

Sports Opinion



Shannon Heffelfinger NU player travels far for dreams

This Saturday, Joe Walker returns to Baylor's Floyd Casey Stadium, the place where he had hoped to realize a lifelong dream.

Two years ago, Walker, now a Nebraska defensive back, committed to the Baylor football team.

A native of Arlington, Texas, Walker was excited about the chance to don a green jersey, to compete at a school that represented his home state and, most importantly, to run onto the field in front of his mom.

The next thing he knew, Baylor didn't want him.

Walker didn't make grades. Too bad, the Bears said.

Dream over.

Walker, upset and embarrassed, delayed his college enrollment for a year. Walker wasn't on the field when Baylor opened its season last fall.

Instead, Walker watched the games on TV while other freshmen ran onto the field, heard the cheers and lived his dream.

"It was a very sad feeling," Walker said. "Sometimes, I would just go home and cry late at night in my bed."

Frustrated but determined, Walker refused to abandon his goal of playing Division I football.

After working hard to achieve the grades he needed, Walker began practicing with the Huskers last spring against the wishes of his mom, who Walker described as "shaken" when he gave up Waco for Lincoln.

"She was really sad to see me leave and go so far away," Walker said. "She only wanted what was best for me."

Four games into the season, Walker appears to have made the right decision. Walker secured the No. 2 spot at rover last weekend against No. 12 Kansas State. Walker picked off KSU quarterback Michael Bishop in the fourth quarter and returned the snag for a 71-yard touchdown.

"It's a chip off my back to be here," Walker said. "I'm finally doing what I love to do."

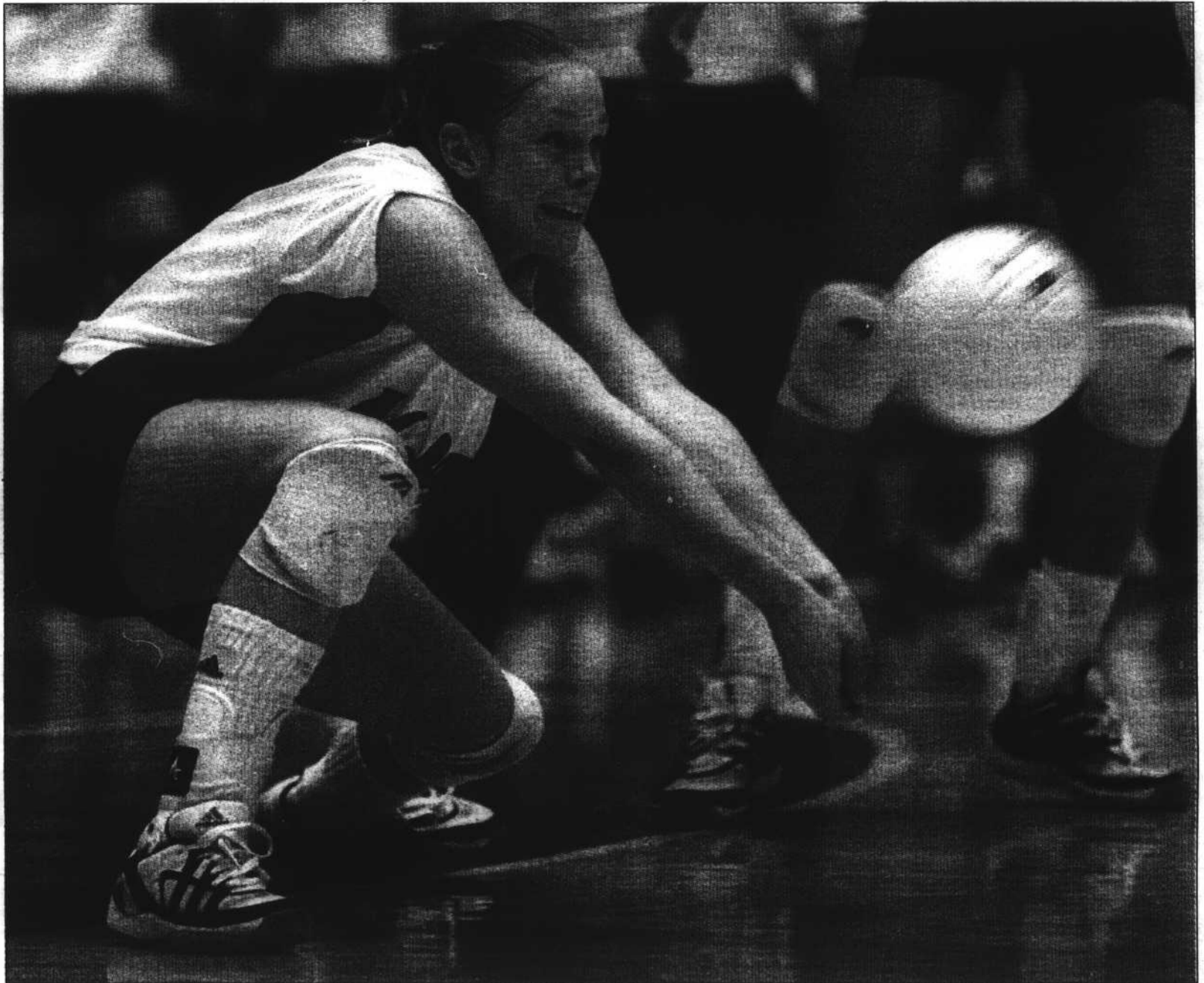
Walker returns to the place that no longer holds his dreams Saturday when NU travels to Waco.

One year later than he thought he would, Walker will run onto the field at Floyd Casey Stadium.

But he will wear a red jersey. And somewhere in the stands, his mom will be smiling.

Heffelfinger is a sophomore news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan assignment reporter.

Buffaloed!



RYAN SODERLIN/DN

NEBRASKA'S MANDY MONSON digs for the volleyball during the NU vs. CU volleyball game at the Bob Devaney Sports Center Wednesday night.

Colorado ends NU's 41-match home win streak

■ The home loss is NU's first-ever in Big 12 conference play.

Volleyball Score	
Colorado	11 15 15 6 15
Nebraska	15 9 7 15 8



BY SHANNON HEFFELFINGER
Assignment Reporter

One volleyball team played with passion Wednesday night at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

One team attacked its opponent with power, swinging and hitting around, through and over the hands of opposing blockers. One team drove its serves forcefully across the

net, capturing momentum at key moments in the match. One team won because it deserved to, Nebraska coach Terry Pettit said.

And that team wasn't the Cornhuskers.

No. 22 Colorado built a mountain of momentum, and the fifth-ranked Huskers collapsed under the pressure, their 41-home match winning streak crumbling to the ground with them. NU (13-3 overall and 4-1

in the league) suffered its first conference home loss in the 23-year history of the program in front of a season-high crowd of 5,432 at the Devaney Center, falling to the Buffaloes 11-15, 15-9, 15-7, 6-15, 15-8 in 2½ hours.

"Colorado won because they worked harder than us and played harder than us," Pettit said. "And if we would have won, it wouldn't have been an accurate reflection of the match. We didn't serve tough, and we didn't play with passion. I don't remember the last time that happened. I don't know that it ever has."

Nebraska played Wednesday

without Jaime Krondak, who sat out with a sore back. In addition, NU missed Renee Saunders, whose broken foot kept her out of action. Setter Fiona Nepo played despite suffering from the stomach flu. Reitsma led Nebraska with 20 kills, and Mandy Monson added 15.

CU (9-4 and 5-0) struck first in the rally-scoring fifth game, took the lead and never relinquished it. Nebraska challenged the Buffaloes, coming within 9-7 at the midway point.

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Regional powers choose prospects early

BY DAVID WILSON
Senior Reporter

Before the first football game of his senior season at Auburn High School, Chris Kelsay had already decided where he was going to college.

The 6-foot-4½, 235-pounder accepted a scholarship offer from Nebraska at the Cornhuskers' football camp last June. Kelsay, like many high school athletes across the nation, said he didn't want to deal with outside pressures during his senior year.

"I don't have to worry about the

colleges and everybody bothering me," Kelsay said. "I can focus on my grades."

Powerhouse football schools with strong regional appeal are taking advantage of this mentality by offering scholarships to top recruiting targets before their senior seasons. As a result, these schools pencil in many of their available scholarships before February, when high school seniors can sign letters of intent.

It's a win-win situation, Penn State Recruiting Coordinator Jay Paterno said.

The Nittany Lions get most of the

credit for starting the national trend of offering scholarships at summer camp.

"We had a kid in our football camp that had been coming for three years," Paterno said. "We said, 'Heck with him, let's take him.' He committed early and it's just something we've continued to do."

Other teams follow trend

Other schools were surprised at first, Paterno said, but the trend quickly caught on.

"They took a look at it," Paterno said, "and it's really a lot easier for everybody."

In recent years, the Huskers have offered numerous scholarships to seniors-to-be at their June camp, NU Director of Football Operations Pat Logsdon said.

"There have been some years when we had the majority of our commitments by Christmas time," Logsdon said. "I think a lot of kids are afraid of being left out at the end."

Athletic Department employees—including coaches—are not allowed to discuss high school athletes with the public until the players sign a letter of

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