



Mike Warren/DN

ERIC BROWN, an outfielder for the Creighton Bluejays, dives back to first after Nebraska pitcher Chad Wiles threw to first baseman Dan Johnson trying to pick Brown off. NU defeated Creighton 9-5 in Omaha.

Nee's assistants search for new coaching slots

By Matthew Hansen

Staff writer

While Nebraska Athletic Director Bill Byrne searches for a new men's basketball coach, the remnants of Danny Nee's coaching staff continue to show up at the office every morning.

But there's no work with Xs and Os, or the off-season conditioning program. Instead, Assistants Larry Gay, Randy Roth and Cleo Hill spend their

"I'd say the chances of us staying are real slim."

Larry Gay
UNL assistant basketball coach

Roth and Hill aren't expecting any favors.

"I'd say the chances of us staying are real slim," Gay said. "That's the way the business works."

Hill said the new coach likely will bring his assistants with him. And while all three remained optimistic about finding a coaching job somewhere next season, their current situation left Gay, who was hired this season to replace the departed Jimmy Williams, with a sour taste in his mouth.

"It is just strange sitting there and knowing you don't really have a job. This is the ugly side of being a coach, what we are going through right now," Gay said.

"When you get basically fired like this, it's obviously not an ideal situation. Knowing we tried to turn this thing around, and we couldn't, it is a terrible feeling."

Part of Gay's discouragement centered on the bleak job market. He said that, coming off an 11-19 season, the assistants would be hard-pressed to find a good job.

Hill said he was searching at the high school and college levels, as well as overseas. Gay planned on finding another assistant coaching job, while Roth wouldn't elaborate on his prospects.

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Huskies clip Creighton

■ Three-run home run in the first inning set the Huskers on their way to victory.

By Mike Warren

Senior Editor

The Nebraska baseball team traveled to Omaha on Tuesday afternoon and pinned the wings back on the Creighton Bluejays, winning 9-5.

Creighton (18-3), ranked No. 18 by the Collegiate Baseball newspaper, fell into a hole early against NU and didn't have enough to pull out of it.

A first-inning three-run home run by junior

first baseman Dan Johnson set the pace for the Cornhuskers (16-7).

"It was a fastball in," Johnson said. "That's my pitch to hit."

Johnson's home run sailed over the right-field fence, and he seemed to know it was gone early.

"In baseball, you really get into zones sometimes," Johnson said, "and right now I feel really good up there. Keep working ahead in the count, that's what allows you to get your pitch."

Creighton starting pitcher Rob Holmes would give up two more runs to the Huskers in the third, and two again in the fifth. Holmes only was charged with six runs because of errors by the Creighton defense, one that should have been caught easily by center fielder Troy Carley. But six runs would be enough for Nebraska to come away with the win.

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Nebraska's starter Scott Fries retired the first 10 Bluejay batters in route to his first win of the season. Fries went five innings for NU, allowing just two hits, and two earned runs. Creighton scored a third run after a Brandt Vlieger fielding error but Fries was not charged with the run.

Fries was replaced by Chad Wiles who went one inning and gave up two hits. Brian Rodaway would come on in the sixth to finish the game allowing six hits and two runs in three innings of work.

With Nebraska ahead 7-0, Pitching Coach

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SPORTS OPINION

Count on Byrne to fill coaching vacancy well



Samuel McKewon

I do not count myself among Nebraska Athletic Director Bill Byrne's most ardent supporters.

But after his termination of Danny Nee's contract as men's basketball coach, the questions that surrounded Byrne's ability to land a top-notch replacement surprised me.

Of the things Byrne can do very well as an athletic director, one of them is plucking coaches. Since his tenure began in 1992, consider the coaches who have joined the Cornhusker staff in various sports:

Softball: Rhonda Revelle (1993)
Women's Gym: Dan Kendig (1994)
Soccer: John Walker (1995)
Women's basketball: Paul

Sanderford (1997)

Baseball: Dave Van Horn (1998)

Football: Frank Solich (1998)
Rifle: Karen Anthony (1998)
Volleyball: John Cook (2000)

It's an eclectic mix. A few were handpicked, like Solich and Cook, a few more came from prominence, like Sanderford, and a few more came from relative obscurity, like Van Horn. Byrne sealed deals with all of them.

And all of them have been successful in their own way. Cook hasn't started yet, but he's got a proven track record. Van Horn and Kendig have revived previously dormant programs.

Anthony has the rifle team in the nation's top five. Revelle has NU's sights set on the College World Series every season. And though the Husker women haven't taken the nation by storm quite yet, Sanderford at least has them thinking NCAA Tournament every year. Solich was masterful last season in keeping the Huskers together and winning.

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Ffriend has groin injury; will decide on surgery

By Joshua Camenzind

Staff writer

Nebraska basketball center Kimani Ffriend revealed on Monday he had been playing with a groin injury most of the season — one in which he was an All-Big 12 newcomer and led NU in scoring in conference games at 13.4 points per game.

Cornhusker Team Trainer Mike Gooding confirmed the groin injury but would not comment on the severity at this point.

"It's something that I really can't talk about because of the situation with the coaches and such right now," Gooding said.

But Gooding said Ffriend had the injury for much of his first season as a Husker.

"I was not 100 percent during the season," Ffriend said. "If I was 100 percent you can imagine how much improvement and how much better I could have been. But I can't worry about that right now, I just have to deal with it."

Ffriend said he could play through the pain and rest helped the injury. But surgery remains a possibility. He said he would talk to doctors and trainers to see "what my options are."

"If I had the surgery I might end up

"I am pretty sure that I am going to stay, but I just want to see who the new coach is."

Kimani Ffriend
UNL center

like Cookie Belcher, and I am not planning to be in that situation and sit out a year," Ffriend said. "There is like a six-month period for recuperation, and the whole summer would just be down the drain."

The Jamaican said rehabilitation could take up to eight months, and he wouldn't be able to develop his game.

Ffriend said he will decide within a week whether or not to have the surgery after meeting with doctors and Gooding. The trainer said he will meet with Ffriend on Thursday but did not clarify the subject of the meeting.

But the injury wasn't the only thing weighing on the All-Big 12 center.

The 6-foot-11-inch senior-to-be said he didn't know if he could handle another coaching change. Ffriend just was getting comfortable with former coach Danny Nee before he was fired on March 13.

So Ffriend said he would insist on speaking with his new coach before he would agree to stay at Nebraska next

season. Ffriend said his friends and family all have advised him to stay at NU.

"I am pretty sure that I am going to stay, but I just want to see who the new coach is," Ffriend said. "Nebraska is a great place and why not stay — everybody on the Big 12 first team is leaving."

Ffriend has a history of bad relationships with coaches, he said. He left Gulf Coast Community College in Florida after 24 games last year because of a personality conflict with his coach.

"That has been a strain on me, and I don't want to go through another season like that," Ffriend said. "One of my biggest problems is trusting people."

If Ffriend left, he could have the surgery and transfer to another Division I school, because he would have to sit out anyway, or transfer to Division II school or lower. He also could enter NBA draft on June 28 if he enters before the May 14 deadline.