

Sports Opinion



Dave Wilson

## Garth Brooks excels at music, falters at sports

When country music superstar Garth Brooks decided to pursue his career full time, he wasn't in a honky-tonk bar in Nashville.

He was in the pole-vault pit at the Ed Weir Track in Lincoln after failing to qualify for the Big Eight finals.

"I thought my life was over," Brooks said, "and one of the trainers walked by and said, 'Now you can get on to what you're supposed to be doing.' And she meant the music."

A javelin thrower from 1981-84 at Oklahoma State, Brooks made his first trip to Lincoln in 1984 for the Big Eight Championships. Though he was a decent athlete, Brooks didn't have an Olympic career ahead of him, former Oklahoma State track coach Jim Bolding said.

"It was not a strong event for us at that time," Bolding said. "He was a good baseball player, and it was an event he just tried out for. I don't recall him ever placing in a meet. He was out there and he made the effort."

But as the most energetic entertainer in country music, the Yukon, Okla., native never failed to display his athletic ability on stage.

"He still appears to be pretty stout," Bolding said. "But he has to be in pretty good shape. He definitely had some natural athletic ability."

While on partial athletic scholarship at Oklahoma State, the athletic department saw Brooks' true talent. Certain areas would be set up prior to football games and other athletic events for Brooks to play country music.

When he returns to his home state, Brooks doesn't forget the people who helped him get started.

Just over a month ago at a show in Tulsa, Okla., Bolding said he had a chance to talk to Brooks for the first time in several years. And through fame and fortune, not much had changed.

Brooks is still a good ol' boy. "He's still pretty humble and a guy that you feel you could talk to," Bolding said. "I think that's probably one of the things that appeals to fans. Of course, we may be a little biased here in Stillwater."

Until Wednesday, I thought Bolding was a little biased.

But after running into Garth at the Bob Devaney Sports Center, I realized that Bolding hadn't stretched the truth one bit.

Garth is one of the most down-to-earth guys I've ever had the pleasure of speaking with. And though he may not look it, Garth was and is an athlete.

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

## Gill: Newcombe will play wingback

By SAM MCKEWON  
Staff Reporter

Freshman Bobby Newcombe, who passed up a redshirt season to play football immediately for Nebraska, is being moved from quarterback to wingback for the rest of the season.

The decision was announced by quarterbacks coach Turner Gill at the Big Red Breakfast in Omaha Thursday, where he told the crowd that in order to get Newcombe on the field, he would start catching the ball rather than passing it. Newcombe is also one of NU's top three kick-return men.

"He a talented guy that we want to get on the field," Gill said after practice. "We feel like that's the best place for him to be right now."

Newcombe will practice exclusively with the wide receivers, while sophomore Monte Christo moves to third-string quarterback behind senior

Scott Frost and sophomore Frankie London.

Coach Tom Osborne said the move related to the lack of depth at the wingback position as much as it did to Newcombe's ability on the field.

"We don't have a lot of guys there," Osborne said. "We still have Shevin Wiggins and Lance Brown there, but we lost Sean Wieting and John Gibson, so Bobby gives us a little more depth."

Newcombe will come in as the No. 3 wingback behind Wiggins and Brown, respectively. Both Wieting and Gibson went down with knee injuries earlier this year.

Newcombe said the coaches first expressed interest in him playing wingback during two-a-day practices in August. He added that he had been tak-

ing snaps at wingback in practice, and started practicing the position full time this week.

Newcombe said the transition has been made easier with the help of receivers coach Ron Brown.

"Coach Brown has really helped me adjust to playing the position," Newcombe said. "It was really an easy decision to make."

Newcombe had a strong start in his first game against Akron, rushing for 32 yards on seven carries and passing for 15 yards. He did not play in the Washington game.

Osborne said Nebraska did not want to waste Newcombe's freshman season with mop-up duty as a third-string quarterback.

"We didn't want to waste his year of eligibility," Osborne said. "It's our thinking that Bobby can be a great quarterback, but we need to get him on the field."



Newcombe

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## Rugby teams start season with success

By NATE ODGAARD  
Staff Reporter

Though the Nebraska women's rugby team lacks the tradition the men's team has established for more than 25 years, both teams have one thing in common this year - early season success.

After learning the game in its first year of existence last year, the Husker women's club team taught Iowa State a lesson, kicking off this year's fall season with a 47-5 route over the Cyclones on Saturday.

Sophomore Cassie Ringgenberg said Nebraska's win was a sign of good things to come.

"I think it helps that we have more of an experienced team," she said. "I think this year's team is much better than last year's."

When the Husker women formed the team last year, few players knew how the game was played. It showed on the field as NU failed to score in any of its five fall-season games. They managed to win two games, while losing six, in the spring.

After starting 1-0, Ringgenberg and the team has good reason to be optimistic about this fall.

"We have a lot of very good, impressive rookies, and our returning girls are doing a wonderful job," Ringgenberg said.

Mary Spicka has sparked the



SOPHOMORE SEAN LEWIS carries the ball during a drill Tuesday afternoon in front of Harper-Schramm-Smith Residence Halls.

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## KSU coach discovers challenging vocation

By SHANNON HEFFELFINGER  
Assignment Reporter

Jim McLaughlin spent the majority of his volleyball career coaching the University of Southern California and the USA Olympic men's teams.

But it wasn't until an interview session with the Kansas State women's team that McLaughlin finally found the opportunity for which he was look-



ing.

"I knew I could help these women differently than I could help the USA guys," McLaughlin said. "The challenge there was to develop game plans. With the women here, it's developing the qualities it takes to be a great team."

"We're developing commitment and loyalty and trust, along with the volleyball tactics. So far, it's been a great situation."

McLaughlin stepped into the Wildcat job vacated by Jim Moore, who now coaches Big 12 Conference

rival Texas. Moore guided KSU to its first-ever NCAA Tournament appearance in 1996, leaving McLaughlin with big shoes to fill.

With three starters returning from last season's 26-9 team, McLaughlin hopes to follow in Moore's footsteps. Kansas State, tied for fourth place in the league last year, and Moore predicts a similar finish this season.

The Wildcats (8-3) begin their conference run tonight against No. 24 Colorado before playing host to fifth-ranked Nebraska Saturday at 7 p.m. The Cornhuskers (9-2), who play Kansas (7-6) Friday night, present KSU with its toughest challenge of the season so far, McLaughlin said. "Nebraska is extremely talented,"

McLaughlin said. "They have a USA-caliber player in Lisa Reitsma and a great setter. We'll have our hands full."

The Wildcats will look to senior setter Devon Rynning, junior middle blocker Val Wieck and junior hitter Kim Zschau for leadership during the NU match. Rynning has already earned one conference player-of-the-week honor this season, averaging 13.11 assists per game.

The experience of the three returning starters has helped to ease the team's transition into a new system, McLaughlin said.

"Those three have helped the

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