

SPORTS

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Vlieger, Kimura help NU upend Bluejays

BY DAVID WILSON
Staff writer

In the words of Nebraska third baseman Danny Kimura, "It wasn't pretty."

Nonetheless, despite failing to capitalize on each of Creighton's six errors, the Cornhusker baseball team snapped a three-game losing streak with a come-from-behind 5-4 win Wednesday night at Buck Beltzer Field.

Kimura, who officially finished the game with no hits in five at-bats, knocked in the game-winning run in the bottom of the 10th on a lazy sacrifice fly to right field.

"I was glad to see that for Danny," NU Coach

Dave Van Horn said. "He had a really frustrating night. We keep saying that he's just about to break loose and it hasn't happened yet."

The 28th-ranked Huskers, who improved to 21-9, tied the game at four in the bottom of the ninth with two outs. NU junior shortstop Brandt Vlieger pushed the tying run across poking a two-strike single to right.

Bluejay right fielder Ovid Valentin came up just short of catching the soft liner on a diving attempt, knocking the ball down as pinch runner Adam Stern crossed the plate.

"Vlieger did it," Van Horn said. "He stayed over that pitch. It was 0-2, he battled back to 2-2.

Then that pitch he hit for a single was probably 6 to 8 inches outside, but you can't take a chance."

Vlieger's single, his only hit of the game, came off Creighton reliever Scott Yahraus, who threw the final 2 2/3 innings and earned the loss for the Bluejays.

"When there are two strikes, you have to open your zone up," Vlieger said. "I was looking for the slider and I just slapped it to the right."

Creighton Coach Jack Dahm said he was expecting a 4-3 win before Vlieger's single. With the loss, CU fell to 19-10 before 1,119 fans.

"That's a tough one to lose," Dahm said. "We had chances to put them away, and we didn't. They took advantage of that."

The Bluejays jumped out to a quick 2-0 lead in

the top of the first on an RBI single by Yutan native Peyton Lewis and a sacrifice fly from Dan Lawler. CU added another in the third before Husker starter Jarod Bearinger was pulled for Chad Wiles.

Wiles lasted 6 2/3 innings, surrendering one run on eight hits while striking out seven batters.

"That might have been the best he's thrown since I've been here," Van Horn said.

Nebraska scored one in the third on an Adam Shabala single — and Ken Harvey, who entered the game as a pinch hitter in the seventh, doubled and scored following his first at-bat. Harvey currently leads the nation with a .509 batting average.

Vlieger then put the Huskers within one in the eighth, scoring on another Shabala single. Shabala finished 2 for 4 with two RBIs.

Voss key to narrow win for Huskers

BY BRANDON SCHULTE
Staff writer

It wasn't her trademark full-game effort, but Jenny Voss saved the Nebraska softball team again.

Clinging to a one-run lead in the top of the fifth with the bases loaded and no outs, Voss came in for relief and was able to get the Nebraska out of the jam for a 1-0 win in front of 473 fans at NU Softball Complex.

Creighton started things off in the fifth with a bunt single, a single to right and a walk. That set the stage for Voss, who came on in relief of starter Leigh Ann Walker.

Nebraska 1
Creighton 0

"I love those situations," Voss said. "It sets a tone. They might not come out as hard because it shows them that we've got their number."

Voss calmly slammed the door on the Bluejays, getting a pop out, a strike-out and inning ending ground out. From that point on, not one Bluejay advanced past second base.

The win marked the fourth time NU has defeated CU on the season and was the third straight time by one run. With the win, Nebraska improved to 18-11 and Creighton dropped to 17-21.

Despite the apparent pressure, Voss said she was up to the challenge.

"The team needs to see that I'm confident coming into that situation," Voss said. "I know I can do with them behind me. I just tried to think about setting a tone, not only to the other team, but for us also."

Nebraska took a 1-0 lead in the second inning when freshman Leigh Suhr doubled in Cindy Rothemeyer.

CU missed a chance to get out of the inning without any damage, but CU pitcher Shelli Mellegaard fumbled a Ginger Taylor grounder with two outs to keep the inning going. The error led to Suhr's game-winning RBI.

Walker was credited with the win, her sixth of the season, as she pitched four innings, striking out seven, giving up three hits and no runs. Voss picked up her first save of the season as she pitched three scoreless innings with four strikeouts.

The 1-0 win was surprising after scores of 4-1, 6-5 and 3-2 in the previous three games between the instate rivals.

"I knew we were going to pitch well tonight," NU Coach Rhonda Revelle said. "But I didn't expect a 1-0 game. I thought we'd seen each other too much and that there would be more scoring."

The loss was especially devastating for Creighton, which had already endured two come-from-behind victories by Nebraska in the seventh inning.



NU COACH DAN KENDIG has a commanding presence as a coach on the gym floor and as a promoter for both the team and the sport off it. It has paid off, as his record in six years at NU is 98-21 and attendance has risen since he arrived.

"If I could get on a bullhorn and just scream to everyone 'just this one time, come out and watch this team,' and they came. I wouldn't have to beg them back."
— Dan Kendig

Story by
JOHN GASKINS
Photos by
MATT MILLER



NU COACH DAN KENDIG consoles gymnast Heather Brink after a routine at a meet. Both Kendig's gymnasts and coaches say his most redeeming coaching quality is his "genuine care" for his athletes.

KENDIG CAN DO

Vocal NU coach will do 'anything' for Huskers

A group of shaken-up women's gymnasts gathered at center floor, fearing their worst nightmare had arrived. In a sense, it had.

The Nebraska women had just humiliated themselves on the beam, their best event, in a March 20 match against Iowa State. Three of them fell. It wasn't supposed to happen. It couldn't happen. But it did, and there was a lot to lose because of it.

Slipping from their hands was a 25-meet home winning streak and solid confidence from a record breaking season. NU had one event, the floor, to make up a large deficit. It wasn't likely.

A tall, bald man, decked in red, gathered them at center floor and stared into their eyes. He thrust his hands out — he always talks with his hands — and pushed them toward the ground. He was calming them down. He told them they had

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