

Sports Opinion



## David Wilson Too good? NU football not exciting

It didn't hit me until I was sitting in Harry Caray's Restaurant in Chicago last weekend.

The walls were loaded with baseball memorabilia, but it was ignored by the primarily business-like crowd.

Where were all the baseball fans?

Then I realized baseball season was over.

I miss the pennant races, the diving catches, the game-winning homers, Baseball Tonight on ESPN, and most of all, Peter Gammons.

"But Dave," you say, "the best college football team plays right here in Lincoln, Nebraska."

I can't deny that college football, in general, usually quenches my sports-crazy thirst. But now, in the heart of the season, the body of the story has pretty much been told. All that's left is the climax.

Here in Lincoln it's the same thing every week. It gets old listening to Osborne say, "We can't look past (fill in the blank). They're going to be a challenge."

Since the Kansas State game, the only suspense has been how many yards Ahman Green will rush for and how few yards the Blackshirts will allow.

After the game, Osborne won't be too excited about anything. NU always allows a big play, or somebody misses a block. The effort is always slightly less than perfect.

I hate to say this, but Nebraska football is a little too dominant (and when people take that for granted, that's a pretty big compliment). But it gets to be a little redundant. Same old, same old. Blah, blah. Blah, blah.

I'm bored. But wait, what's that? Do I hear basketballs dribbling over at the Bob Devaney Sports Center?

Thank God for college basketball.

It seems to be arriving a little early (starting practice in October?), but yet it's just in time.

The great thing about college basketball is that a team can lose a couple of times and still be in contention for a conference championship - or a national championship for that matter.

A team doesn't have to dominate to be the best. Teams can work out the bugs at the beginning of the season, lose a few games, and still make the NCAA Tournament.

And as nerve-wracking as it may be for fans and gamblers alike, there's nothing better than a good game in any sport.

It's also comforting to know that major league pitchers and catchers report in just three short months.

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

# Cornhuskers back in contention



MATT MILLER/DN

HUSKER MIDFIELDER AMY WALSH tries to get the ball from a Texas Tech opponent. The Huskers look to defend their Big 12 Championship when they open play in the Big 12 Tournament today in San Antonio, Texas.



By JAY SAUNDERS  
Assignment Reporter

Conference losses to Texas and Texas A&M in the middle of September left doubts as to whether the Nebraska soccer team was as dominant as the Cornhusker team that won the Big 12 Conference Championship last season.

On Sept. 12 NU dropped a 1-0 game to Texas in Austin and then two days later fell to Texas A&M 1-0 in College Station.

Since that trip to Texas, however, the Huskers have left no doubt with anyone that Nebraska (16-2 overall, 8-2 in the Big 12 Conference) was back to defend its title. The Huskers have won 12 straight games, outscoring their opponents 56-2.

During that stretch NU has knocked off top 10 opponents Duke and Minnesota.

Now, preparing for the Big 12 Tournament that the Huskers won last season, NU may get a chance to avenge its early season losses in San Antonio, Texas.

Nebraska earned the No. 2 seed in the tournament and a first-round bye. NU will play the winner of the game between Baylor, the No. 3 seed, and Iowa State, the No. 6 seed, in the semifinals at 5 p.m. today.

"We are excited because we could get to play a couple of teams we lost to before," senior midfielder Kari Uppinghouse said. "We are on a streak right now and hopefully we can just build and improve on that."

If Nebraska wins the first game, it will play in the championship on

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## MU hopes to hang in against Huskers

By ANTONE OSEKA  
Senior Reporter

By the end of Saturday's game with top-ranked Nebraska, Missouri Coach Larry Smith expects to learn a lot about the resiliency of his football team.

"I think our defense has got to be able to just run and hit," Smith said. "We're going to get blocked, knocked down, things like that. But the thing we've got to do is get back up and make plays."

The Huskers (8-0 overall and 5-0 in the Big 12 Conference) and Tigers (6-3, 4-2) face off Saturday at 2:35 p.m. at Faurot Field in Columbia, Mo. The game will be televised regionally by ABC.

Smith said if the Tigers are to

"... the thing we've got to do is get back up and make plays."

LARRY SMITH  
Missouri coach

become the first conference team in 36 regular-season games to knock off the Huskers, MU must avoid turnovers.

Missouri has turned the ball over 13 times this season - eight fumbles and five interceptions - allowing opponents to score 20 points. But the Tigers have been opportunistic with opponents' turnovers, scoring 58 points on 15 turnovers.

Nebraska has 10 turnovers this

season - eight fumbles and two interceptions - while taking the ball away from its opponents 14 times.

Nebraska Coach Tom Osborne is looking for a tough game from the Tigers.

"Overall, I think it will be a very tough contest for us," he said. "We need a tough game, we're going to get one."

Smith said he was impressed with the Nebraska defense, which

looks as solid as the Husker national championship defenses of the mid 1990s.

This season NU's defense is giving up an average of 217.8 yards a game and just 68.4 yards rushing.

But Smith said the key to preparing for the No. 1 team and the Husker defense is not to make any changes.

"The formula is real simple: You be yourself," Smith said. "The most important thing you have your players doing is running, hitting, tackling and believing that they can win and then going out on the field and finding a way to win."

Missouri has found a way to

Please see **MISSOURI** on 10

## NU coach hopes to set precedent in exhibition

By SHANNON HEFFELFINGER  
Assignment Reporter

An exhibition game means little to first-year Nebraska women's basketball Coach Paul Sanderford, who begins to write the story of his inaugural season with the Cornhuskers.

But the preseason-game chapters could lead to mean a great deal.

The Cornhuskers close the door on the 11-year era under former Coach Angela Beck and open another tonight at 7:05 when Slavyanka (Russia) visits the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

"I could care less about the exhibition games except that we get to play in front of people and they get to watch," Sanderford said.

"It's going to be another practice for us. We'll play 14 people and we're going to try to run our style. Nobody is going to remember these exhibition games. We are going to try to win every game, but the ones people will remember are the ones we play in February and March."

The greatest value in tonight's game, Sanderford said, lies in the opportunity it provides to "get the jitters out."

The Huskers return a strong nucleus from last year's team, including Big 12 All-Conference

selection Anna DeForge.

NU also returns several players who started at one time last season, including forwards Jami Kubik, Charlie Rogers and Emily Thompson and guards Nicole Kubik and Brooke Schwartz.

The strength of returning experience lessens when a new coach takes over, Sanderford said. But the hard-working, fast-learning style of the Huskers has impressed Sanderford - who brings a .753 winning percentage to the Huskers from Western Kentucky, his former team of 15 years.

"All these kids have been real receptive to what

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