and society, much like the attitude Robinson carried 50 years ago.

"Around here, there is no color," Nebraska I-back Jay Sims said, "even though guys have their differences. This anniversary reminds us how far we've come, but it also reminds us how far we have to go."

Individuals like Pat Tyrance, a future orthopedic surgeon, and Tiger Woods, a future sports legend, show us anything is possible. Tyrance, a former NU linebacker who spoke at the Nebraska Student-Athlete Academic Awards Banquet Sunday night, will receive a doctorate and master's degree from Harvard University in June.

Woods shattered another barrier on Sunday, winning golf's most prestigious tournament in Augusta, Ga., the same state in which Robinson was born on Jan. 31, 1919.

"When Tiger Woods does what he does," Brown said, "it sends an inspiring message, and it should not be relegated to one particular race. It should transcend into all races."

Someday it will, when everything for which Robinson stood 50 years ago finally becomes a reality.

Sherman is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan senior reporter.

# Shaw makes case in spring

Sam linebacker spot sees battle between two sophomores.

By ANDREW STRNAD  
Staff Reporter

Brian Shaw is following the path of many Nebraska football players.

After waiting to prove himself for a season, Shaw has entered this spring as NU's top Sam linebacker and is using this chance to stake a claim to a possible starting spot come fall practice.

Things have been good so far in the sophomore's attempt to fill the spot vacated by team tackle leader Jamel Williams.

Shaw, a 6-foot, 215-pounder from Deweese, redshirted as a walk-on during the 1995 season, and saw limited playing time a year ago totaling 22 tackles in playing all 13 games for the Cornhuskers.

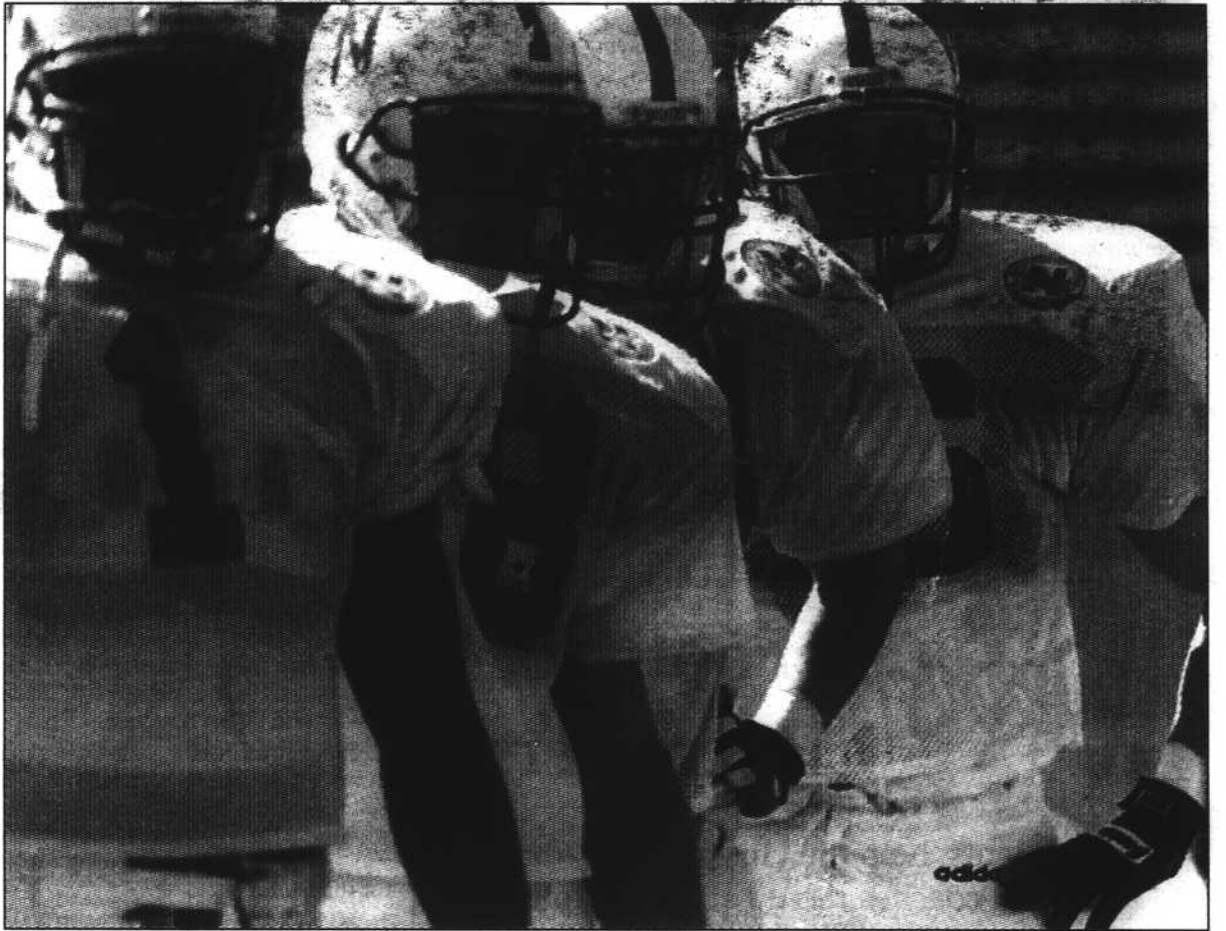
This spring Shaw is at the top of the depth chart, ahead of fellow sophomore Tony Ortiz, which makes this spring that much more important.

"Obviously we both want the starting job, but at the same time we're pushing each other in practice," Shaw said.

NU Linebacker Coach Craig Bohl said Shaw's competitiveness and fire has impressed Bohl this spring, and that is one reason Shaw is penciled in to start in the fall.

"Brian's a tough kid," Bohl said. "He flies to the ball and can pressure the quarterback at the same time as well."

Shaw showed his tenacity during Saturday's scrimmage when he forced and recovered a fumble on his last play of the afternoon.



JAY CALDERON/DN

BRIAN SHAW (right) stands with Eric Johnson, No. 1, Chad Tuttle and Russell Froelich at practice Monday. Shaw is NU's top returning Sam linebacker.

"I was happy about that, especially since it was my last play," Shaw said. "I just penetrated through the line and hunted down the ball carrier just like I'm supposed to."

In fact, it's the time that Shaw spent on the offensive side of the ball in high school that has helped him now.

Shaw was an all-state running back for Sandy Creek High School, where he rushed for more than 5,000 yards, including 2,121 yards his senior season.

Being a former back, Shaw said, has given him the tools to be a run stopper. "I try to anticipate the sort of decisions that a running back makes and

just react to the ball," he said.

Last spring, Shaw came into spring ball having to learn everything about his new position from scratch. This year, with a full regular season and spring under his belt, Shaw said, he

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## NU plays host to Broncos

From Staff Reports

The Nebraska baseball team attempts to get back on the winning track today when it plays host to Hastings College at Buck Beltzer Field at 2:30 p.m.

NU and the Broncos were originally scheduled to play just one game, but the two will now play a doubleheader.

The Cornhuskers (18-22 overall and 4-11 in the Big 12 Conference) returned home from College Station, Texas, on Monday after dropping three straight to Texas A&M. NU has lost seven of its last 10 games after winning eight consecutive contests.

The Huskers need to regroup before a five-game road trip which begins Friday at Oklahoma. Nebraska plays three of those five games at OU this weekend. The Sooners beat the Huskers three times last season.

Nebraska travels to league-leader Texas Tech next for games on April 22 and 23 before returning to Lincoln to play Oklahoma State. NU begins a three-game homestand on April 25.

In other Big 12 baseball news, Baylor outfielder John Topolski and Oklahoma right-handed pitcher Kevin Olsen were named the league's players of the week.

Topolski went 14 for 24 at the plate for the Bears and Olsen gave up one run and five hits in a 10-1 win over Kansas State.

## Reive hangs tough

By GREGG MADSEN  
Staff Reporter

For all its length, life is essentially defined by individual moments.



Reive

routine.

He gingerly sat up and took a few steps before he noticed a tingling sensation in his arms and legs.

"It kind of freaked me out," Reive said. "I got up right away, and it was almost like I had got electrocuted."

The sophomore Cornhusker gymnast separated his fifth cervical vertebra on the fall, and surgery was performed the next morning.

A week and two days later, despite the brace and constant doses of pain pills, Reive doesn't know if he'll ever compete in gymnastics again. But for Reive, that's not a problem. He's just thankful to be alive.

"The doctors told me they didn't know how I managed to walk away from it," Reive said. "A half-inch higher or a half-inch lower and I

wouldn't be walking."

Reive said the surgeon used screws and a titanium plate to fix the damage. He will spend the next three months in a brace, and the bones won't be healed for eight months.

The full extent of the injury will not be known until the bones completely heal, but Reive isn't worried about whether he'll be able to compete again.

"My thoughts personally are that I'm not really that excited to continue doing gymnastics," he said.

Reive had developed into one of the third-ranked Huskers' top all-arounders in 1997. Against Penn State on March 16, he had the highest score of the season for the team with a 57.725 on the all-around.

He said he wouldn't rule out the possibility of competing again. But for now, he said his focus is on his recovery.

"I never want to go through that kind of pain again," Reive said.

NU Coach Francis Allen said he is optimistic that Reive can do gymnastics again.

"It depends on J.D. from here on out," Allen said. "It depends on how he reacts and how the injury heals."

Reive, who has competed in gymnastics since age 3, said the heartbreak of the injury is outweighed by the joy of being alive.

"It's hard to be angry when I'm still here," he said. "Most people would be in a wheelchair. But I feel very fortunate that I'll at least be able to walk again."

## Huskers just happy to play CU

By MIKE KLUCK  
Senior Reporter

Nebraska's stop-and-go softball season will get the green light today — Mother Nature permitting.

The Cornhuskers (16-16 overall and 3-3 in the Big 12 Conference) travel to Omaha to play Creighton in a doubleheader that begins at 6 p.m. at the CU Sports Complex.

NU swept Creighton in a doubleheader April 3 at the NU Softball Complex winning 10-1 and 4-2. But in the 12 days since that game, the Huskers have played only two games — a doubleheader against Texas Tech on Sunday in Iowa.

"We looked a little rusty against Texas Tech," NU Coach Rhonda Revelle said. "But we can't let that bother us, we just have to go out and play."

After having played 12 games in a period of nine days over spring break, the Huskers have played just four times — two games each against Creighton and Texas Tech — since resuming classes.

NU's game against Iowa State on April 5 was postponed after the Huskers jumped out to an 8-0 lead after the first two innings. Those games were rescheduled for last Thursday, but poor

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