

Sports Opinion

## Shannon Heffelfinger Pressures won't sack Newcombe

When considering the pressure that dropped like a dead bolt on Bobby Newcombe's shoulders Monday, some might feel a little nervous for him. Or maybe even a little sorry for him.

Newcombe won the No. 1 quarterback position for the fall after a spring of tough competition from Frankie London and Eric Crouch.

At 18 years old, he has just been handed the enormous pressure of directing the Huskers through another championship run. If Nebraska loses a game which it should not, say at California on Sept. 12, the blame falls on his shoulders.

Now is a critical time for Newcombe and Nebraska. To say that there have been a lot of changes in the program is an understatement.

The Huskers will adjust to the loss of one of the greatest football coaches of all time and adapt to the changes a new head coach brings. The gap isn't huge, but it's a gap all the same.

The Huskers have an almost entirely inexperienced and untested offense line. They lost a Lombardi Award winner in Grant Wistrom and an Outland Trophy winner in Aaron Taylor. Ahman Green, NU's best running back, left for the NFL.

If there was ever a year when NU's powerhouse may be a little less stable, then this is it. And if one of the cards in the house falls and things go the wrong way in College Station, Texas, or Manhattan, Kan., Newcombe will be held accountable by fans.

Just like Scott Frost was in 1996. But Newcombe can handle it.

There is something special about the sophomore from New Mexico.

You can see it every time he touches the ball. His 91-yard run in the Red-White Spring Game attests to his speed and big-play ability. Newcombe can turn bad situations into touchdowns for the Huskers.

But it's more than that.

Newcombe is smart, and he knows how to handle himself. He showed a lot of poise Tuesday when he addressed the 30 or so members of the media who came to hear Solich's decision. He was gracious in his victory, but he was gracious in Crouch and London's defeat.

"I'm the type of person who has feelings for everything," Newcombe said. "If I were (London) I would have been disappointed, too."

Newcombe relates well to his teammates. He handled the whole situation with maturity. Newcombe is going to be a good leader.

And he's proven over the last three weeks that he can perform under pressure.

So don't feel nervous or sorry for Newcombe. His shoulders are big enough.

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



NU FOOTBALL COACH FRANK SOLICH walks the steps of Memorial Stadium after practice last week. MATT MILLER/DN

## Solich eases into 1st spring as head coach

*All running smoothly as Huskers end practice*

BY SAM MCKEWN  
Senior Reporter

Frank Solich sat down Tuesday afternoon in front of television cameras and tape recorders to discuss a decision on who would start at quarterback.

It wasn't a "formal" news conference by Solich's standards, it was just "another coaching decision."

But with more than 30 media members present, Solich soon realized his chat with the media was a lot more formal than he had expected.

"It's really unbelievable the kind of interest this sparked," Solich said. "Nebraska football seems to be really important to people in the state and fans around the state."

It was another lesson in Solich's crash course as the new coach of one of the most visible programs in college football.

Since January, Solich has been in charge of the day-to-day operations of the Huskers, taking over for the retired Tom Osborne. And there has been many changes that the 53-year-old Solich has had to get used to.

During practices, Solich now runs all stations instead of his

**“**  
*I had the opportunity to play under a great coach in Coach Osborne, and now I get to play under another great coach in Coach Solich.*  
**”**

**BOBBY NEWCOMBE**  
NU quarterback

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## WNBA Draft passes on DeForge

*NU forward now looks to ABL for professional options*

BY SHANNON HEFFELFINGER  
Senior Reporter

South Stadium Lounge at Memorial Stadium sat silent

Wednesday. The stillness, typical on most days, was nothing but a disappointment for Anna DeForge on that afternoon.

DeForge had expected a day that was anything ordinary. The former Nebraska women's basketball player, who signed a contract to enter the WNBA

last month, had scheduled a press conference to discuss her draft status. The draft started at 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, and by 1, DeForge's NBA hopes had been dashed and the press conference had been canceled.

DeForge, the fourth-leading scorer in school history, received strong interest from at least half the league teams.

But none picked her in the four-round, 40-selection draft.

"I am upset that I was not drafted, but it is not the end of the world," DeForge said.

"I am kind of surprised that I was not drafted because of what the people from the league had been telling me about my prospects, but I guess that's the way it goes in this busi-

ness." NU Coach Paul Sanderford said he thought DeForge fell in the draft because of the recent influx of foreign players.

"I'm shocked she didn't get drafted," Sanderford said. "According to her agent, we thought she'd go."

Texas Tech's Alicia Thompson and Texas' Angela Jackson were the only Big 12 Conference players taken. Thompson went to the New York Liberty with the No. 9 pick, and the Washington Mystics selected Jackson with the No. 33 pick overall.

DeForge will now look to her other professional option — the American Basketball League. Although she chose the WNBA over the ABL two weeks ago, DeForge

can obtain a release from her contract and enter the May 5 ABL Draft.

"I think Anna's real disappointment," Sanderford said. "But at the same time, she'll come back from it. There's no doubt about it — she's a tough person and I think we'll see her playing professional ball next year."

Angela Beck, DeForge's coach for three years at Nebraska; coaches the ABL's San Jose Lasers.

DeForge finished her senior year by leading the Huskers in scoring (just over 18 points per game) and rebounding (7.9 per game). She also ranks fourth on NU's all-time list with 804 rebounds, 392 assists and 222 steals. She is the Huskers' career record holder with 155 3-pointers.

## Weather wields constant worries for Huskers

■ Thirteen games have been canceled because of stormy conditions.

BY ANDREW STRNAD  
Staff Reporter

For the 13<sup>th</sup> time this season, the Nebraska baseball team has had its plans altered by Mother Nature.

Wednesday night's game against Creighton in Omaha was canceled because of rain, as was Tuesday

night's game in Lincoln with the Blue Jays.

Coach Dave Van Horn said the weather has been the Cornhuskers' nemesis throughout the season.

"It really makes things difficult for us because we should be up around 50 games or so right now, and instead we're down around 40," Van Horn said.

NU is 21-17 on the year and will leave this morning for Austin, Texas, before playing a three-game series against the Longhorns this weekend.

In other baseball news, Van Horn

announced that four more players have signed national letters of intent to play baseball at Nebraska.

Shortstop Brandt Vileger heads the list. Vileger was a graduate of Millard North High School in Omaha, and he currently plays at Grayson (Texas) County Community College, where he is hitting .380 with 41 RBIs and 67 runs scored.

"He's ready to play right now in the Big 12 Conference," Van Horn said. "He brings a lot to the table. He can hit for power, but he has 16 bunt base hits."

The Huskers also added a much-needed pitcher to its staff. Brandon Wood comes to Lincoln from Wharton (Texas) Junior College as a hard-throwing right-hander and will have three years of eligibility when he arrives at Nebraska next year.

Van Horn said he expects Wood to become an immediate impact player with his 90 mph fastball, which will help the Huskers become a Big 12 power.

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