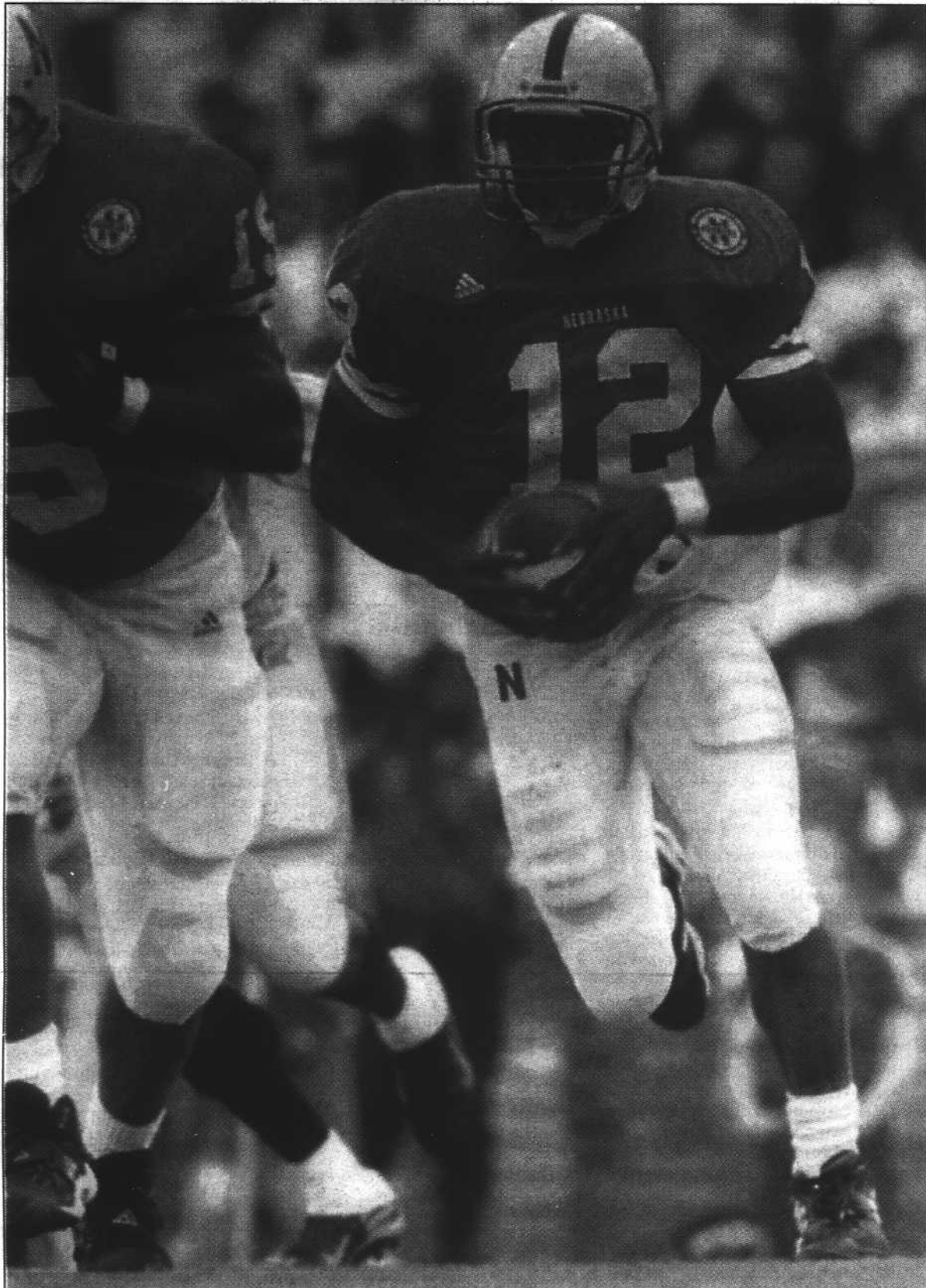


Spring FOOTBALL 2000



SENIOR WINGBACK Bobby Newcombe will be one of the main punt and kick returners for NU along with junior Joe Walker. Newcombe has been returning kicks since his freshman season.

Mike Warren/DN

Newcombe leads solid return cast

By John Gaskins

Staff writer

Long forgotten in Nebraska's 12-1 record and seven-game winning streak to end its impressive 1999 season was just how close the Cornhuskers came to disaster.

After already hitting a low and seeing their national title hopes sink in the Oct. 23 loss to Texas, the Cornhuskers were drowning even deeper the next

week. For nearly three quarters against lowly Kansas, they were sinking toward rock bottom.

Down 9-3 late in the third quarter, with its offense going nowhere, NU received a life preserver from just the right person at just the right time. The Jayhawks were forced to punt, and they punted to Bobby Newcombe.

Big mistake.

The junior wingback-turned-quarterback-turned-wingback again turned the fortunes of NU's game and season

around with one explosive 86-yard touchdown dash that happened to be the deciding outcome in a 24-17 win.

Within seconds, he had taken the Huskers off life support and started a charge that didn't end until they beat Tennessee in the Fiesta Bowl and finished No. 3 in the polls.

Such is the power of one punt return.

"That gave the team a lot of motiva-

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NU takes Jays in two games

By Jamie Suhr

Staff writer

OMAHA — For a rivalry, it sure is one-sided.

The Nebraska softball team swept a double header against in-state rival Creighton on Wednesday, improving its record to 18-15 and giving the Cornhuskers a seven-game winning streak over the Bluejays.

In NU's 5-0 victory in game one of the double header, NU scored all the runs it would need with one swing of

HUSKERS	5	3
BLUEJAYS	0	2

the bat by second basemen Jamie Fuente, who belted a solo home run over the leftfield wall in the top of the first.

That was all the run support pitcher Jenny Voss (6-6) needed. Voss baffled hitters all night, gaining her second straight shutout by pitching a complete game one-hitter.

"Jenny had outstanding command," Coach Rhonda Revelle said.

After striking out the side in the third inning, Voss stepped to the plate and drove in an RBI to give NU a 3-0 lead.

However, NU would struggle to find runs in game two of the twin bill.

The Huskers failed to capitalize on numerous scoring opportunities by leaving seven runners stranded in scoring position and having a runner thrown out at home.

Creighton held a 2-0 lead after an unearned run crossed the plate in the second and third innings. NU answered the Jays with a dun of its own when Fuente hit a sacrifice fly to deep right-field to score Jennifer Lizama.

Despite the poor production with runners in scoring position, Revelle was happy with her team's offense.

"We're still having good at bats," Revelle said. "I'm pleased with how we competed at the plate."

NU starting pitcher Penny Cope didn't give up any earned runs, but lasted just four and one-third innings. She left with runners on second and third and just one out in a 2-2 game. Leigh Ann Walker was brought in from the bullpen and set the Jays down in order by forcing a pop out on a bunt and then striking out designated hitter DeAnn Kaster on three pitches.

Walker (8-4) spellbound the Jay hitters with her rising fastball and knee-buckling change-up. In her perfect 3 2/3 innings pitched, Walker struck out nine of the 11 batters she faced.

"When we're all on our game, we're unhittable," Walker said. "(Bluejay batters) were frozen out there."

Bentz likes team's chances at NCAAs

By Brian Christopherson

Staff writer

The Nebraska swimming and diving team just wants to sit at the same table with the elite college swimming programs, and maybe tally up an individual title before dessert.

Nebraska Coach Cal Bentz wants to join the party as a top-10 team at the NCAA Championships, which starts today and runs through Saturday in Minneapolis, Minn.

"We have a lot of leadership on this team," Bentz said. "We have been knocking on the door of the top 10 for a long time now, and now we have the opportunity to get in."

Bentz has reason to be optimistic that this team could finish higher than any other Cornhusker team in history. The highest finish right now came in 1988 and 1989 when NU finished 10th.

The Huskers head to the Twin Cities with 10 athletes competing, six of whom competed at last year's Championships, helping lead the 1999 NU squad to an 11th place finish.

Seven of those 10 swimmers claim

All-American status, with one of those stars looking to write his name in Nebraska swimming history.

Senior Adam Pine enters the 100-meter butterfly as the top seed in the country, laying claim to the nation's fastest time with an unshaven time of 46.26 at the Big 12 Championship (fourth fastest mark in event history).

"Adam is an experienced swimmer both collegiately and internationally, and I think he knows how to handle the situation he is in," Bentz said.

Pine also will be kept busy swimming the 100-meter freestyle (7th place finish in 1999) and the 50-meter freestyle, as well as the 400-meter freestyle and 400-meter individual medley relays.

Other returning senior All-Americans will be Michael Windisch and diver Erik Cook.

Windisch figures to be the biggest threat in the 400-meter individual medley, a race that he qualified for in the consolation final the previous two seasons.

Cook gives the Huskers a fighting

Please see **SWIMMERS** on 15

Self, Hamilton head list of possible NU coaches

By Joshua Camenzind and Matthew Hansen

Staff writers

Tulsa Basketball Coach Bill Self and Miami Coach Leonard Hamilton easily can understand the other's situation heading into their teams' Sweet 16 NCAA Tournament showdown on Thursday night.

Both have guided their squads to unprecedented success this season. Both are recognized as among the hottest coaches in the country.

And, as a result, both have spent much of their



Self

time recently deflecting speculation that they may be pacing the sidelines for Nebraska or another school next season.

According to NU Athletic Director Bill Byrne, neither coach has been contacted by the school and will not be until their seasons are over.

But that hasn't stopped the rumors. Self said that the mention of his name in conjunction with other coaching jobs has

become a distraction for his team.

And Hamilton said the speculation was unfair to his team.

"I enjoy doing what I do," he said in an Associated Press story. "I enjoy my relationship with my players. The strength of the pack is in the wolf, and the strength of the wolf is in the pack. That's our philosophy here at Miami."

The speculation will continue, though, mainly because of the success Hamilton and the Hurricanes have had this year.

The Miami coach hasn't always had to worry about coaching rumors involving his hiring. A decade ago, Hamilton, 51, was picked to try to res-

urrect the Hurricane basketball program after leaving Oklahoma State, where he coached 1986-90. In the first half of the '90s, the results weren't pretty.

In his first four seasons, Hamilton's teams won only 34 games, losing 80. But the 1995 season would prove to be the beginning of Miami's, and its coach's, ascent.

That year, the Hurricanes went 15-13 and reached the NIT. Hamilton was tabbed as the UPI National Coach of the Year and the Big East Coach of the Year.

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