

Sports Opinion



## Antone Oseka Kids revive sports' true significance

Every Monday night, I lose my voice.

I yell for 45 minutes straight, and no one yells back at me. Six little boys look at me, nod and say "OK, coach." Then, we drink juice boxes.

Usually, they do the exact opposite of what I tell them. Not out of spite, just because their way is more fun than mine. And they really don't understand the importance of defense. All they want is to score a goal.

Alex, Chad, Dave, Jay, Joe and Sean are only in the first grade, and I'm their YMCA micro-soccer coach. They still play soccer because it's fun. They don't comprehend wins or losses. They aren't thinking about scholarships or national championships or the money of the pros.

They're thinking about having fun. For the record, we've only lost two games this season. And we contributed to our first demise (4-2) by scoring a goal on ourselves in the first half. I don't feel bad. The team we lost to scored 22 goals in 24 minutes the game before.

When I started coaching, I thought we were going to get killed every game we played. I was inexperienced in soccer coaching, and the best advice the manual had was, "Let them play, they'll figure it out." For our first practice, we ran a few passing drills and a few scoring drills, then started the game.

Micro-soccer is different from anything you've ever seen. The field and goals are smaller and it's three-on-three. The YMCA gives you 45 minutes with your team every Monday night. The first 20 minutes you practice, then you play two 12-minute halves with a one-minute halftime. Then, the game is over and everyone has juice boxes.

These six guys have reminded me what sports is all about. It isn't about whether you win or lose - most times my boys ask if we won or not - it's about having fun on the field. It's about playing with your friends, not about off-the-field problems.

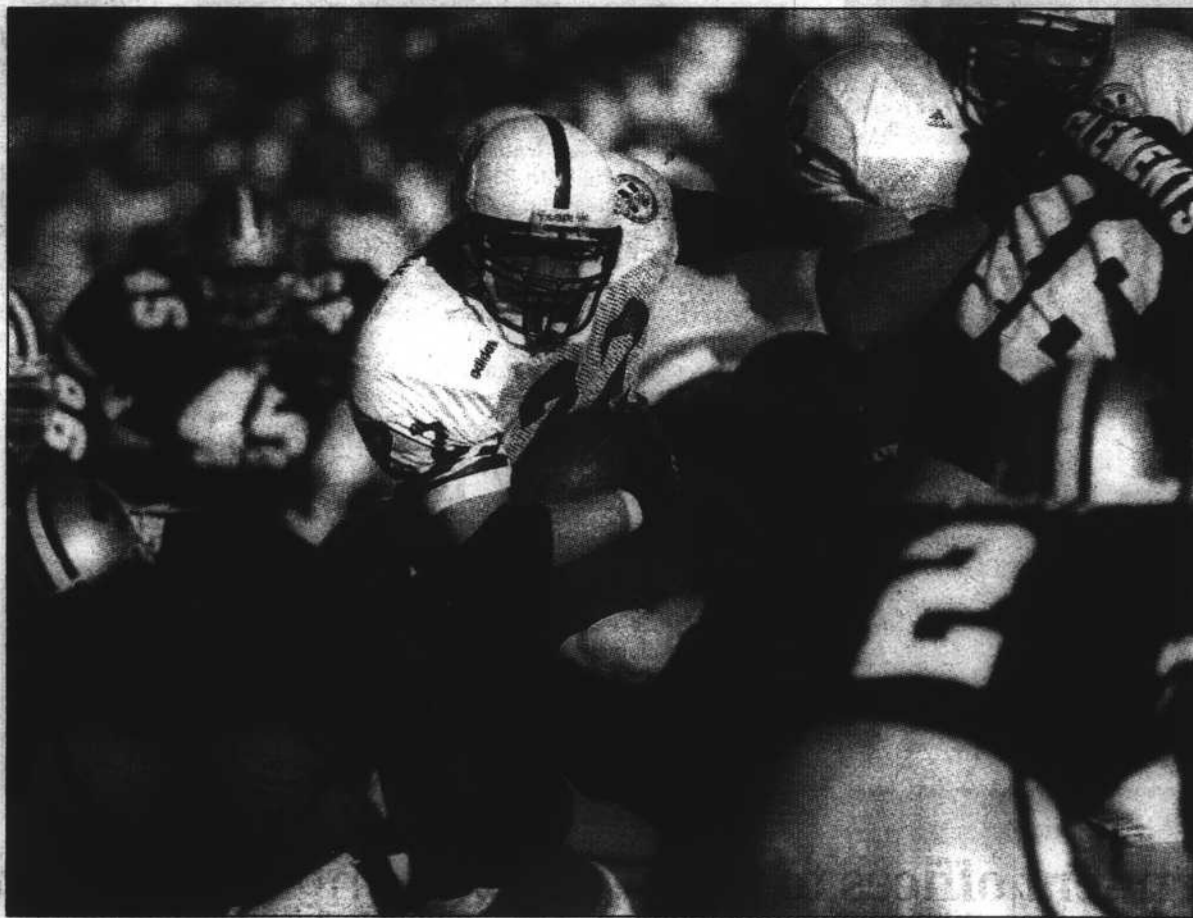
Besides, they're all pretty talented. It's no coincidence that we win more than we lose.

Sean is a left-footed powerhouse. Chad is a speedster who almost has wings on his feet. Alex will bowl over anyone to get to the ball. Jay, although he's the smallest in stature, can put a pass on his teammate's foot.

Joe has a good shot, and always knows where the net is. Dave is the most-improved player; he can steal the ball away from anyone. I just stand there and yell instructions. They listen briefly, then they have fun.

I don't care, I'm their coach. I always get a juice box.

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



RYAN SODERLIN/DN

**NU SOPHOMORE FULLBACK Ben Kingston carried the ball last year against Kansas State for a six-yard gain in the Huskers' 39-3 win in Manhattan, Kan. Rushing yards against the Wildcats may be difficult this year as KSU only averages giving up 114 yards a game on the ground.**

## NU expects challenge Osborne: K-State deserves attention

BY ANTONE OSEKA  
Senior Reporter

Even after 29 straight years of wins against Kansas State, Nebraska isn't overlooking the Wildcats.

Instead, the NU coaching staff thinks this could be the toughest game left on the Cornhusker schedule.

"It's not a team with obvious weakness," Nebraska coach Tom Osborne said. "I would say, looking at the remainder of our schedule ... Kansas State is the most dangerous team we have left. Now that may change, but the way they are playing now, I don't see anyone playing as well as Kansas State is right now."

The Huskers (3-0) and the Wildcats (3-0) kick off at 6:07 p.m. Saturday at Memorial Stadium in a game that will be televised seminally on FX.

Nebraska is coming off a 27-14 upset win over Washington two weeks ago, while KSU shut out Bowling Green 58-0 last week. It was an impressive outing for the Wildcats as they had over 638 yards of offense, 429 on the ground.

"I can't remember a K-State team having more than 400 yards rushing," Osborne said. "They ran the ball

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TOM OSBORNE  
Nebraska football coach

extremely well."

Nebraska will be looking to shut down the Wildcat offense while trying to counter with some offense of its own. Against Bowling Green, the Kansas State defense allowed only 56 yards of total offense.

"I don't care who you are playing," Osborne said of the Wildcats' win over Bowling Green, "when a team plays that well, it has to get people's attention."

The biggest factor Saturday might be the Memorial Stadium crowd, as many Kansas State players haven't

Please see KSU on 10

## Soccer team defends at home

BY JAY SAUNDERS  
Staff Reporter

The No. 10 Nebraska women's soccer team is halfway through an eight-game home stand that continues this weekend with a 7 p.m. game Friday against Missouri, and a 1 p.m. game on Sunday against Kansas at the Abbott Sports Complex.

The Cornhuskers (8-2 overall, 4-2 in the Big 12) have won four straight games, and all four have been shutouts. Wins against conference foes Iowa State, Baylor and Texas Tech have pushed the Huskers into fourth in the Big 12.

Missouri (3-6, 1-4) and Kansas (3-7, 1-4) are both young teams in the bottom half of the conference standings.

After the Huskers' 5-0 victory over Texas Tech (which also has a losing conference record) last weekend, Nebraska coach John Walker said the team did not play a great game against the Red Raiders.

Walker said the level of the opposition shouldn't be a factor in the Huskers' performance.

"We should have a standard that is acceptable to us," Walker said. "It should be a constant in training and in every game."

Soccer

What has been a constant is Nebraska's ability to keep its opponents off the scoreboard. In the last six games, NU has only allowed two goals. For the season, the Huskers have only allowed five goals.

Last weekend against Baylor and Tech, the Huskers shut down three of the conference's leading scorers while recording two shutouts.

One of the keys to the Husker defense this season has been senior all-American goalkeeper Rebecca Hornbacher, who sprained her thumb against Texas Tech but has been cleared to play this weekend. Hornbacher is seventh in the nation and second in the region with 0.47 goals against average.

NU, which enters this weekend with four consecutive shutouts, is going for a school record. The Husker record for consecutive shutouts is five, but Walker said the team is not thinking about the record.

"We talk about good, solid team-defending," Walker said. "If you have that then the stats take care of themselves."

Please see SOCCER on 10

Volleyball



## 'Maturing' Missouri to face NU

The Tigers' record has soared under the direction of Coach Disa Johnson.

BY SHANNON HEFFELFINGER  
Assignment Reporter

In three years at the helm of the Missouri volleyball team, Coach Disa Johnson has directed the Tigers through a slow climb out of the bottom of the Big 12 Conference.

One month into her fourth season, the Tigers (11-6 overall, 0-2 in the conference) have taken a sudden leap.

The Missouri volleyball team returns the same personnel from last season's 0-28 squad, but Johnson said Nebraska will face a new and improved Tiger version Saturday at 4 p.m. at the NU Coliseum.

The Huskers face Iowa State tonight at 7:30 at the NU Coliseum.

MU has posted an 11-6 record in 1997, a number that almost equals the 15 wins accumulated in Johnson's tenure.

"We're just playing at a different level," Johnson said. "We're really making progress in that we can push back when we're pushed at. We never had the ability to do that before."

"I know we're maturing. We've been through the growing pains and we're turning things around. It's just part of the process, and I think we've turned the corner."

Johnson points to the emergence of freshman setter Heather Gerber as a factor in the team's early season success this year. Gerber, who has totaled 496 assists and averages 9.36 assists per game, has allowed the team to improve offensively.

"We've always had good hitters, but we've never had a setter to go with her," Johnson said. "The reason last year happened the way it did is because we didn't have a setter. Both of them were hurt, and we had an outside hitter setting for us. In our conference, it's very difficult to win really close matches without that firepower."

Nebraska owns a 32-match winning streak over the Tigers, and has swept Missouri 12 times since 1984. But Johnson said her team - which lost to No. 1 Penn State and fourth-ranked Stanford earlier this season - is not intimidated by Nebraska.

"The coach that used to be here just wanted the team to try to score a few points when it played teams like Nebraska," Johnson said. "That's not our mentality since I've been here."

"Straight up, player for player, Nebraska is obviously more talented than us. But if they take us lightly, it could be a great match."

Note:

Nebraska junior outside hitter Renee Saunders suffered a fractured left foot Thursday morning. The team will not know the seriousness of the injury until viewing X-rays, NU assistant coach Cathy Noth said, but Saunders is expected to be sidelined for four weeks.

"She is one of our better ball handlers defensively, so we will look for others to step up," Noth said. "It could be Megan Korver or Katie Jahnke playing the full rotation now."