

OPINION PACKAGES

Our VIEW

A lesson to learn

Game taught fans the art of losing

We've been through this before. Before the 1998 season even started, many of us even predicted it.

With a new coach, a new quarterback, a new starting halfback and a whole lot of new faces on defense, the Cornhuskers weren't supposed to be an unstoppable juggernaut.

They weren't supposed to sweep through the Big 12 like they did so often in past years.

They weren't supposed to be in the national championship hunt.

And on Saturday afternoon in College Station, Texas, they proved it.

The Nebraska Cornhuskers of 1998 are not the Nebraska Cornhuskers of 1997 ... or 1994 ... or 1995.

For most people, that would be an obvious fact. There aren't any Tommie Fraziers, Scott Frosts, Grant Wistroms or Jason Peters around here anymore. Obvious, right?

But in Nebraska, where the autumn months usually mean tailgate parties and sacrificial Division I-A lambs, it took a nationally televised game to prove it.

It took a game in which the Huskers — down by three touchdowns with one quarter remaining — were forced to play catch-up with an offense that was not up to the task.

Was it embarrassing?

The Aggies were not the sacrificial lambs that many Husker fans would've liked to think they were.

Texas A&M has only lost one game this year — and it was against Florida State. Texas A&M is an 18th-ranked team that is on the rise (even more so after Saturday). And, let's just admit it, on Saturday afternoon Texas A&M was better than Nebraska.

Was it embarrassing?

Well, it shouldn't have been.

In the Cornhusker state, where football fans are supposedly as savvy as any, we haven't quite mastered the skill of losing.

We can watch our team win game after game and congratulate them for the fact that they don't run up the score.

But when they lose by one touchdown, we cry and scream and lament our lack of talent, our inexperience and our bad play calling.

A few weeks ago, when ESPN paid Lincoln a visit and witnessed the Huskers' trouncing of an overblown Washington team, the "College GameDay" crew said Nebraska's fans were among the best in the country.

But they saw us on a day we were used to having. Winning we can handle.

Maybe we should see the course of events Saturday afternoon in College Station, Texas, as more than a lesson for the Cornhuskers. We should see it as one for all of us, too.

Mook's VIEW



Equal showing

Forum sets standard for future decision-making



TODD ANDERSON is a senior French, Spanish and International Affairs major and a Daily Nebraskan senior staff writer.

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for breaking a divisional trend of apathy and general ignorance.

Imagine 500 people from five states forming a group to discuss institutional reform.

It's like voters of all ages and backgrounds standing up and shouting to our leaders in Washington, “Hey, don't forget about us.”

Brainstorming on Social Security reform is not only historically significant and culturally symbolic, it's indicative of a whole new approach to decision-making and fair representation.

It is important that the United States, in side step with the world, has changed dramatically in the last 50 years.

In addition to seeing an end to the era of tense, but certain, bilateral conflict, the demographic structure of our global society has seen confusing and unpredictable changes.

International institutions have found new courage to redefine basic human rights and decide who is accountable for upholding them.

Meanwhile, certain questions remain to be answered at the national level, and the Social Security program — a contract between government and the citizens of the society it protects — is undoubtedly one of them.

For Americans who have counted on the most successful social program in the history of this country, there is no doubt our society, through government institutions, bears the moral responsibility for ensuring the welfare of its

people.

In the case of Social Security, orphans, retirees and spouses can be confident of living out their lives in dignity.

The question, therefore, is how to adapt a 60-year-old system to broad changes in a manner that reflects the fundamental values of our society and culture.

Those were the questions that 100 Nebraskans pondered and attempted to answer Saturday.

Those are the questions for which we have a long way to go before finding clear-cut answers.

This weekend's discussion forum set the standard for how future meetings should be conducted — only with the participation of bureaucrats and policy-makers, as well as professionals and the working class.

While educating the public and seeking out forums for all voices to be heard, groups like Americans Discuss Social Security have shown it can be done.

While a final model for such representation is still in the experimental stage, it's a new form of democratic input to fit a new world of continual and rapid metamorphosis.

Yet, just as true democratic representation can only exist hand in hand with strong civic conscience, public willingness to support this new model is the key to its success.

And with the strong showing made by younger segments of Nebraska society, we seem to be on the right track.

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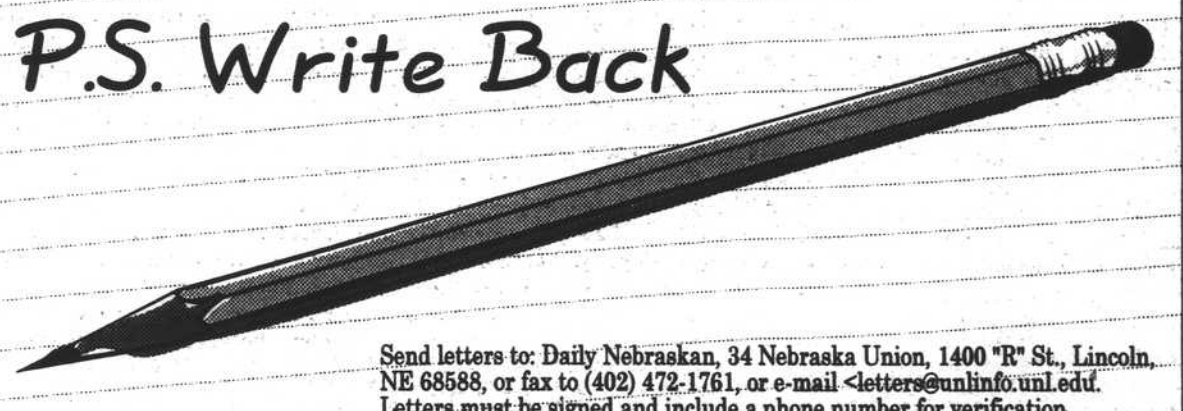
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