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KRIS BROWN
camp coordinator



TANYA WRIGHT/DN
NEBRASKA HEAD Football Coach Frank Solich shows Sarah Bauer, a participant at the Pacific Pals picnic, how to throw a football Tuesday at Bethany Park. Pacific Pals is in its fourth year in Lincoln and offers part-time employment to NU athletes.

NU athletes volunteer in summer youth program

■ Community work aids both children and the volunteers, says NU Head Football Coach Frank Solich.

BY TANYA WRIGHT
Staff Reporter

Imagine children spending four weeks of their summer pulling weeds, helping in libraries and cleaning up city parks.

Thanks to the partnership of the Summer Youth Program and Pacific Pals, area youth are engaging in activities they might not otherwise get the chance to experience.

Approximately 100 children are chosen from area middle schools either through Classroom Connections — a program aimed at keeping children in school, called TeamMate Mentors — a program started by Tom and Nancy Osborne, which pairs volunteers with selected students who are sometimes recommended by teachers.

The Summer Youth Program, which is funded by the Kellogg

Foundation Points of Light grant, pairs children with local organizations where they spend their mornings volunteering in the community and helping out agencies like Goodwill, the Lincoln Action Program and the Community Playhouse.

“It gives kids an opportunity to see parts of their community and to be involved in areas that they otherwise might not,” said Dr. Mary Lynne Schaffer, coordinator of the Summer Youth Program.

Pacific Pals began in Omaha eight years ago, became a non-profit organization in 1994 and expanded to Lincoln one year later. The summer camp phase pairs NU student-athletes with local youth in an attempt to provide positive role models.

Pacific Pals Camp Coordinator and football player Kris Brown, seized the opportunity to make a difference in the life of a child.

“I think it's important that we as student-athletes get out in the community and do as much as we can,” he said.

Each afternoon the children and 11 student-athlete counselors participate in activities ranging from swimming to visiting local institutions.

Camp participant Steven Sigrist, 14, said he liked visiting

the State Penitentiary because the children got to talk with an inmate and “could ask anything.”

The children learn about their communities and develop skills that will stick with them for life.

Nebraska Football Coach Frank Solich believed in the program but said the children weren't the only ones who benefited.

“I think it's a good program,” he said. “I think it also benefits the athletes who help with the camp, knowing they can be of some help to the youth that are here.”

Pacific Pals Director C.L. Ross estimated the program has helped over 21,000 children and their families in the Lincoln and Omaha areas.

“Some of these kids who have had counselors still have relationships with them,” she said. “We get letters from parents saying how worthwhile (the program) is.”

The current program may be rewarding, but NU women's basketball player Naciska Gilmore thinks the program has an even brighter future.

“I think it's going to develop,” said Gilmore, a camp counselor. “It's already developed into something good, and I think it's just going to keep getting better.”

Strickland: lockout could affect season

BY DARREN IVY
Co-Editor

When the current agreement between the NBA and its players expired June 30, and without a new agreement being accepted, the owners locked out the players for the third time in the last four years.

The past two lockouts didn't last long, but former Nebraska guard and current Dallas Maverick Erick Strickland is expecting this lockout to last some time.

“We may miss some games,” Strickland said. “The two sides are at two extremes. When you have that situation, you sometimes aren't willing to hear what the other side has to say, and that adds time to the negotiations.”

The lockout will, in essence, shut down the league. Teams will be barred from talking to their players. Trades and free agent signings will be prohibited, and summer leagues will be canceled. However, players will still receive salaries until November.

“The expired collective bargaining agreement between the NBA and its players did not work,” Deputy Commissioner Russ Granik said after conferring by conference call with the league's Board of Governors.

“We have made a series of proposals to the players under which salaries

would continue to increase — but at a slower rate than under the expired deal,” Granik said. “Regrettably, the players have rejected all the proposals. The NBA will not operate until we reach a new agreement that is fair to both parties.”

While the owners are trying to blame the players for the lockout, Strickland said the players want to play, and the owners are the ones at fault.

“It's weird that the (owners) took a lot the last time and now two years later they come back and want to take more,” Strickland said. “We don't feel we are being treated right.”

Strickland said the players won't give up the Larry Bird clause, which allows teams to exceed the salary cap to retain their own free agents.

Randy Bowman, Strickland's agent, said the lockout is not about who is right or wrong, but rather a battle of attrition.

“Whichever side loses money first and feels the pain most severely will buckle,” Bowman said. “If the players were smart and built a cash reserve, the players should be able to withstand the owners.”

Strickland took Bowman's advice and said he was financially set.

“We knew the possibility of a lockout, so we made sure we were overly cautious last year.”

Elkhorn standout gives oral commitment to NU

BY ADAM KLINKER
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska football team made another addition to its recruiting class when Phil Peetz gave an oral commitment last week to become a Cornhusker.

Peetz, a senior-to-be offensive and defensive lineman from Elkhorn (Neb.) High School verbally committed to a full-ride scholarship to play football for the Huskers in the fall of 1999. Peetz will sign with NU in February.

“It's feeling pretty good right now,” Peetz said. “I've been kind of calm about it, but it's starting to hit me now.”

Peetz, who signed with Coach Dan Young, said the Huskers may be looking for him to play on the defensive line as a rush end or lineman.

“He's very explosive on both the offensive and defensive lines,”

Elkhorn Head Coach Mark Wortman said. “Coming to a high school game, he's a definite standout.”

This fall, Peetz will begin his third season as a varsity starter at Elkhorn. In his sophomore and junior years he was named to the Nebraska All-State Football Team as an offensive lineman.

With Peetz's speed and explosiveness off the line and his 6-foot-2, 250-lb. frame, Wortman said on either side of the ball Peetz will move people around in the tradition of other Husker lineman.

“He's ready to go,” Wortman said. “Like most kids, he's been looking forward to playing for Nebraska for a long time.”

Peetz is the first Elkhorn High player to receive a scholarship to NU for football. Reserve quarterback Jay Runty, also of Elkhorn, made the team as a walk-on last year.