

OPINION PACES

Our VIEW

Do unto others

Northeast next in line for storm relief

At the end of October, an unwelcome blanket of white suffocated Lincoln- and Omaha-area residents.

The snow's weight felled tree limbs that ripped power lines from their poles and hovered menacingly over our pathways.

For days, no electricity flowed to our schools and businesses. No heat warmed our homes.

Then, when we felt most hopeless, help arrived. It poured from countless emergency workers and volunteers who refused sleep to finish disaster cleanup.

Many of these volunteers traveled hundreds of miles from their homes and families to give us the help we so desperately needed. Others donated blood or financial assistance to help disaster victims they would never meet.

Today a similar disaster in the northeast United States and eastern Canada calls upon us to return the shower of good will poured upon us last fall.

According to CNN Interactive and ABC-NEWS.com, deadly ice storms wrecked much of the Northeast last week, ripping down trees and power lines.

Late Sunday, 11 deaths in Canada had been blamed on the storm.

More than 3.6 million homes remained without electricity, including 3 million in Canada and 500,000 in Maine. Many New Hampshire, New York and Vermont residents also suffered without electricity or clean running water.

At the same time, rising temperatures caused huge chunks of ice to fall from trees, homes and other buildings.

Officials called the scene a "war zone."

Nebraskans, too, know how it feels to wake up one morning in a "war zone."

We remember our first, precarious steps from our homes Oct. 26 that allowed our eyes to scan our broken neighborhoods.

Here, in the tough-skinned Midwest, we can sympathize.

And, though we are far away, we can help.

The American Red Cross is accepting donations to help fund disaster relief for ice storm victims.

Those wishing to donate can contact the Lancaster County Chapter of the American Red Cross at (402) 441-7997, then request their donation be earmarked to help ice storm victims. The organization promises 92 cents of every donated dollar goes directly to victims.

Information on donating and volunteer opportunities also can be found via the American Red Cross's national phone line: 1-800-HELP-NOW.

During a phone call to a New Hampshire American Red Cross chapter Sunday, the Daily Nebraskan told one staff member Nebraskans might identify with storm victims and offer support.

"Oh, wonderful. That would be wonderful," came the response. "Thank you."

Cartoonist's VIEW



Guest VIEW

Winter of discontent

Wolverines feel cheated by championship outcome

The Michigan Daily University of Michigan

Ann Arbor, Mich. (U-Wire) - It seems people can find flaw even in perfection.

But one team wasn't going to get its way. One team was going to feel slighted and be disappointed. One team was going to get screwed.

So maybe this is the best way to do it, the most fair of two unfair options, where neither team gets the whole cake to itself, but still has a nice hunk of it sitting in front of them.

Michigan won its first national championship in 49 years when sports writers from the Associated Press voted the Wolverines No. 1 after an intense, if not convincing, win over a No. 8 Washington State team in the Rose Bowl. But only 20 minutes after the party began, it came to a screeching halt - or at least suffered a temporary stoppage - when the USA Today/ESPN coaches poll was released and the Wolverines were surprisingly listed at No. 2, four tiny points behind Nebraska, which smacked Tennessee, 42-17, in the Orange Bowl.

Michigan must now both celebrate and endure college football's third split national championship since 1990.

And while Nebraska is certainly a great team, and losing out in the coaches' poll does not diminish what has been a spectacular season for these Wolverines, Michigan got the raw end of the deal in one of the most absurd turnarounds in polling history.

While the Cornhuskers are an exceptionally gifted team, and oddsmakers have made them a seven-point favorite in a mythical heavy-weight bout with Michigan, the Wolverines deserve an undisputed national championship.

It only makes sense that Michigan fans should be outraged that the Cornhuskers jumped past them in the coaches poll. The Wolverines held a commanding lead before the bowl season, but somehow lost 26 first-place votes to the benchheads we allow to coach some of the best athletes in the world.

No No. 1 team has ever won a bowl game and slipped in the rankings, and Michigan shouldn't have either. Teams should not lose votes because they don't cover the spread, or because of low margins of victory.

"Stop right there!" someone cries. That's exactly how the Wolverines overtook Nebraska in the first place. Wrong again. There is a huge difference between the two situations.

Teams should lose votes for playing poor and undisciplined football, whether they win or lose. Nebraska played poorly and struggled against a mediocre football team, needing overtime and a miraculous catch, which was in fact illegal, to beat Missouri - a game it should have lost. Michigan stomped all over then-No. 1 Penn State, 34-8, to rightfully stake its claim as the best team in the country.

So, while Michigan only beat Washington State by five points, it played very well, limiting the Cougars' high-octane offense to just 16 points, 24 under their average, and this was a game Michigan deserved to win. Meanwhile, Nebraska whipped a solid but over-rated Tennessee ballclub 42-17 by keeping its starters in well into the fourth quarter, when the Volunteers were playing backups, and shamelessly campaigning for retired Coach Tom Osborne to be awarded one more piece of history.

Nebraska is a terrific team, but needed a couple of sentimental voters to help its cause. (Voting coaches have known Osborne for 25 years. They've only known Lloyd Carr for three.) So while Osborne certainly didn't end his career to gain votes, to think the announcement didn't sway some members of the coaching fraternity would be naive.

And while the Wolverines lost out by two first-place votes to the Cornhuskers in the coaches' poll, the team lost by four points, which means that either two coaches voted Michigan third or one dropped them to fourth. While you could make a case for Nebraska as the nation's top-ranked team, Michigan should then certainly be No. 2.

This is an obvious attempt to sabotage Michigan's chances at a national championship. And while the polls' outcome did not depend on these two points, it very well could have, discrediting what has long been considered the less prestigious of the two polls.

Some coaches said it didn't matter that Nebraska ran up the score, but that the Big Ten's poor showing in bowl games made Michigan's undefeated record seem a little less impressive. While the Big Ten didn't fare very well in bowl games, Michigan's schedule was still one of the toughest in the country. The Wolverines had just one easy game - a 38-3 win over Baylor, who was also on Nebraska's schedule. There are no days off in the Big Ten like there are in the Big 12, and Cornhusker victories over Division II schools Akron and Central Florida should be taken with a grain of salt.

While there aren't any excuses for the Big Ten's poor bowl showing, each Big Ten team that lost played a higher-ranked team, while both that didn't - Michigan and Purdue - won. It would be a shame to think that had Curtis Enis and Joe Jurevicius played and Penn State beat Florida, the Wolverines would be undisputed national champions.

As for who would win a slugfest between Michigan and Nebraska, who knows? The answer is nobody. And while some of us think the Huskers would walk all over Michigan and others think the Wolverines would shut Nebraska up, it is idiotic to guess and then

Maybe these two teams deserve to split the title, since they can't slug it out on the field. But if the tables were turned, and the Cornhuskers led in both polls before Jan. 1, do you really think Michigan would now have a share of the national championship?

Osborne is content with a split of the national championship. Carr is not. Fans in Lincoln are partying and while the celebrations will not be canceled in Ann Arbor, people are still disappointed.

That should tell you something.

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