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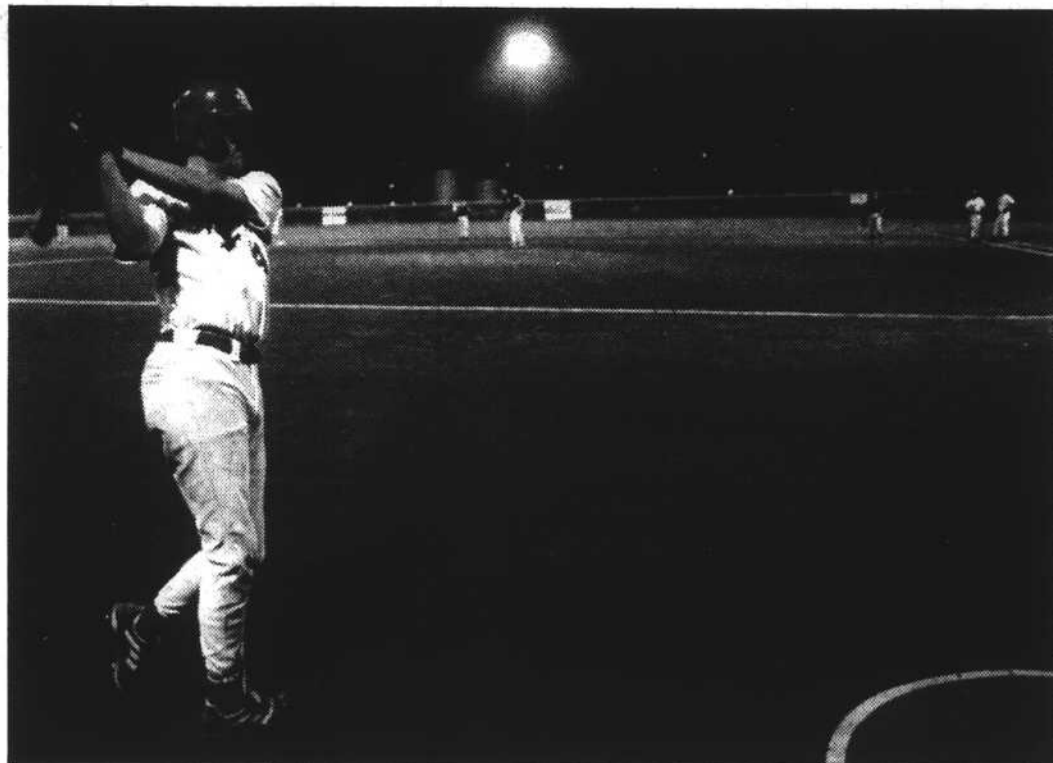
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**TODD SEARS, a former Nebraska first baseman, was selected in the third round of last week's Amateur Baseball Draft by the Colorado Rockies.**

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## Sears eager to play as professional

BY DAVID WILSON  
Staff Reporter

Todd Sears just wants to play baseball.

One week after being selected in the third round by the Colorado Rockies in the June Amateur Baseball Draft, the former Nebraska first baseman has found himself in the middle of a contract negotiation — and not on a baseball field.

But that goes with the territory, Sears said.

"It's kind of complicated," Sears said, "all the games that are played — the little things that they try to do. Colorado's not that bad, but I heard that other teams try to intimidate the player. I just want to get out and play as soon as I can. It's kind of frustrating, but it's exciting as well. Colorado has been great to me so far."

Rather than hiring an agent, Sears said he is dealing with the Rockies himself. But Sears is not alone. Within the last week, Sears said, he has spoken with NU Coach John Sanders and former Cornhusker Darin Erstad, who was a first-round selection by the Anaheim Angels in 1995.

"They told me some things to expect and some things to do," he said.

As a junior, Sears finished the 1997 season batting a team-high .421, while also leading the Huskers with 17 home runs, 79 RBI, 173 total bases, a .742 slugging percentage, 62 walks, a .543 on-base percentage, and a .985 fielding percentage. The first baseman was a first-team All-Big 12 Conference selection and was also named a third-team All-American.

"He ranks right up there in the top echelon of players I've coached," Sanders said. "He had three outstanding years and he was a joy to coach."

In 1995, Sears hit .346 with 10 home runs and 50 RBI and was named the Big Eight Co-Freshman of the year. As a sophomore last season, Sears hit .380 with six homers and 62 RBI. In three seasons at Nebraska, Sears ranks second in team history with a .402 career batting average, sixth all-time with 33 home runs, second all-time with 46 doubles, and second all-time with 191 runs scored.

Despite his accomplishments, Sears said, he was surprised to be taken so high in the draft. Sanders, on the other hand, said he expected Sears to be taken a little higher.

"To me, Todd Sears is a first-round pick," Sanders said. "I'm a little prejudiced, obviously, but Todd was their first position player taken. That's a good spot for Todd. I like his

Please see SEARS on 3

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