

Sports Opinion



Vince D'Adamo Leaving school for the pros is no big deal

As another college athletic season winds down, I feel compelled to sound off about one thing that frankly makes me sick every time I hear it mentioned.

I have had it with all the hubbub about athletes leaving school early to enter the NFL and NBA drafts.

Granted, there is a lot to be said for athletes like Nebraska defensive linemen Grant Wistrom and Jared Tomich, both of whom decided to stay at NU for their senior seasons.

Tomich, taken in the second round by New Orleans, almost certainly would have gone in round one had he decided to forgo his final year. Likewise with Wistrom this year.

Profit is not a dirty word. I respect Tomich and Wistrom for their decisions. But if athletes have a chance to become first-round draft choices and set themselves up for life — like Kentucky sophomore basketball player Ron Mercer will surely do in the June NBA draft — with a seven-figure-a-year salary, there is a definite upside.

Who cares if they sacrifice another year of history classes for the money? Is anyone saying they can't go back to school at any point? It's not like somebody is tying these athletes down with a rope and saying, "If you decide to leave school early, you can't go back."

Look at Dallas Cowboys running back Emmitt Smith. Smith, who left Florida after his junior year in 1989, got his degree last summer.

The same goes for the Washington Bullets' Juwan Howard. He left Michigan after his junior year (1994) and earned his degree in May 1995.

It makes sense that other athletes have either gone back and earned a degree or are taking classes now.

"I think it's better that they don't enter early," sports agent extraordinaire Leigh Steinberg said. "It's a matter of personal choice."

"But there is a misnomer that each of the athletes who comes out early never finish school, get hurt or don't make it. The reality is that these people are motivated to finish their degrees."

Among those athletes represented by Steinberg who have gone back to hitting the books are Drew Bledsoe, Jeff George, Andre Ware and Russell Maryland.

There is no written law that states every 17-year-old must attend college. And since people are allowed to go to college by choice, they should be able to leave by choice. Nowhere in the how-to-survive-life-in-the-NFL-or-NBA handbook does it say that it's mandatory to finish college.

If you have the chance to set yourself up for life, as Steve Miller once said, "Come on, take the money and run."

D'Adamo is a senior broadcasting major and Daily Nebraskan staff reporter.



MATT MILLER/DN

TRESSA THOMPSON, Nebraska's All-American shot putter, has her sights set on the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney, Australia.

Long road leads Thompson to stardom in shot-put circle

BY MITCH SHERMAN
Senior Reporter

State Highway 84, a winding road in northeast Nebraska, connects the world to Bloomfield, where Jim and Syble Thompson raised three girls. Their second-oldest daughter, Tressa, a tomboy before the time she began junior high, chose an alternate road on which to leave the Knox County town of 1,186 people.

Tressa Thompson chose the straight path to stardom.

Four years removed from Bloomfield High School, where she played for the state championship football team in 1990, Thompson soon embarks on the next leg of a journey that she expects to land her in Sydney, Australia, for the 2000 Summer Olympic Games as an American shot putter.

The most storied thrower in University of Nebraska history and the most famous citizen in Bloomfield, Thompson owns nearly every shot-put record in the NU books. Earlier this season, she set the NCAA indoor mark with a heave of 60 feet, 7 3/4 inches.

"Working with Tressa has been a learning experience for me," said Mark Colligan, Nebraska's head throws coach since 1990. "My impressions of good throwing as a coach used to be far less than what she's already done. For her not to be totally pompous and full of herself, I think that's the best quality she has."

But for this blond-haired, blue-eyed Cornhusker, Nebraska serves as only the beginning, the foundation for what she hopes blooms into a career that places her alongside a quickly growing group of U.S. track-and-field legends.

After next month's NCAA Outdoor Championships, in which Thompson can eclipse the only remaining obstacle in her collegiate career, she competes in the U.S. Track and Field Championships, June 11 through 15 in Indianapolis. At that meet, Thompson hopes to qualify for the World Track and Field Championships — the world's second-most prestigious event behind the Olympics — August 2 through 10 in Athens, Greece.

"I plan on doing some big

Please see TRESSA on 11

Tracking Tressa

In four years at Nebraska, shot putter Tressa Thompson has rewritten the Cornhusker record books and established a new NCAA indoor mark. Here's a look at her top five all-time throws, each of which has occurred this season:

Distance Meet

60-7 3/4	NIAC Championships (indoor)
59-5 3/4	NCAA Championships (indoor)
59-0	Big 12 Championships (indoor)
58-5 3/4	Willie Williams Invite (outdoor)
58-0 3/4	Drake Relays (outdoor)

Huskers focus on Cowgirls

NU opens the Big 12 Softball Tournament at Oklahoma City, NU Coach Rhonda Revelle isn't thinking about winning the whole thing.

BY MIKE KLUCK
Senior Reporter

Entering this weekend's Big 12 Softball Tournament at Oklahoma City, NU Coach Rhonda Revelle isn't thinking about winning the whole thing.

Instead, Revelle wants the Cornhuskers (26-20 overall and 10-6 in the Big 12 Conference) to focus on the little things they did at the end of the season. NU won nine of its final 11 games, which included a seven-game win streak.

In the last 11 games, NU's bats have come to life as the Huskers hit .282, improving their season average to .244. NU leads the conference with a .432 slugging percentage and 56 walks.

The fourth-seeded Huskers begin the tournament at the ASA Hall of

Please see OSU on 10

To finish .500 NU must win last six games

BY DAVID WILSON
Staff Reporter

In the last 20 years, under the reign of Coach John Sanders, the Nebraska baseball team has finished below .500 once.

The Cornhuskers (25-31 overall and 5-19 in the Big 12 Conference) must win all six of their remaining scheduled games to finish at .500 this season.

Nebraska will play host to Texas tonight at 7 in the first of a three-game series at Buck Belzter Field. The two teams meet again at 2 p.m. on Saturday and 1 p.m. on Sunday.

Though the Huskers have no chance to make the Big 12 Conference Tournament, the Longhorns (27-21 and 10-14) are one of three teams jockeying for the final position.

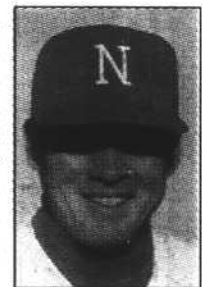
In order for UT to qualify, it must sweep Nebraska this weekend, Iowa State must take two games from Missouri, and Kansas State needs to win one game against Kansas.

The Tigers (24-25 and 12-14) currently rank sixth in the league and Kansas (30-21 and 12-15) ranks seventh. Texas is eighth, just one game behind Missouri.

Please see TEXAS on 10



Revelle



Sanders