**Athletes star in 'School is Cool'** 

## BY BERNARD VOGELSANG Staff writer

Bobby Newcombe will never give up.

After a season of injuries, the Nebraska Cornhuskers quarterback told approximately 13,000 elementary and middle school students at the Eighth Annual "School is Cool" Jam that he was determined to work harder than ever to play 10 times better next season

And similarly, Newcombe told the students, they should not leave school if they ever face hardships.

The jam was held Monday morning in the Bob Devaney Sports Center to persuadé fourth- through eighth-grade students how important education is. Students from almost 300 schools listened to speakers and watched artists like the High Impact Squad, which performed spectacular slam dunks.

Lincoln Public Schools, the University of Nebraska Athletic Honor Society and Pi Lambda Theta sponsored the jam.

Hawthorne Elementary School who helped organize the event, said the NU athletes and coaches who spoke at the event were excellent role models. Although they had met with adversity in their careers, they stayed focused on their goals, she said.

With four losses in his first season as head football coach at Nebraska, Frank Solich also met with hardships. He told the students to keep believing in themselves when things don't go well.

"You must battle through hard moments to get where you want to be," he said.

Tracy Jensen, a former NU cheer-

leader who suffered a spinal cord injury during a practice in December 1996, gave an emotional speech about making choices.

Jensen said that when she was lying in the hospital, she decided that the only way to recover from her injury was to work hard.

Jensen told the students they also needed to make decisions in their lives. She encouraged them not to use drugs or alcohol and to stay in school.

"Knowledge is power," she said. "The more you learn, the better your future will be. The choice is yours."

NU volleyball player Jaime Krondak said the students should also listen to their parents and teachers.

Krondak said although she still would like to become a rock star, she now is now working hard to get a job in the fashion business.

"This summer, I will move to New York. That is scary. But I will listen to my parents' advice because they will always help me," she said.

NU yell squad member Shannon Department, Golden Key National Young said the students must stay motivated if they want to achieve something.

"Stay determined because it might Deb Dabbert, a principal at take a long time before you improve your skills," he said.

Last year, Young set his consecutive-backflip record at 28. To show his determination, he performed 29 backflips at Monday's jam.

After the jam, Derek Wilson, a fifthgrader at Pyrtle Elementary School, said the High Impact Squad was the best part of the morning.

Wilson said Solich and Newcombe's speeches also taught him never to give up and believe in himself.

Today, more than 4,000 students from western Nebraska will attend a School is Cool" Jam in North Platte.

TUESDAY, APRIL 13, 1999 DAILY NEBRASKAN DAGE 3



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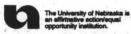


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