

Senators target legal loopholes in existing law

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Protection Act of 1992, which made sports gambling illegal in every state but Nevada and Oregon, where it's used in the lottery. The bill is endorsed by, not surprisingly, the NCAA and 26 other major U.S. amateur organizations.

The legislation hinges on five main goals:

- Eliminate the Nevada sports book for gain-in-point shaving scandals;

- Eliminate the legitimacy of publishing point spreads and advertising for sports tout services;

- Resensitize the public to the illegal nature of gambling on college sports;

- Reduce the number of people who are introduced to sports wagering;

- Eliminate conflicting messages as we combat illegal sports wagering that say it's O.K. to wager on sports in some places but not others.

Supporters hope the bill cuts gambling off at its source: Nevada. The majority of the points spreads are created in the state, which are often used by small-time illegal bookies and are printed by newspapers around the nation.

The fact that the bill goes across party lines might help the chances of the bill's passing. Support is pervasive in the sports community, so that might help also.

But Americans like gambling. Cut it off in Nevada, and they'll find other outlets.

That's the case made by John Harper, a senior oddsmaker at Las Vegas Sports Consultants, the largest oddsmaking service in the country, which makes spreads for 85 percent of Las Vegas sports books.

"College-educated people get into sports gambling, and they're not going to let this legislation be passed," Harper said. "Compared to other games at a casino, gambling on sports is a pretty fair deal. Certainly the educated people see this, and that's why this bill has such a little chance of being passed."

Financial concern was one of the main reasons gambling proponents cried foul after the bill was announced on Feb. 1. Frank Steshley from the tax division of the Nevada Game and Control Board said approximately 2.5 billion was taken in legally by the state's casinos during 1999.

Harper estimates that only 20-25 percent of the Las Vegas Sports Consultant, Inc., business comes from college athletics with little coming from Olympic sports and none from high school athletics. The rest of the business deals with professional sports, prize fights, etc.

Harper agreed that illegal gambling was a problem, but said shutting down regulated and taxed betting isn't the way to solve the dilemma.

"The premise of the bill is faulty," he said. "The people behind the bill don't realize that 99 percent of sports betting is not done in Nevada - its illegal or offshore."

"It doesn't matter if the bets originate from here. What a lot of people don't understand is that if we get shut down, other places in the world will still make the lines - Nevada is dwarfed in gambling by other countries all over the world."

Harlan Vogel, program coordinator for the treatment of problem gambling at Family Services of the Omaha Metro Area, agreed.

"I think what the legislation would do is cause gambling to move further underground," Vogel said. "At UNL it's illegal, yet I've heard figures that say one million dollars is bet during one

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football weekend. If you multiply that by all of the campuses across the country it's a lot of money."

Mecca for gambling

Still, shutting down college sports gambling in Nevada would be a step in the right direction, supporters say. Since the state held its first heavyweight title fight between Bob Fitzsimmons and James S. Colbert in 1897 in Carson City, Nevada has been a mecca for gambling on athletics.

And many collegiate gambling scandals in the past century have involved people placing large bets legally in Nevada after conspiring with athletes to fix games.

One of the most famous cases in NCAA history involved the 1950 NCAA and NIT champions, The City College of New York. College basketball in the Big Apple and Madison Square Garden was never the same. Some also believe the NIT, which had the same amount of credibility as the NCAA Tournament at the time, never recovered from the incident.

Most recently, two college basketball players from Arizona State were implicated in a point-shaving scam connected to Las Vegas gambling.

In the 1990s alone, at least seven schools and more than 50 athletes have been implicated in scandals that involve fixing games - losing on purpose - and point-shaving - intentionally playing poorly to win by less or lose by more than a team ordinarily would have.

Nebraska I-back Dan Alexander said Cornhusker football players are cautioned about the dangers of sports gambling several times a year. Alexander said he never has been approached by anyone asking him to throw a contest.

"One thing we're warned about is a lot of times players are approached by people trying to get the inside scoop on the team so they can make profits (gambling)," Alexander said. "(The coaches and administrators) worry about players getting in with the bookies and then being restricted by them."

Dean Smith, former North Carolina basketball coach, thinks newspapers' publishing point spreads and advertisements for sports gambling institutions also are problems.

The Washington Post is the only newspaper that refrains from publishing point spreads. In a letter to Senators Brownback and Leahy, Smith said:

"Publishing point spreads gives credence to illegal gambling and, many times, it encourages a person who thinks the point spread is not correct to place an illegal bet."

Alexander said Husker players know spreads exist - NU used them as a strong rallying point after the 1997 season to campaign for national championship - but they're not used by players in any other way.

"We hear about them," Alexander said. "Usually we only hear about them if they're a motivating reason - when people (who make the spreads) don't give credit where credit is due."

"That's the only reason we'd ever look at them."

WOMEN'S TENNIS

Pelazini keeps the chemistry in tennis team

By Brian Christopherson

Staff writer

Nebraska Women's Tennis Coach Scott Jacobson wishes they all could be California girls.

At least he couldn't be blamed for thinking that way if his whole team matched the work ethic and leadership of Golden State representative Gina Pelazini.

The Nebraska senior co-captain from Rialto, Calif., has intangibles as a leader that make life a little easier for the coach.

"She's always in a neutral position between the coaches and the team," Jacobson said. "She is largely responsible for the chemistry of the program."

Pelazini is still a little jittery about her being such a commanding figure to her teammates.

"I get kind of nervous when I think about being a senior," Pelazini said. "I am just starting to feel good about my game."

Her game largely is responsible for the Cornhuskers' early-season success.

The 4-1 Huskers have had big boosts from Pelazini and the 4-1 singles and doubles record she brings to the table.

Pelazini has seen duty at the No. 4 and 5 spots in singles action, but teamed up with senior Sandra Noetzel in No. 1 doubles to knock off the fourth-ranked doubles team in the country from Texas earlier in the season.

"You have to know your partner, and I like playing with Sandra," she said. "There are some great singles players that can't play well together. It depends on how well you work together."

"The togetherness on this team is one of the best things we have going for us," Pelazini said. "On many teams, the competition is so fierce between each other that they don't like each other, but here, we hang out with each other."

Pelazini is looking to improve on her record with Southwest Missouri State and Wichita State's coming to town this weekend.

"I'm pretty confident that we can win those matches fairly easily," Pelazini said.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Pressure high for b-ball win

■ Husker seniors aiming to play well in last home game.

By John Gaskins

Staff writer

If the circumstances surrounding its home game with 12-13 Oklahoma State made the Nebraska women's basketball team play tight and nervous on Tuesday night, how will they play tomorrow night against Kansas State (12-15, 5-9) with even more on the line?

According to the Husker seniors, just fine.

This comes despite a 14-11 record that spells WNIT (Women's National Invitational Tournament) instead of NCAA if NU loses. And this attitude comes despite hoards of their hometown fans packing the stands for the last home game of their careers, and despite their tentativeness for the first 30 minutes of the OSU game - a 75-71 overtime victory, in which Sanderford said the women were outplayed.

"I think we'll be more ready," senior guard Nicole Kubik said. "Nobody wants to leave their home floor losing. That's something we can control. We're going to go out as winners. As far as being nervous about beating (K-State), we know we can

beat them. We beat them before."

The rematch of the Huskers' 68-61 victory over the Wildcats in Manhattan, Kan., on Jan. 30 will tip off at 7:05 p.m. at the Bob Devaney Sports Center. NU sits tied for fifth place with Texas at 8-6 and is hanging on for dear life in NCAA Tournament consideration.

Four seniors - Kubik, guard Brooke Schwartz, forward Charlie Rogers and forward Cisco Gilmore will be honored on senior night. Coach Paul Sanderford will start all four - a tradition he has upheld in all 18 years of coaching at both Western Kentucky and Nebraska.

Starting them won't be a stretch for the norm for Sanderford. Kubik, Schwartz and Rogers have started nearly every game in the past two years, while Gilmore started most of last season's games and is usually one of the first players off the bench this season.

The four seniors have combined for 58 percent of NU's scoring, 49 percent of its rebounding and 64 percent of its steals this season.

"These four kids I inherited were the major building blocks of the program," said third-year coach Sanderford. "I hope people will realize the time, effort and energy these kids have put into women's basketball here. I'll miss their work ethic the most."

Camenzind: Let them pray: No one is hurt, and the team gets united

PRAYER from page 20

1985, and it was originally intended to curb the efforts of CU Football Coach Bill McCartney, who left the Buffaloes in 1994 to take over Promise Keepers, a nationwide men's Christian organization.

The policy states: "Coaches should not organize or conduct religious activities, including promotion of prayer or Bible readings by players or coaches."

This can be a tough subject to deal with, but not on a case-by-case basis.

The Buff players have no qualm with what they do; in fact, they do it on their own.

Jaquay Walls told the Denver Post on Tuesday, "Someone's trying to get us in trouble for praying. For praying? I can see if we were hurting someone. That's nonsense."

Other Colorado players backed up Walls.

Said CU guard Josh Townsend: "He (Patton) doesn't force us to do anything."

If Patton was not present for these prayers after practice, where CU players kneel and join hands, the ACLU would have no problem.

But just because Patton is present and he participates with the team, it is wrong.

Ridiculous is one word that comes to mind.

There is a point where the Constitution of the United States and the First Amendment can become something to uphold for the sake of just doing it. This is one of those cases.

Boulder ACLU President Judd Golden said the prayers are driving a wedge within the team, and that prayer

has no place on the basketball court.

I beg to differ.

Prayer at Colorado has done nothing more than bring the team together, and make it a better environment for the players.

The players play for Patton, who acts as a father figure and is concerned with their well-beings as people, and not just how many rebounds they can grab in a game.

Unity has been achieved at Colorado. You can tell by the way they play and stand by their coach.

Golden, in an interview with the Daily Nebraskan, said that may be the case this season, but in years to come other players might feel differently. He said because of Patton's practices and beliefs, players of other religions (or no religion at all) might be discouraged from coming to Colorado.

So the Buffaloes miss out on a recruit because he doesn't want to pray. Big deal. Worse things have happened to the university, and it is not like hundreds around the country don't do the same thing. Counting high schools, it's thousands.

Nebraska prays before and after games. I don't see the ACLU of Nebraska pounding down Danny Nee's door - NU's policy is similar to CU's.

The basketball team prays for like their ability, that the visiting team makes it home safely and that they did what they had to do and honored the Lord. Asking not to be a part of that sounds pretty wrong to me.

But Golden said the prayer takes away from the team experience, and he will seek out legal options if CU does not respond with action.

Colorado Athletic Director Dick

Tharp told the Denver Post that he believed the ACLU was "off-base in this particular instance."

Golden said he is sorry Tharp sees it that way, and that what is happening is just not appropriate.

NU assistants Larry Gay and Cleo Hill seemed perplexed when told of Patton's situation, and Hill added, "We should probably pray more."

Gay, who coached at Louisville and Georgia before NU, admitted his teams prayed at both schools. He also said that as a player at Florida State, he and his teammates prayed by themselves. Gay said times have changed, and it has become a more common practice to pray as a team.

Cary Cochran, who leads NU in a prayer "chant" before the Huskers take the court every game, said that prayer, as well as the one said after the game, is voluntary.

Cochran also said his high school team, coached by his father, said the Lord's Prayer before every game.

"You don't have to pray," Cochran said. "Praying was by no means associated with the school. It was just something that if you wanted to do it, you did it. He (my dad) wouldn't hold it against them if they didn't."

Patton wouldn't either. The bond that has formed at CU is being severed by some politically correct stiff who ignores the fact that it is ultimately the players' choice whether to participate or not.

The players at Colorado just happen to choose to do so.

Good for Patton and good for them.

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