

Sports Opinion



John Gaskins

Iron Mike's ring return loopy show

He's back. One of the great sports eye-poppers of the century, Mike Tyson, returns to the ring Saturday night. He makes his return after being out of boxing for 18 months, after making part of Evander Holyfield's ear his late-night snack in the heavy-weight championship, a scene that shocked the world and gave big-time boxing a moral, business and popularity blow.

Things changed after that night. Millionaire promoter and Afro Whiz Don King, who made Tyson his meal ticket for years, dumped him. Everyone thought Mike was gone for good.

Yet, here he is. Back on Pay-Per-View. He's ready to take on the world. Question is, is the world ready for him ... again? I don't know if the world is, but I'm betting boxing is.

It's no coincidence that Tyson returns with a license to fight and a million-dollar contract at a time when the sport is losing money, credibility, appeal and, most of all, ratings.

Pay-Per-View's boxing ratings have decreased 82 percent since last we saw Mike. Media experts point specifically to Tyson's absence as the reason.

So, Pay-Per-View boxing has called upon Tyson to bring it out of its drought. Nothing wrong with that. The entertainment value is certainly there.

But the question remains: Will people want to see Tyson again after the Holyfield fiasco?

In an attempt to rectify Tyson's image, Pay-Per-View has constantly run commercials advertising Saturday's fight with Tyson working out, a sappy announcer saying this is a troubled man's second chance, and most hilariously of all, Iron Mike eating cereal and smiling at the camera as if he were some innocent, sheepish All-American schoolboy who got a Tickle Me Elmo doll for Christmas.

I fell out of my recliner bursting with laughter after seeing this ad. Thought it was some of the best propaganda since the Nazi era. And they don't need it.

Do you really think boxing fans and America believe Tyson is any different than the poster child for moronic meatehead criminal athletes that he has been? After being jailed for rape? After going Van Gogh on Holyfield? Of course not.

But I don't think Pay-Per-View needs this wholesome image to sell the fight. Ethics will be shoved aside by millions to see what will happen. Will he win? Will he go nuts?

Call it greedy or call it forgiveness on both boxing and the viewers' part. But I know I'll be throwing down a little dough to see what this phenomenon will do next. People love a show, especially a sideshow.

John Gaskins is a sophomore broadcasting major and Daily Nebraskan staff writer.

Jordan makes retirement official

CHICAGO (AP) - The NBA's greatest player made it official today.

Michael Jordan retired from the Chicago Bulls after 13 seasons, six championships and countless soaring dunks.

"Mentally, I'm exhausted. I don't feel I have a challenge," Jordan said at a packed news conference at the United Center, where a bronze statue of him stands outside. "Physically, I feel great.

"This is a perfect time for me to walk away from the game. I'm at peace with that."

Word of Jordan's retirement broke late Monday night, but he had refused to comment until today. After leading the Bulls to their sixth championship in June, Jordan said he would make an announcement on his future only after the NBA lockout ended.

The players and the owners reached a deal last week to save what's left of the season. Once that happened, everyone's next question was whether Jordan would return.

He answered that today with a

"I tried to be the best basketball player I could be. I've had a great time."

MICHAEL JORDAN
former Chicago Bulls player

resounding "No."

Jordan leaves as a five-time league MVP, 10-time league scoring champion and the No. 1 per-game scorer in NBA history.

"I tried to be the best basketball player I could be," said Jordan, who was joined by his wife, Juanita, Bulls chairman Jerry Reinsdorf and NBA commissioner David Stern. "I've had a great time.

"I'm just going to enjoy life and do things I've never done before."

During the news conference, the Bulls unveiled a banner in the rafters from Jordan's first retirement. It said "Jordan 1984-1993" but will now have

to be updated.

Jordan alluded to his first retirement in 1993, when he briefly pursued a professional baseball career before returning late in the 1994-95 season.

"Well, we do this again, a second time," he said to open the news conference.

Jordan said he was "99.9 percent" sure he would never return to the NBA and added, "You can read that for what it's worth. ... I'm very secure in my decision."

Asked if he had lost his desire to play, Jordan said: "The desire is always going to be there."

But he said he wanted to make sure

that the desire was there "not one-fourth of the time I step onto the court, but every time."

"I thought about saying just two words, 'I'm gone,' but I thought I owed my fans a lot more than that," he said.

Jordan had a bandage on his right index finger and said he severed a tendon while trying to cut a cigar and would need surgery. But he said he had decided to retire before the accident.

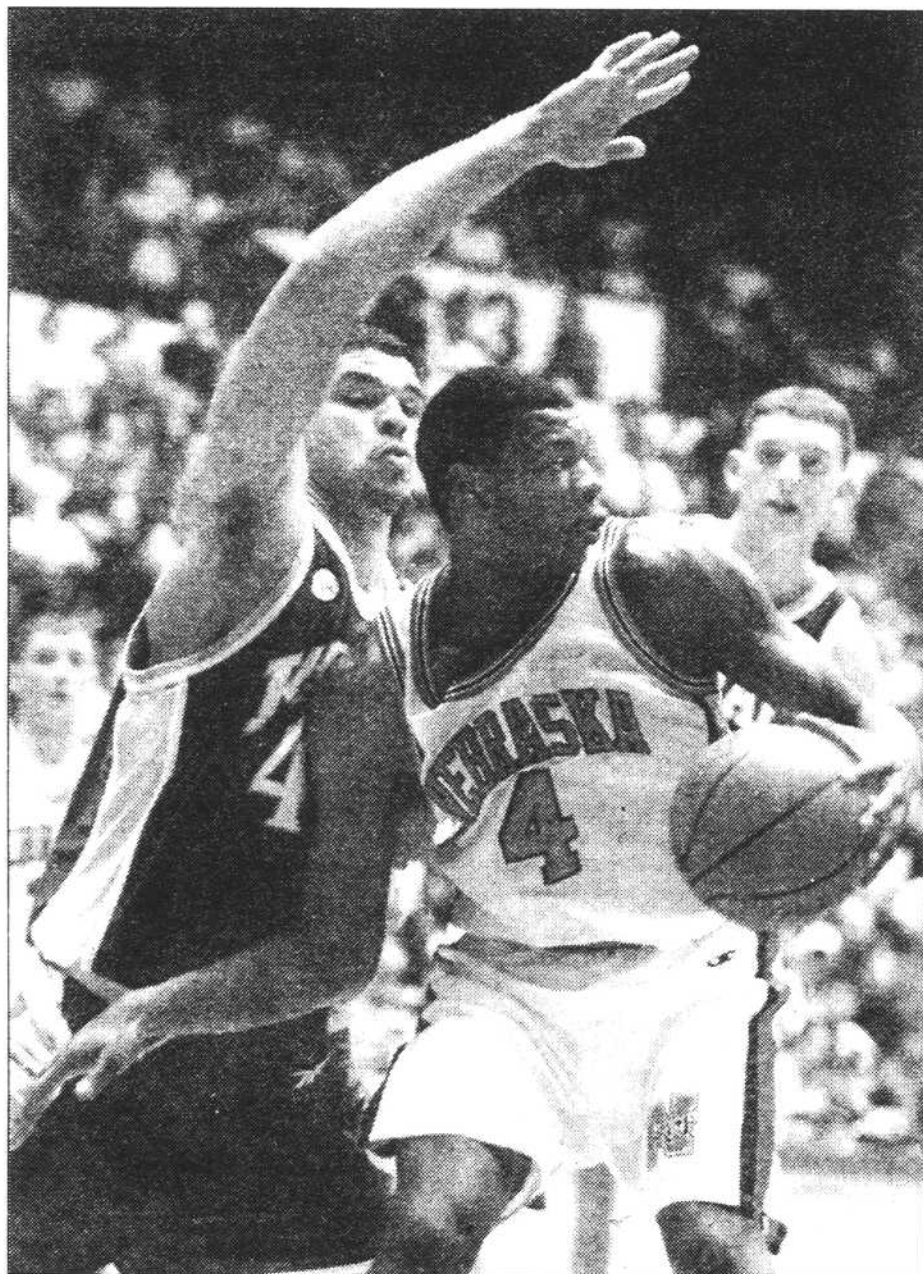
He said he looked forward to being a parent and would "live vicariously through my kids," whether or not they played basketball.

"My life will take a change," Jordan said.

His wife added: "I see Michael doing a lot more carpooling."

Reinsdorf called Jordan's announcement "a tough day for basketball fans all over the world."

"This is a day I hoped for," Johnny Bach, an assistant coach on three of the Bulls' championship teams, said praising Jordan for not only his skill, but for the joy he brought to the game.



MIKE WARREN/DN

NEBRASKA'S SENIOR CENTER Venson Hamilton looks for an open shot against Wildcats forward, Manny Dies, in the first half of Wednesday's game at the Devaney Center. The Nebraska men held the lead at the half and defeated Kansas State 70-61.

NU gets back on track with win

BY ADAM KLINKER
Senior staff writer

Nebraska	70
Kansas State	61

It was considered a must-win situation all week for the Nebraska men's basketball team.

After Wednesday's game against Kansas State, it looked like they must have won.

The Cornhuskers broke into the Big 12 Conference

victory column Wednesday night with a 70-61 win over Kansas State in front of 8,029 fans at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

After the game, NU forward Venson Hamilton and guard Cookie Belcher answered reporters' questions over shouts of joy and

celebration in the locker room next door.

"We're supposed to win at home; we're defending our home court," Hamilton said. "But this is just the first step. We've got to keep going."

Belcher agreed.

"We focused on motivation this week as a keyword," he said. "Venson and I came

Please see **HOOPS** on 13

Husker offense goes kaput in loss to Wildcats

■ A seven-minute drought kills Nebraska in a 79-67 setback to KSU, the second straight Big 12 Conference loss for NU.

BY JAY SAUNDERS
Staff writer

MANHATTAN, Kan. - It wasn't any secret - the Kansas State women's basketball team knew it what was going to face when it played host to No. 19 Nebraska.

Before the game, NU Coach Paul Sanderford gladly offered his defensive game plan against the Wildcats - full-court pressure from the opening tip.

That pressure had caused several opponents fits. KSU beat it early and often in a 79-67 win in front of 3,215 at Bramlage Coliseum.

"You have to be more than your press," Sanderford said. "(Kansas State) executed better in the half-court offense, and they rebounded better."

NU (13-4 overall and 2-2 in the Big 12 Conference) fell behind 11-3 after a barrage of 3-point field goals from KSU guard Kristen Rethman. Rethman came into the matchup averaging only 3.7 points per game.

But against the Cornhuskers, Rethman lit the nets for a team-high 22 points. For most of the first half, NU trailed a K-State team (9-5 and 2-2) that was averaging 69 points a game.

KSU Coach Deb Patterson said it was important to jump on Nebraska's press early, especially after losing a game early at Texas Tech, where she said the Red Raiders' pressure was the difference.

"We had individual players willing to step up and do their job," Patterson said. "That helped get off to a good start."

That good start carried into a 38-33 halftime lead.

Coming out of the locker room, fortunes reversed.

Junior Brooke Schwartz scored 9 of her 16 points in the first six minutes of the second half, helping NU take a 44-42 lead.

Just when it looked like Nebraska was going to maintain another second-half comeback, the bottom fell out of the

"We could never establish any kind of rhythm. It's much easier to press when you're not playing catch-up."

PAUL SANDERFORD
NU coach

Please see **BASKETBALL** on 13