

Sports Opinion



Antone Oseka

How about a bowl for bad teams?

I guess I'm a purist. I expect my bowl games to be respectably named contests between two reasonably good teams. I want to see classic show-downs that didn't happen in the regular season. Big Ten vs. Pac-10. Big 12 vs. SEC. WAC vs. MAC.

As the regular college football season came to a close, I eagerly paged through newspapers to find bowl matchups I can expect to see at the end of December and the beginning of January. I love watching the Peach Bowl and the Copper Bowl and, of course, the Fiesta, Orange and Sugar bowls.

But the bowl situation has gone too far.

The Carquest Bowl, the Insight.com Bowl and, worst of all, the Humanitarian Bowl make me ill. I can barely stomach the Motor City, Las Vegas and Outback Bowl. At least the latter put good teams on the field. The former games are ridiculous contests between mediocre teams.

Let's just look at the teams scheduled to take the field in the triple-cast of retching bowl games. The Carquest Bowl pits Big East No. 3 vs. the ACC No. 4. That would be a great basketball matchup but not a very appealing football game.

The Insight.com Bowl pits the WAC No. 2 v. Big 12 No. 6. Since Texas Tech declared itself ineligible, that leaves Colorado as the Big 12 No. 6 team. CU isn't even bowl eligible, finishing the year 5-6. The Insight.com bowl could be in trouble.

The Humanitarian Bowl already has its first participant, Utah State (6-5), which will play an at-large opponent. I'm sure that'll be a packed house.

Since the world seems to be bowl crazy, I figure I could get in on the money. I want the NCAA to grant me a special provision to the newly-instated six-win rule. (Last year, the NCAA said a team can't play in a bowl game without six Division I wins.)

I want to take the two worst teams in college football and play the Toilet Bowl. The Toilet Bowl, corporately sponsored by Toilet Duck (the Toilet Duck Toilet Bowl), would be played in the only suitable place - Flushing, N.Y.

This year's matchup would pit Northern Illinois, Illinois and Rutgers. Since I'm a fair bowl committee, we're playing round-robin format. All three teams come in at 0-11. A win here could turn their program around for the next season.

OK, so I guess I'm not a purist. I'm an opportunist.

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

Huskers aim to extend hot start

By **DARREN IVY**
Staff Reporter

Women's Basketball
Bradley vs. Nebraska
7:05 p.m., Bob Devaney Center

The basketball court is Coach Paul Sanderford's classroom.

With each game, the coach of the Nebraska women hopes to teach lessons so his players can improve on their past mistakes.

Tonight's game with Bradley at 7:05 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center will be NU's next opportunity to show improvement.

"We're not really concerned with Bradley," Sanderford said. "We're concerned with Nebraska, and what we are going to do to get better."

Playing seven games in 2½ weeks has limited Sanderford's time to teach in practice, but he said the team is coming along.

Sophomore guard Nicole Kubik played down the significance of limited practices. She said games are an even better learning environment, because that is when the players get to put everything together.

"It's a better test to see if you know what you've learned," Kubik said.

For the game against the 3-2 Bears of the Missouri Valley Conference, Sanderford said he has outlined taking better care of basketball and improvement in shooting.

"We can't turnover the ball 25 to 30 times a game and expect to continue to win, because the teams are going to take advantage of that," Sanderford said.

No. 12 NU (6-1) also can't shoot 32 percent from the field, as it did in a 68-59 win over Kentucky on Saturday, Sanderford said.

Sanderford said NU needs better shot selection and more patience on offense.

One way Sanderford hopes to get better shot selection is through transition baskets.

Earlier in the season, NU got more transition baskets, but it didn't have as many in its last three games. Sanderford said he hopes tough defense will create more easy baskets against Bradley.

"We have to come out every game and be prepared, because everyone is going to give us their best shot. We learned from Kentucky that we can't take anybody lightly."

NICOLE KUBIK
Nebraska guard

"If you have to have a constant, the two things you need to have to be successful are good rebounding and good defense," Sanderford said. "Those two things are carrying us right now."

Defense also is one of the strengths of NU's opponent. Solid defense and good guard play earned Bradley a fourth-to-fifth place predicted finish in the MVC, Sanderford said.

But don't expect the Huskers to overlook Bradley.

In NU's last game, it struggled during the first half. Sanderford

said NU may have underestimated Kentucky's talent and overestimated its own. Kubik said that won't happen against Bradley.

"We have to come out every game and be prepared, because everyone is going to give us their best shot," Kubik said. "We learned from Kentucky that we can't take anybody lightly."

Kubik said the goal is to get up early on Bradley.

"We want to get a lead early and keep building on it," Kubik said.

Making his mark Junior wants tourney return

By **SAM MCKEOWN**
Staff Reporter

Andy Markowski has done his share of watching.

The fourth-year junior forward has watched big men shuffle in and out of the Nebraska basketball program. The names of Mikki Moore, Bernard Garner and Terrance Badgett resound as frontcourt players who failed to deliver Nebraska to the NCAA Tournament.

This season, it's Markowski's turn to reverse recent Husker history and help NU return to the Big Dance.

"I waited through other inside players here at Nebraska," Markowski said. "It's my time now to make our goal of the NCAA Tournament happen."

Markowski, a 6-foot-8 graduate of Ord High, has become one of NU's most important components of a 1997 Husker team that regularly plays eight men. He has improved on his career averages of 4.2 points and 3.9 rebounds per game, scoring 7.3 points and grabbing 8.5 rebounds through six games this season.

While his numbers are up, Markowski said his role has really not changed. Markowski said he is expected to be a top rebounder, play tough post defense, and score if given the opportunity.

There are no illusions about him being a frontcourt scoring machine, Markowski said.

"They're not asking me to pour in a bunch of points," he said. "They never have. We've got five or six guys who can really score. I've got to rebound more than anything."



ANDY MARKOWSKI tries to block the pass from Colorado State forward Matt Burnett during the Cornhuskers' win over the Rams. Markowski's roll with the Huskers has increased this season.

Coach Danny Nee said Markowski is a critical part of the Husker offense.

"He's been around here for four years, so he's the veteran of the team," Nee said. "He knows everything so well. He knows where to be and when to be there."

Nee said he's seen an increase in Markowski's overall confidence in his own play.

"He looks like a completely different player this year," Nee said. "You know his confidence is higher now."

A good example of the Markowski's growing confidence is his ability to play with frontcourt mate Venson Hamilton. The two are the only players with experience inside and both play more than 28 minutes per game, making them a critical part of NU's success.

Statistically, Markowski and Hamilton are the inside game for

the Huskers. They combine for 75 percent of the Huskers' post scoring and 80 percent of NU's front-court rebounding.

Markowski said he and Hamilton have developed a good tandem inside.

"Venson and I have come along in this system together," Markowski said. "We both pretty much know what the other is doing inside and where to be for rebound if the other shoots."

The chemistry of Markowski and Hamilton is the same for the rest of the team, Markowski said. The togetherness of the 1997 team has helped him to move into the starting role.

"The chemistry we have makes us a lot better than teams here in the past," he said. "Our talent doesn't match up with some of the teams we've had in the past, and we couldn't run with them in a pickup game, but we play a lot

"He knows everything so well. He knows where to be and when to be there."

DANNY NEE
Nebraska men's basketball coach

harder than they do." Markowski said he's ready to take Nebraska back to the NCAA Tournament. He's tired of watching it on television.

"Twenty wins, that's all we need," Markowski said. "I don't care about my personal statistics. I just want to get us to the NCAA's."