

Sports Opinion



Sam McKewon

Injury ends tough year for London

"I was pretty much packed and ready to go."

That's what Frankie London had to say to Daily Nebraskan reporter Mitch Sherman on Apr. 24, 1997, about his career at Nebraska. He was prepared to leave, to transfer somewhere where he could play quarterback. Instead, he stayed.

I wonder if he would have been better off if he hadn't.

London broke his tibia and fibula in his left leg Saturday against Kansas. His season is over. He'll be out for six months. It's a long way from almost being the starting quarterback last spring.

London now only has one year left of eligibility. He's spent four years in this program and had little more than a few moments in the sun as a player. He had talent, but after waiting his turn at quarterback, he got passed over for a younger, faster Bobby Newcombe. He got moved to wingback, where he never saw the ball. Then he got hurt.

It's all very unfortunate. And really, it never had to happen.

London never should have lost the job. He ought to be directing the offense right now. I never agreed with NU's decision to go with Newcombe.

Watching the first seven games this season, Newcombe has been slowed by an injury and even sat out a couple of games. When he has been in, he hasn't been the spectacular big-play quarterback Frank Solich and Turner Gill touted him to be.

Case in point: Newcombe's longest run from scrimmage this season is 20 yards. That's it, 20 yards. He had a 22-yard run on the first play in the first game of his career against Akron.

Blasphemy, you say? How dare I criticize Newcombe? Well, really, I'm not. Newcombe is a good passer — NU's most accurate since Brook Berringer. With an inexperienced line, Newcombe can't make the plays he might otherwise.

But as I watched Saturday as Newcombe handed the ball off a bunch and ran a few good options, I thought to myself, "Frankie could have done this." And certainly, he could have, because Eric Crouch and Monte Christo have done it, too.

What London could not do was what Newcombe did as a wingback. He was the most dangerous player on the field. With only one guy to cover him, there was a 50/50 chance Newcombe would break a big play on a pass or a reverse. On punt returns, you know he was good.

As London lay there Saturday night, I saw for him and Nebraska what could have been: London at quarterback, Newcombe turning into the next Irving Fryar and NU still undefeated.

It should have been that way.

Sam McKewon is a junior news-editorial and political science major and the Daily Nebraskan sports editor.

NU survives A&M test

■ Coach Terry Pettit wins his 700th career match while Nebraska is taken to four games for only the second time this season.

By **ANDREW STRNAD**
Staff writer

The first go around the Big 12 Conference is complete, and for the Nebraska volleyball team, all is well.

Nebraska, fresh off a weekend sweep of No. 13 Texas and a four game victory over No. 15 Texas A&M, pushed its record to 17-0 overall and 8-0 in the Big 12 Conference.

Friday NU dumped the Longhorns in three games (15-7, 15-11, 15-12) behind a career-high 23 kills from senior middle blocker Megan Korver. Sophomore Nancy Meendering also added a personal-best 20 kills.

Coach Terry Pettit notched his 700th career win against the Aggies (15-8, 15-7, 14-16, 15-12) on Sunday as NU's 44-game winning streak came to an end.

Texas A&M was able to rally from 8-14 down in the third game to win 16-14, and put the pressure on NU by leading 7-2 in the fourth game before the Huskers rallied to put the Aggies away.

"It was definitely good to have a tough match like that," NU senior outside hitter Jaime Krondak said. "We learned a lot today."

Krondak finished the match with 19 kills and 17 digs.

As a result of NU's strong play, the Huskers received a first-place vote for the first time this season.

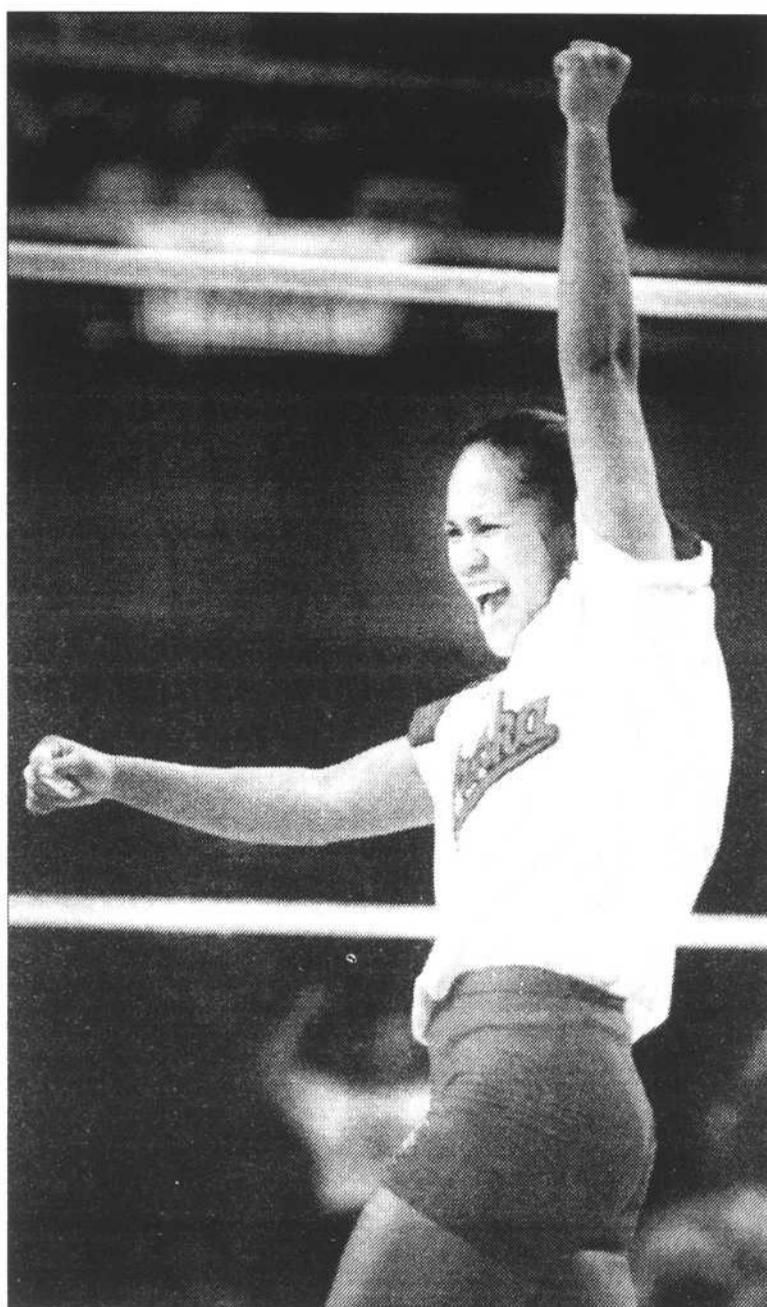
The optimistic voter was none other than Pettit.

"Why not?" Pettit said. "We've played as well and as tough a schedule as anybody else."

The Huskers are still well behind top-ranked Long Beach State (38 first-place-votes) and No. 2 Penn State (21).

The top three are the only three remaining undefeated teams in Division I-A.

In the Oct. 11 AVCA/Sagarin Divison Power ratings the Huskers



SCOTT McCLURG/DN

NEBRASKA SETTER Fiona Nepo celebrates during the fourth game against Texas A&M on Sunday afternoon at the NU Coliseum. Nebraska's match against Texas A&M was only the second time this season the undefeated Huskers have gone to four games.

were the top-ranked team ahead of LBSU and Penn State.

In other volleyball news, NU setter Fiona Nepo was named the Big 12 player of the week.

The 5-9 senior recorded a career-high 21 digs and tied a career high with 76 assists against Texas A&M.

"That's nice," Nepo said. "It pretty much reflects our team, but it's nice. I told my mom, and she's happy."

NU continues Big 12 play at home as Oklahoma and Kansas come to Lincoln Friday and Saturday.

NU's hoops season under way

Men start new era without Lue

By **SAM MCKEWON**
Senior editor

When a reporter asked senior forward Andy Markowski how he felt about this season's Nebraska basketball team, it would have been fair to expect an unpromising prediction.

After all, the Cornhuskers lost their top player, Tyronn Lue, to the NBA Draft last April. Along with him went his 21.2

points per game and the team's best free-throw shooter.

Instead, Markowski cracked a small smile and had a look that said otherwise.

"I feel real good about this team," Markowski said Tuesday at NU's media day. "Silently, I'm more excited about this team. We've got the potential to be better than last year."

Nebraska returns every scholarship player from last season's 21-12 team except Lue and guard Rodney Williams. Williams was released from his scholarship last spring.

NU Coach Danny Nee said the team will have more balance without Lue, who now plays for the Los Angeles Lakers. Nebraska still will rely on its defense, second best in the Big 12 Conference last season, to be the team's strong point again.

"We're going to hang our hat on our defense," Nee said. "We've also got to cut down on our turnovers if we're to be better than last year."

NU averaged 17.8 turnovers last season, and Nee said he'd like to see that amount down to 12. The Huskers will try to cause more turnovers with a new pressing defense.

Nee said he plans to use three players at point guard: junior Joe Holmes and freshmen Todd Smith and Cary Cochran. Holmes, a junior college transfer from Tyler (Texas) Junior



Nee

Sanderford more comfortable

By **JAY SAUNDERS**
Staff writer

For the Nebraska women's basketball team, last season was supposed to be a test run for then first-year coach Paul Sanderford.



Sanderford

The players were not ones he recruited, and the players weren't exactly sure what to expect from the former Western Kentucky coach. But the test run ended up as a 23-5 season, tying the school record for most wins in a single season.

As practice begins for this season, Sanderford said he is excited about the prospect of another successful campaign.

"This is a long way from being my team," Sanderford said, "but at least I know the kids that are returning. I know who to push and how to motivate them."

Sanderford had no problem with motivation for Saturday's first practice.

With the Bob Devaney Sports Center microphone clipped on his shirt, the second-year coach had the Cornhuskers practice for three hours.

"I was very satisfied with today's practice," Sanderford said. "We are much ahead of where we were last year physically."

This season is also a chance for the players to get to know Sanderford's coaching style better.

"It felt good to be back at practice," senior Cori McDill said. "(Sanderford) makes practices so intense. But it is competitive too."

NU also has gained the services of former Husker volleyball player

NU's Zimmer leads women to fourth place

From staff reports

Freshman Jeannette Zimmer led the Nebraska women's cross country team to a fourth-place finish Saturday at the Oregon Invitational in Eugene, Ore.

Zimmer again paced the Cornhuskers in the 5,000-meter race at Alton Baker Park with a time of 18 minutes, four seconds. The time gave Zimmer a ninth-place finish in the field of 204 runners.

Erica Palmer of Wisconsin won the women's race in 17:22. Wisconsin won the women's title with 46 points.

Sophomore Amy Wiseman finished next for the Huskers in 18:20 for 16th place, and Jaime Pauli was shortly behind in 21st with a time of 18:25.

On the men's side, the Cornhuskers finished the 8,000-meter race in seventh place and were led by senior Jim Vance, who finished in 24th place with a time of 25:02.

Lagat Bernard of Washington State won the race in 24:04. Portland earned the men's team honors with 73 points.

Marcus Witter and Tony Smith were next for the Huskers, finishing in 25th and 28th place with times of 25:03 and 25:12.

Rogers pushes men's golf team to third at Duke

From Staff Reports

Three seniors led the Nebraska men's golf team to a third-place finish Monday at the Duke Golf Classic.

The Cornhuskers tied with Georgia Tech, the fifth-ranked team in the country, at the two-day, 54-hole tournament at 6 over the par 70 course.

Seniors Jamie Rogers, Scott Gutschewski and Josh Madden finished in the top 20. Rogers shot a tournament-best round for Nebraska with a 69. He tied for sixth with a 2-under par 214 (72, 73 and 69). Gutschewski matched Rogers for sixth with rounds of 71, 73 and 70. Madden tied for 18th, shooting 220.

NU's Steve Friesen finished 30th (222), and freshman Seth Porter shot a 236 in only his second college tournament.

Please see **MEN'S** on 11

Please see **WOMEN'S** on 11