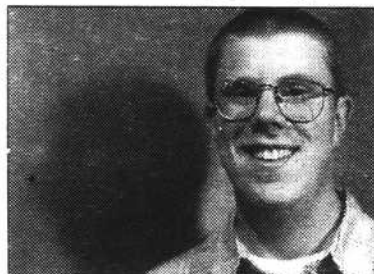


Sports Opinion



Jay Saunders Osborne's achievement moves many

The fireworks exploded. Jason Peter made a speech instead of a tackle. What was left of the "Sea of Red" chanted and screamed, even though the game had been decided for a long time.

Nebraska's 69-7 victory over longtime rival Oklahoma was about more than just beating the Sooners. It was about celebrating yet another milestone of the greatest football coach of all time.

Tom Osborne won his 250th game last Saturday — winning those games in just 25 years, faster than any other coach in history.

On that cold and rainy first of November evening, an evening perfect for college football, it would not have mattered who the opponent was. Every player and every fan was honoring Osborne.

In true Osborne fashion, on his night, he gave so much of the credit to his players, his assistants and the fans.

I have to admit, one of those fans was me.

I know. I am supposed to play the role of objective journalist here and not be a fan. But that night, standing in the south end zone, it was hard not to get emotional.

If someone would have told me 10 years ago while watching Nebraska and Oklahoma play in "Game of the Century II" that I would be covering a Nebraska football game, you would have gotten an amusing response. But there I was, 10 years later, on the turf at Memorial Stadium, part of history. I wasn't alone.

"We would give our heart and soul for him," senior co-captain Grant Wistrom said. "We know he would do it for us."

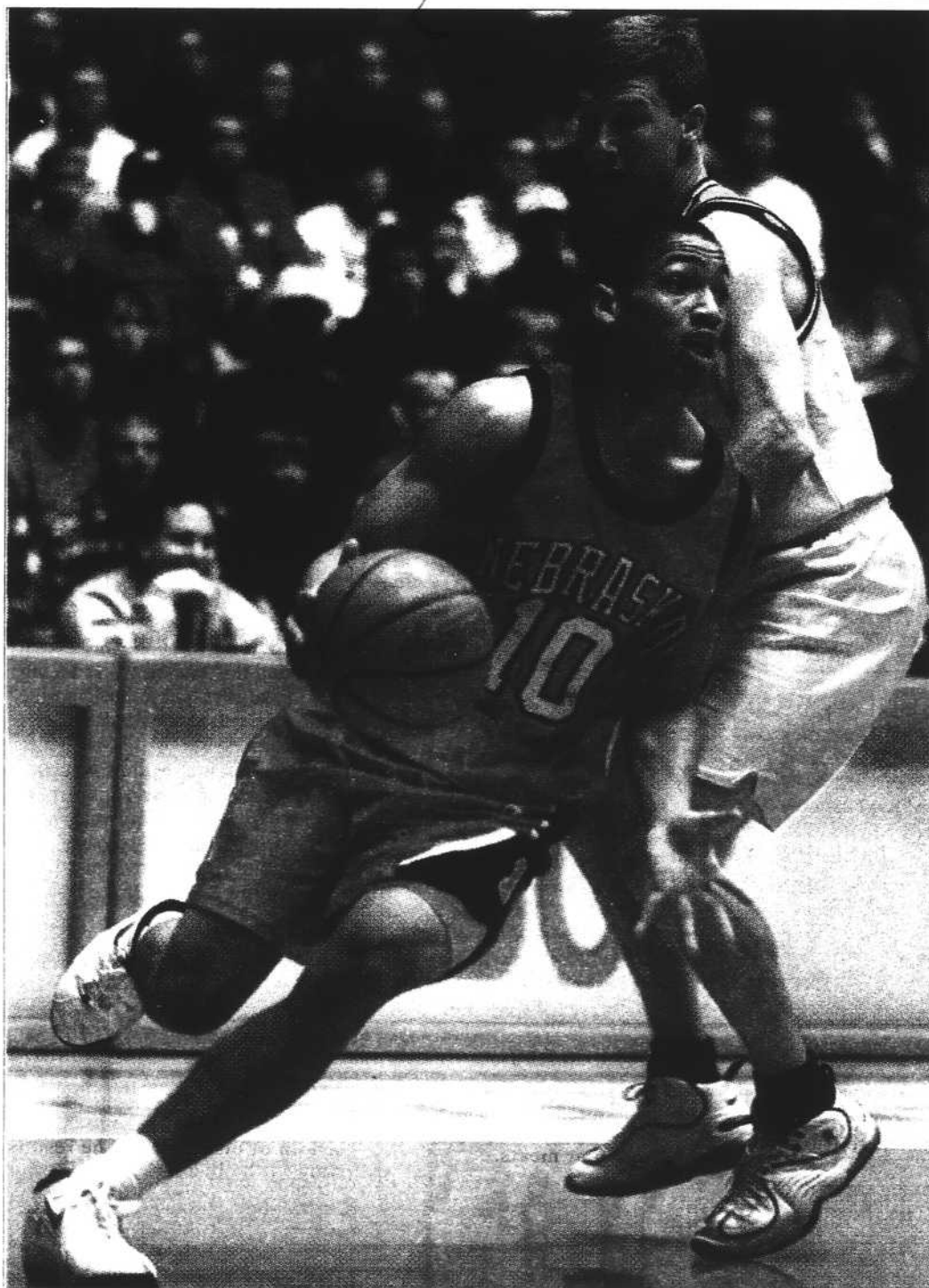
Peter, usually known for his wit, gave an emotional speech while presenting the game ball to Osborne. In the press room after the game, Peter said he was happy to be able to be a part of the celebration.

"I was thrilled I got the opportunity to give (the game ball) to him," Peter said. "Coach Osborne means the world to me."

Osborne is loved by players and fans alike. He means as much to Nebraska football as almost any man: past, present and probably future. In a business where it is tough to maintain a job, Osborne has been at Nebraska for 25 years. He is the driver of the Nebraska bus that has been steering since 1973.

I'm just glad I could be there to go along for the ride.

Saunders is a sophomore broadcasting major and a Daily Nebraskan assignment reporter.



NEBRASKA'S TYRONN LUE drives past Team Pella's Jacy Holloway during NU's exhibition 83-63 win. RYAN SODERLIN/DN

Basketball

Nebraska	83
Pella Windows	63

Nebraska takes step with victory

By DAVID WILSON
Senior Reporter

It wasn't the toughest competition the Nebraska basketball team will face this season, but an 83-63 win over Pella Windows Wednesday night will serve as a stepping stone for the Cornhuskers.

In an exhibition game at the Bob Devaney Sports Center, Nebraska handed Team Pella (9-2) its second loss of the season before 5,253 fans.

"I felt all of the starters have improved from a year ago," Nebraska Coach Danny Nee said. "I don't think Team Pella played or shot the ball well, but I think we did a lot of things right. It's a starting point and we're going to try to build on it."

The Huskers also tested a new video system, which allowed the team to view four minutes of selected game tape at halftime. They will break down the rest of the tape for review this week.

"Our kids really learn from the TV," Nee said.

NU junior guard Tyronn Lue, who recorded a double-double for the first time in his career at Nebraska, led the Huskers with 20 points and 11 assists.

Though Nebraska controlled most of the game, Lue said the Huskers looked out of shape running the court with Team Pella, which is comprised of former collegiate players.

"I think we got a little lackadaisical out there," Lue said. "I got kind of bored."

But some players had excuses for not playing 100 percent.

Sophomore guard Cookie Belcher, who is still recovering from a strained left hamstring he suffered Oct. 18 in the first day of practice, saw 28 minutes of court time Wednesday.

Please see PELLA on 11

Freshmen excel in exhibition

By SAM MCKEWON
Staff Reporter

A chapter opened for three Nebraska basketball freshmen who made their debut at the Bob Devaney Sports Center Wednesday night.

Forward Chad Johnson, center Brant Harriman and guard Rodney

Williams all played for more than 12 minutes in Nebraska's 83-63 exhibition victory over Pella Windows.

"It was good to get out and play for the first time," Johnson said. "We don't have a lot of depth, so all the freshmen are important."

Johnson was the first freshman to enter the game, at 13:44 of the first half, and he had a solid debut, playing

18 minutes, scoring eight points and grabbing five rebounds. Johnson was a perfect 3-3 from the field and 2-2 from the free-throw line.

"I'm really, really excited about Chad Johnson," NU Coach Danny Nee said. "He shows that he can play on this level."

Johnson was pleased about his opening-night performance.

"It was an honor to be the first freshman to enter the game," he said. "I just wanted to go in and play my role, and it worked out for the best."

Against Pella Windows, Williams did not score, but he had a rebound and an assist in 13 minutes.

"I thought that Rodney did a good job out there," Lue said. "He's got time to get into that role."

Big competition strikes Big 12 tourney

By JAY SAUNDERS
Assignment Reporter

Heading into this weekend's Big 12 Tournament in San Antonio, Texas, many of the conference coaches are comparing the competition level of the Big 12 to some of the nation's best conferences.

The top six teams in the conference play at the Blossom Soccer Complex this weekend in San Antonio for a three-day tournament which will decide the Big 12 champion. Because of an unpredictable regular season, the top six teams weren't decided until the last day of the regular season.

Even with all the close competition throughout the conference season, Baylor Coach Randy Waldrum said he still sees a clear-cut favorite in this tournament.

"Everybody throughout the season has been very competitive against each other," Waldrum said. "Certainly, though, Nebraska is still the class of the



conference."

The No. 7 Cornhuskers, who are the No. 2 seed in the tournament, and No. 5 Texas A&M, which earned the top seed in the tournament, are on the top of the coaches' lists as the favorites for the tournament.

"Nebraska is playing some great soccer right now, and the same can be said for Texas A&M," Colorado Coach Austin Daniels said. "I am not disclaiming anybody. That is why the game is played on the field."

Baylor, the No. 3 seed, has scored a lot of goals this season and has one of the top scoring duos in the country in Molly Cameron and Courtney Saunders. Baylor beat both Texas and Texas A&M in the regular season, and lost 2-1 to Nebraska.

Baylor also has a lot to play for. Nebraska Coach John Walker said. If the Bears get to the conference final,

they will probably make the NCAA Tournament.

But getting to the conference final would mean beating the Huskers, which is a test Baylor probably won't pass, Texas A&M Coach G. Guerrero said.

"The Huskers just have a huge advantage in personnel," Guerrero said. "They have more than the Bears can handle."

Before playing the Huskers, the Bears have to beat sixth-seeded Iowa State. ISU has the conference's leading scorer, Jo Hinks, who has 18 goals and 10 assists. She ranks 15th nationally in points scored.

"There are a lot of teams in there to make the tournament exciting," Waldrum said. "We need to focus on Iowa State. If we don't take care of that, it's over."

Last season, both Nebraska and Texas A&M swept through the conference tournament on the way to a title showdown. With increased conference competition, the Big 12 coaches said

there probably won't be two teams that can walk through to Sunday's 1 p.m. title game.

Even though the coaches have tabbed Nebraska and A&M as favorites this weekend, Daniels said the regular season's upsets could be just a preview for the conference tournament.

"I think (the tournament) will be competitive from the first round all the way to the final," Daniels said. "The one thing the Big 12 has shown is how unpredictable it is."

Note:

The Big 12 Conference announced its 1997 soccer all-conference team. Seven Nebraska players were selected to the team including: Tanya Franck, Sharolta Noonon, Jenny Benson, Isabelle Morneau, Kari Uppinghouse, Lindsay Eddleman, and Kim Engesser.

NU's Becky Hornbacher was named to the Big 12 Conference's second team.