

Close encounters

Drunk plumber and cookies add color to sports editor's 'season'



In an effort to avoid writing a sappy, "I'm going to miss this job" end of the year column, Sports Editor David Wilson took it upon himself to share some random thoughts he compiled throughout the semester.

You know you've got good seats at an NBA game when you can stick your hand out and find your fingers in the mesh jersey on Shawn Bradley's back.

Of course, I wouldn't just go to an NBA game for fun — because they aren't any fun. I was on a spring break vacation in Denver writing a feature on former Cornhusker Erick Strickland.

As a reporter and an editor at the Daily Nebraskan, I've found myself with access to restricted areas at Major League baseball games, NFL games, and tons of major college events.

I've been fortunate. I'm just a college kid getting all kinds of experience in a professional world. And that's been pointed out to me more than once.

In an effort to sell more tickets, the Denver Nuggets offer seats to fans on the end of the bench. No joke.

So this drunk plumber, who got tickets on the bench from his boss, had been blabbing to A.C. Green and Bradley all game, when he noticed me laughing at him.

"What are you laughing at?"

"What are you doing sitting on the bench?"

"How did you get your ticket?"

"I'm a reporter."

"No you're not. You're too young. You don't look professional."

Ouch. I didn't even have my hat on. Luckily, A.C. Green, a 13-year NBA veteran, had my back.

"I believe him."

"Oh."

Thinking back, I should have offered him my place in line for a hundred bucks.

We were sitting around the Sports Pavilion one night this semester when the phone rang. No big deal. It happens all the time.

Photographer Matt Miller answered the phone, "Sports desk, Biff here."

"Will you accept a collect call from Mike Bibby?"

Yeah, as in, Arizona All-American basketball player, Mike Bibby.

Miller took the call and handed me the phone.

It was really Bibby.

He was looking for Sam McKewon for some crazy story Sam was working on. Sam wasn't around, so me and Bibby shot the bull for awhile.

Since then, Miller doesn't answer the phone "Biff here" anymore.

man asked.

"Well, my parents thought everything was kind of backward up there. There were lots of weirdos: witches, vampires, Nazis."

"What's wrong with Nazis?"

"Uh, nothing, I guess."

"Yeah, I think a lot of people up there are just misunderstood."

Yeah, whatever buddy. Please don't kill me.

Upon arriving at Boise State, I went straight to the tournament.

Fans there weren't too into either Nebraska or Arkansas, but they especially liked Lil' Red.

Even though I had seen him a million times before, I thought Lil' Red was particularly funny for some reason. A little too funny, if you know what I mean.

Then the Huskers blew the lead and lost the game. It was late. I had to get my story written.

So without being told otherwise, I went and listened to the Arkansas players speak in the post-game interview room — where every team that had played that day had spoken to the press, win or lose.

Nebraska, though, didn't show.

I ran around until I found the locker room.

Huffing and puffing, I caught the last of the rest of the Nebraska media interviewing coach Danny Nee.

Then we entered the locker room. It was silent. Dead silent. Gloom and pissed-offness filled the room. Every head was hung. Venson Hamilton sat on a sink and stared at a toilet.

Tyrone Lue whispered to the media. And Cookie Belcher ate a cookie.

Now that's funny.

NU goes to NCAAs for 2nd year

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tournament.

But the Wolverines were not the only opposition No. 7 NU had to deal with. The NCAA Tournament selection committee set up a second-round matchup with No. 2 Notre Dame.

The Huskers knocked off Michigan 5-1, but lost 6-0 to Notre Dame, which ended up in the semifinals.

"It was a disappointment that we didn't get to the final four," Walker said. "I wasn't happy with the way the selection committee set up the tournament, but there was nothing we could have done about that."

Walker said even though the team did not get as far into the tournament as in 1996, the team was the strongest in the program's history.

"Realistically we were one of the top five teams in the country," Walker said. "Two years in a row we have been No. 6 and No. 7 in the country. Now, we need to establish ourselves in the top five every year."

Seven Husker players were named to the All-Big 12 conference team. Engesser was named to the Soccer Buzz All-Central region team. Engesser led the team in scoring with 49 points on 23 goals. Senior goalkeeper Rebecca Hornbacher had 11 shutouts and a 0.52 goals against average.

"All the credit needs to go to the players," Walker said. "A lot of people talk about being champions, but not all of them are willing to do the work."

Osborne discovers life after football

OSBORNE from page 3

loved the classroom, but I knew I couldn't do both coaching and teaching, so I chose coaching, but always in the back of my mind was the idea I would return to classroom."

After getting Moeser's approval, he talked to Teachers College Dean James O'Hanlon, who told Osborne he would be happy to have him as a part-time teacher. Osborne will teach an undergraduate class about coaching football and a graduate class about issues in athletics.

Osborne said he chose to teach coaching football because it's something he is interested in and because he thinks he can help young people with X's and O's and how to treat players.

"So many times a young guy watches a movie where the coach breaks clipboards over a guy's head and rants and raves, and that's their idea of coaching," Osborne said. "I don't think it has to be that way."

Osborne didn't rule out teaching other subjects, but he said statistics will not be one of them. When Osborne first started teaching, he taught statistics.

"I really didn't want to do that at all," Osborne said. "But the teacher had quit, and the chairman of the department told me on the first of August that I was the replacement."

"I was one day ahead of the class and book. I might say I was a pretty good teacher because I knew what

their problems were because I'd just gone through it myself."

With his new classes, Osborne will have more time to prepare.

The final quarter of his responsibilities at UNL will be with University Foundation's fund drive. He said he will speak and make some appearances to help raise money for a library addition.

"I feel the academic center of any university is the library, and it hasn't had much done to it for a long time," Osborne said.

Broadcasting and politics are two areas Osborne probably won't be going

into, but he never ruled out either one of them.

Expanding the Teammates Program is another goal of Osborne's. The program has been successful in Lincoln, so Osborne wants to take it to other schools across the state.

The program pairs adults with junior high students in a mentoring program.

"This program makes a difference in the lives of kids," Osborne said.

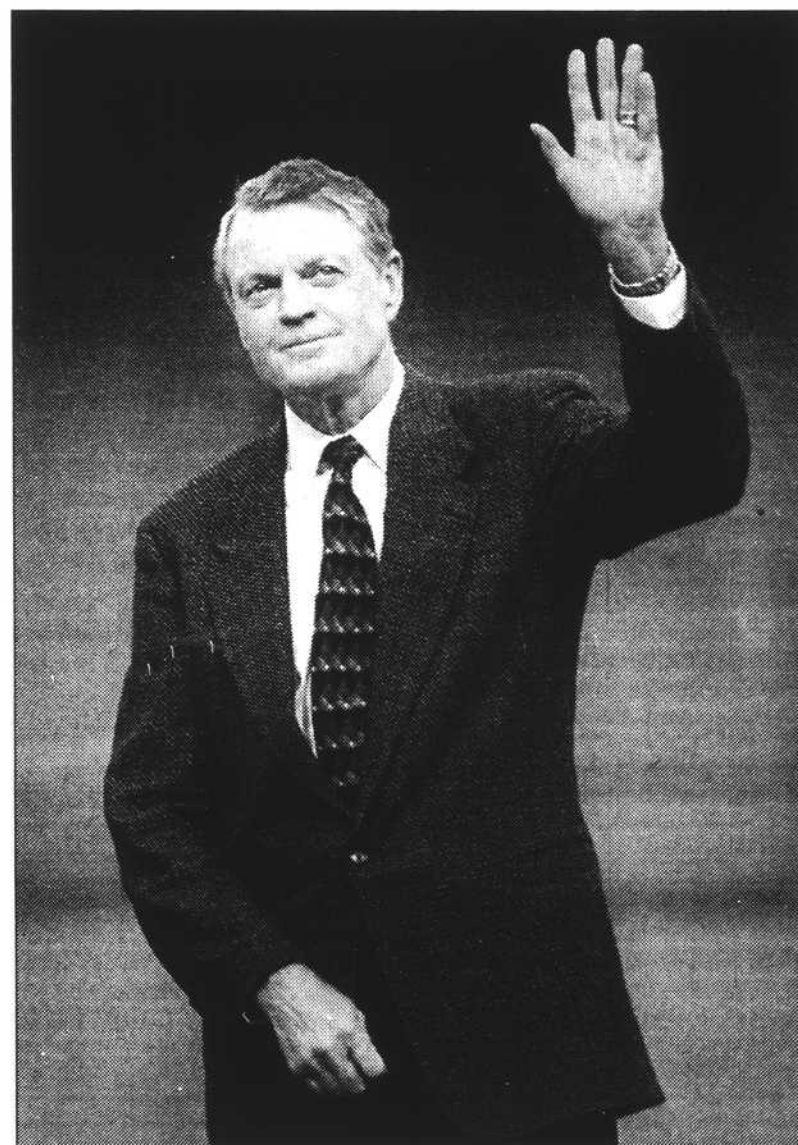
As for Saturdays in the fall, Osborne is not sure he will be at every game, but if he is, he is afraid of where they might put him.

"I may be up there in the knot-hole section," Osborne said. "It's where I started out in the '50s."

And in his spare time, he said, he will be found at a lake or stream doing some fishing.

"I know I will miss contact with players and coaches. ..."

TOM OSBORNE
former NU football coach



MATT MILLER/DN
TOM OSBORNE retired last season after coaching the Husker football team for 25 years. However, he is not leaving empty-handed. Memorial Stadium's field was dedicated Tom Osborne Field on April 24.

**Y'all come back now, ya hear?
Have a safe summer.**

*a message
from the
mighty fine
folks at the
Daily
Nebraskan*