

## Sports Opinion



### Mike Kluck Becker is right choice to keep program afloat

Angela Beck said her decision to leave Nebraska and take the gamble by joining the American Basketball League is one of the most difficult decisions she has ever made.

After all, Beck arguably is leaving the best team in her 11-year career behind in Lincoln:

■ Anna DeForge, a probable pre-season All-American, is returning for her senior season.

■ Also returning are five soon-to-be-sophomores, who all saw considerable playing time this season.

■ Beck has also said the five incoming recruits this season is the best class in her career.

But none of those positives could stop the feisty 39-year-old, who has called herself a builder not a maintainer of programs, from rolling the dice with the San Jose Lasers.

Now that Beck has made her decision to move on, Athletic Director Bill Byrne faces one of his own.

He's in a position a Husker athletic director doesn't often face — the hiring of a new coach in any sport.

But Byrne need not go far in his search.

The best candidate for the open Nebraska post won't need a moving truck to come to Lincoln because she already has an office at the Bob Devaney Sports Center and will only need to add two letters to the nameplate on the head coach's door.

Nebraska Assistant Head Coach Theresa Becker will provide the most stability in this situation for a Husker program that is on the verge of being an NCAA Tournament regular.

Becker has paid her dues. She's been an assistant coach for 14 years — eight years at Nebraska — and a head coach for three years at a Division-I program — Iowa State.

Becker has been credited with recruiting 1992 Big Eight player-of-the-year Karen Jennings, the Huskers' only first-team All-American.

Becker's critics point to her 18-63 overall mark and 5-37 conference record at ISU as a factor against her.

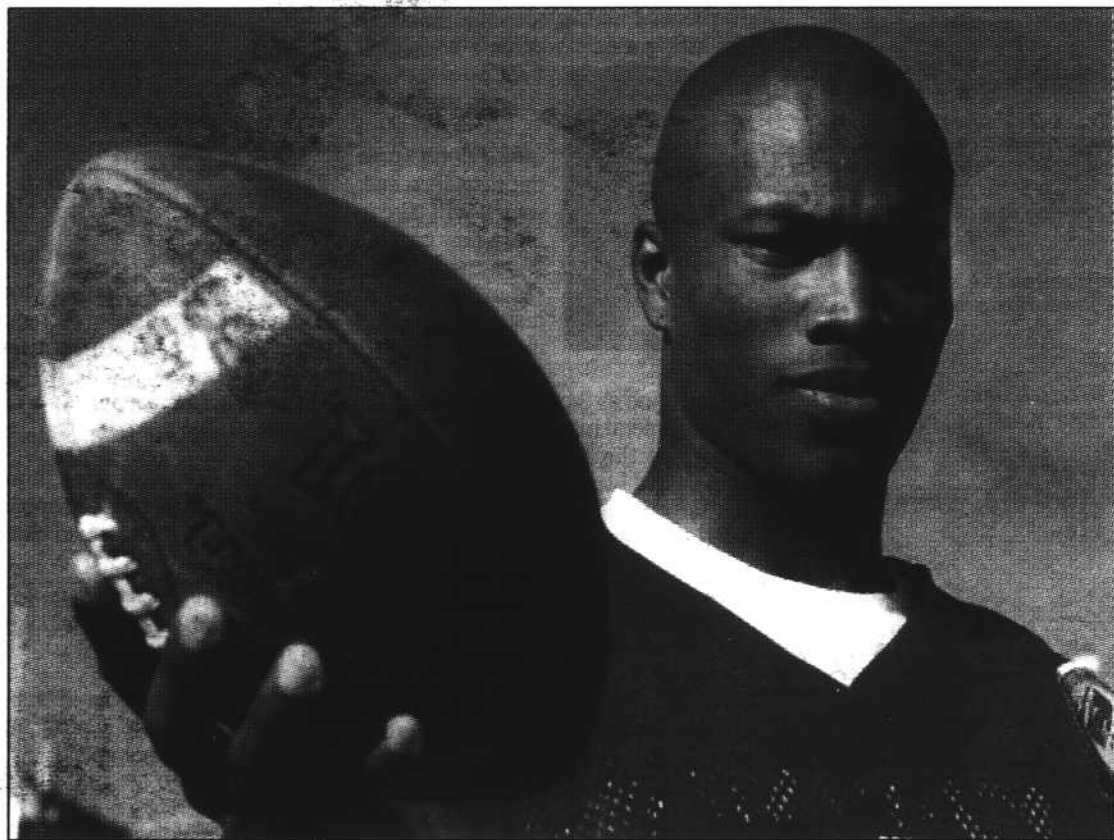
But, if everyone is going to look at her record at Iowa State they must remember she took over a struggling program, played mainly freshmen and sophomores during her time in Ames and left only after the Cyclones changed athletic directors. Becker didn't feel comfortable with the new leadership so she returned to NU.

Seven of ISU's top eight players on this year's NCAA Tournament team were Becker's recruits.

Finally, the most important reason Becker should get the opportunity is because the current NU players want her as their coach and their say should be the loudest of all.

Besides, hiring Becker will turn a positive move for Beck into a positive move for Nebraska.

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



NU QUARTERBACK FRANKIE LONDON has moved up to second on the depth chart after almost leaving NU.

## London earns his chance

By MITCH SHERMAN  
Senior Reporter

Frankie London has finally arrived. Two seasons on the bench, a series of nagging injuries and thoughts of leaving Nebraska placed firmly in the past, London heads into Saturday's Red-White Game as the Cornhuskers' No. 2 quarterback with a new outlook on football and the talent to lead the NU offense.

Less than four months ago, London, a third-year sophomore next fall, came within days of transferring.

"I was pretty much packed and ready to go," he said.

But after meeting with Coach Tom Osborne and Turner Gill, London's

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## Klassen makes immediate impact

By ANDREW STRNAD  
Staff Reporter

Stella Klassen's quick sprint to success this year has been a bit of a surprise to her.

After all, Klassen joined the NU women's track team as a freshman this season and is now one of the NU's most accomplished sprinters.

In fact, success has almost come to easy so Klassen is looking ahead to brighter things.

And qualifying for NCAA Outdoor Championships will be the perfect cap to a season where she has burst onto the NU track scene.

Klassen, who is from Henderson, made an impact immediately in the indoor season by earning a spot on the 4 x 400-meter relay team.

The team of Klassen, Jill Myatt, Charmaine Burton and La'Tisha Croom won the title at the United States Track and Field Meet in March, before a third-place finish at the NCAA Indoor meet in Indianapolis.

The success Klassen enjoyed during the indoor season is making a difference so far in the outdoor season, she said.

"The experience gained from the indoor season, especially going to nationals, has done a lot of good for me," Klassen said.

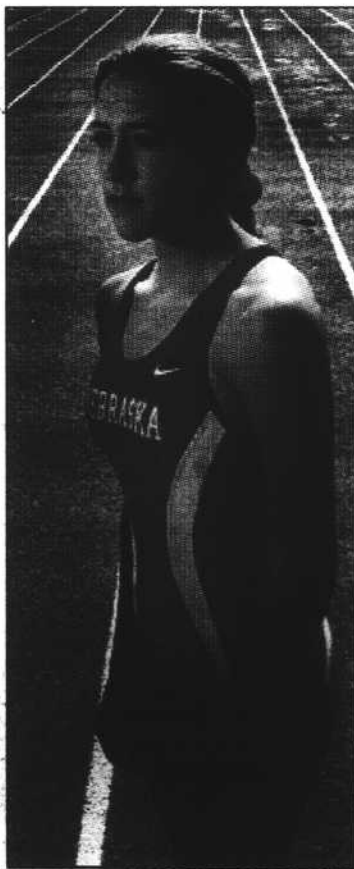
When the outdoor season started, Klassen shaved more than two seconds off her personal-best time in the 400-meter dash.

Her time of 53.62 seconds is the 13th-fastest time in the country and a mark she didn't expect.

"I was hoping to break 54, but I was surprised I did it so quickly," Klassen said.

NU Coach Gary Pepin said Klassen's early season performances were a surprise, but not a shock.

"We certainly knew she could run that fast," Pepin said. "We saw it during the indoor season, espe-



DANIEL LUEDERT/DN  
STELLA KLASSEN has become one of the Nebraska women's track and field team's top sprinters in her first outdoor season.

cially with the relays."

The goal for Klassen remains the same, a trip to the indoor nationals at Bloomington, Ind., in June.

Klassen has already qualified as part of the 4 x 400-meter relay team, and she has posted a provisional qualifying time in the 400 meters. But Klassen said she needs to improve greatly so she can earn an automatic ride to Indiana.

"A 53.62 probably won't get me there," Klassen said. "I don't think my time will make it as of now," Klassen said.

## Players know Beck made right choice

Huskers say Theresa  
Becker is good choice  
for replacement.

By MIKE KLUCK  
Senior Reporter

The shock and surprise of Angela Beck's acceptance of the head coaching and assistant general manager job

of the American Basketball League's San Jose Lasers began to wear off for the Cornhusker players Wednesday.

Instead, they realized the opportunity Beck seized.

"I was shocked at first," said Emily Thompson, who will be a fifth-year senior next season. "I really didn't expect her to leave this year with how good we are going to be next season. Now I guess I'm real happy for Coach Beck more than anything else."

NU players learned of Beck's decision in an unscheduled team meeting Sunday night in the press room at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Freshman Nicole Kubik said the meeting was very emotional with Beck and many of her players were in tears.

Kubik said the players were called Sunday by Assistant Coach Bobbi Morse who informed them of the meeting. After Morse called, the players tried to get more information by calling around to one another.

"It was a weird meeting because we didn't know what the meeting was about," Kubik said. "But when we got there we all had a pretty good idea."

"If she waited until we sucked, then she wouldn't get offers like that."

CORI MCDILL  
NU women's basketball player

NU junior Anna DeForge, who was a first-team All-Big 12 Conference player and an honorable mention All-American this season, said she was shocked when she learned of Beck's decision.

"I'm disappointed she's not going to be here for my senior season," said DeForge, the team's leading scorer last year. "I'm happy for her because this is a good opportunity. She should have never even thought twice about turning down that job."

What surprised many of the players about Beck's acceptance of the position was the timing.

NU just finished a 19-9 season, in which the Huskers started with a school-record nine-game winning streak and at one point were 16-1 and ranked in the Top 25. Nebraska also just missed making its second straight NCAA Tournament.

Besides DeForge returning, five sophomores-to-be who contributed significantly this season return next year. Plus Beck landed a recruiting class that she considered one of the best in her 11-year career at Nebraska.

"The timing is not perfect," sophomore Cori McDill said. "But if she

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