

Sports Opinion



**Antone Oseka**

## A look back reveals much to remember

So, this is college.  
Or, should I say — this was college.

I've experienced events other people only dream about. I was on the field when Tom Osborne won his first national championship.

In fact, I've never missed more than half of a Nebraska football home game in the past five seasons.

I've seen that same Cornhusker team lose one of its own. I've seen the grief death can cause an entire program.

I've seen Lincoln get its first hockey team and go hockey crazy.

I've been on the athlete side of things. Before I became a journalist, I was part of the Spirit Squad, a mascot for the 1994-95 school year. I saw the '94 national championship.

I know Tracy Jensen, the cheerleader, and I was here at the newspaper the night she was injured.

I almost considered quitting journalism. I almost considered quitting school all together.

I got a C in my first reporting class. Not even a C-plus, a C. Luckily, for me, the university didn't support the minus system.

But that teacher, and three great blondes from that class, kept telling me to stick with it.

Now I'm glad I did.  
Through the encouragement of the current sports staff, I came to the Daily Nebraskan in 1995. My first assignments sent me to cover the women's golf team. I soon inherited the wrestling beat, and learned then I wanted to be a journalist.

I wanted to be a special kind of journalist. I wanted to be a sports writer.

For life.  
That sounds weird. There was a time I didn't know what I wanted for dinner, let alone what to do with my life. But eventually, it came to me, and I excelled at what I chose to do.

Now, I'm ready to move into the "real world" and see if I can cut it. I made it through college, two jobs and 12 credit hours per semester at times. I think I can cut it with one job and no classes.

You can cut it, too. Don't let this be the semester where you drop out.

Don't settle for a C as I did. Ace your finals. Eventually things will fall together for you.

Have confidence in yourself and seize every day you have left in your college life. It's a time you'll look back and tell your grandchildren about.

I know I will.

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



**TOM OSBORNE denied rumors Tuesday at his press conference that he will retire in the near future. Osborne has been NU's head football coach for 25 years and will lead the second ranked and undefeated Huskers into the Orange Bowl against Tennessee on Jan. 2.**

## Osborne says he's staying

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Osborne said he typically stays up until 2 or 3 a.m. looking at tapes.

"If you want to call the plays and you want to be able to make adjustments on Saturday, and you want to be actively involved, that's what you have to do," Osborne said.

The alternative, he said, would be to assume a supervisory role and transfer responsibility to the assistant coaches.

"But I think in my case, that would be self defeating because I enjoy the football and I enjoy the players," Osborne said.

"And the other parts of it — it's not bad, but it's not what I choose to do. I don't think I can do that until I'm 70. I know I can't."

Since his 250<sup>th</sup> victory Nov. 1 against Oklahoma, Osborne said he

had been surprised at the amount of attention he received.

"It hasn't been bad," Osborne said, "but it's been a little embarrassing because we have, as a program, won quite a few games."

"The head coach is kind of out in front and people know who he is and therefore, often he gets singled out — good or bad."

Defensive Coordinator Charlie McBride, who has coached under Osborne for 21 seasons, said rumors of Osborne's retirement had come up before.

"Unless something went haywire, I think our staff would be the first to know," McBride said. "And they're all on the road."

NCAA regulations permit coaches to visit high school athletes face to face beginning Dec. 1 and Osborne is one of

three Nebraska coaches — along with McBride and Rush Ends Coach Nelson Barnes — that didn't hit the road for recruiting visits this week.

After NU's 77-14 victory against Iowa State Nov. 15, Osborne was hospitalized overnight because of concerns about an irregular heartbeat.

"What happened to me, the atrial fibrillation, is something that people can live with, but it can cause strokes and it can cause heart attacks," Osborne said. "It's not a good condition to have and it probably will come back."

"I've had some warning signals, there's no question about it," Osborne said. "But I'm here today and that's the main thing."

"When the time comes, you'll be told."

# Scheduling divides Big 12

BY SHANNON HEFFELFINGER  
Assignment Reporter

With every swing of Lisa Reitsma's powerful left arm and each resounding slam caused by the contact, Nebraska



Byrne

Volleyball Coach Terry Pettit gains growing incentive to turn the Big 12 Conference schedule upside down.

Reitsma and other leading hitters pound the ball 100 to 180 times during back-to-back weekend matches, a demanding task that leaves Pettit and Nebraska Athletic Director Bill Byrne cringing.

"We are beating up our athletes," Byrne said. "Lisa Reitsma takes 120 swings a weekend. That's like asking a pitcher to go out there and throw a doubleheader. You just wouldn't do that. So why are we going and asking these volleyball players to do the same?"

Two seasons after adopting the current Friday-Saturday scheduling format for league matches, Big 12 coaches and administrators remain torn between the benefits of a solid bottom line and the drawbacks of aching athletes.

In the former Big Eight and

Southwest conferences, schools played primarily on Wednesdays and Saturdays. When the leagues merged two years ago, coaches and athletic directors bowed to the pressure of a new format to avoid excessive travel costs.

Many schools could not — and still cannot — afford to charter flights from the Midwest to Texas, a necessary aspect of a Wednesday-Saturday schedule.

The coaches voted unanimously in 1995 to modify the schedule. Instead of playing matches on Wednesday and Saturday, the Big 12 universities would play its matches on Friday and Saturday nights.

Today, several coaches regret that decision, and in March the league's athletic directors will vote on a proposal designed to reverse it.

"We had it all," Oklahoma Coach Miles Pabst said. "We had everything the way we wanted it, and the coaches went and voted it out."

Evidence of physical and emotional strain on the athletes points to a conclusion coaches hadn't expected to see so soon. The time has come to alter the current format, Pettit said.

"In the old Big Eight, the quality of the product just was not the same," Pettit said. "The game has evolved to the point where it is much more physical now, and the matches are more demanding."

Big 12 coaches have voiced their

opinions numerous times during conference calls organized to discuss the league's schedule.

"For the most part, we are not going to come to a consensus on this," Texas A&M Coach Laurie Corbelli said. "It's unfair to even expect that. But the majority of us want (the old format), and we are going to fight for it."

### Strain on athletes

An obvious strain on the volleyball players constitutes Corbelli's argument for a move back to Wednesday-Saturday scheduling.

With the exception of non-conference tournaments, A&M competed in back-to-back weekend matches 11 consecutive times over a 2 1/2-month span. Corbelli does not allow Stacy Sykora — the Aggies' top hitter — to participate in attack drills during practice.

"My eyes have really been opened to the risk of injury," Corbelli said. "We have a senior-dominated team. These girls have been playing on consecutive nights for four years."

"About the middle of the season, fatigue really set in, and we were upset by some teams we shouldn't have lost to. Maybe some of that can be attributed to the fact that the girls get really emotionally and physically drained."

NU setter Fiona Nepo backs Corbelli.

## Huskers, CU set to renew hoops rivalry

By DAVID WILSON  
Senior Reporter

With momentum in its favor, the Nebraska basketball team travels to Omaha tonight to face Creighton, the only other Division I basketball team in the state.

Though not everyone calls the matchup a rivalry, consensus is that the game's intensity level will be high.

The Cornhuskers (7-1) look to extend a two-game winning streak at the Civic Auditorium at 7:05 p.m. against the Bluejays (3-2). Nebraska leads the series 20-9 winning each of the past seven meetings, including a 71-52 win last season.

"Creighton is really going to play us hard because its Nebraska," NU center Venson Hamilton said. "If they beat us, that's going to make their season. To them, it's probably a rivalry, but for us, it's just another step to the NCAA Tournament."

Nebraska Coach Darryl Nee said the Huskers are excited to take on the Bluejays.

"We look forward to the game," Nee said. "Our players and their players know each other. We do consider it a rivalry."

Creighton is led by forward Rodney Buford, averaging 19.8 points per contest.

"Creighton has greatly improved from last year," Nee said. "They've improved their athleticism, their outside shooting and they play good defense."

Defensively, Creighton holds its opponents to an average of 67 points per game and has out-rebounded its foes 194-169.

But the Huskers have built momentum and are playing their best basketball of the season, Hamilton said.

Against North Carolina-Wilmington in the first round of the Ameritas Classic on Friday, Nebraska shot 72 percent from the field — the second-best mark in school history — and shot 51 percent against Grambling State in an 85-48 championship game win.

## Volleyball cost



Below are the operating cost for the Big 12 conference volleyball programs, and their support for a schedule change.

### For the schedule change

School	Operating costs
Nebraska	\$458,053
Oklahoma	\$370,987
Texas	\$377,470
Iowa St.	\$112,821
Texas A&M	\$87,543
Baylor	\$69,852

### Against the schedule change

Kansas St.	\$321,065
Texas Tech	\$133,221
Colorado	\$129,127
Kansas	\$41,344
Missouri	\$36,137

JOHN FRANK/DN

SOURCE: KANSAS CITY STAR

"Your body just does not get enough rest," Nepo said. "Around the middle of the season, we're just mentally and physically tired."

Pabst, the OU coach, said Patrice Arrington, the Sooners' most effective attacker, often swings 160 times per weekend.

Much like other heavy hitters,

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