

Fighting Irish fans sell loyalty

A tragedy occurred last weekend in Indiana.

It wasn't Bobby Knight's firing or the Indianapolis Colts blowing a 21-point lead to the Oakland Raiders.

It didn't cause any riots or any gambling debts, but it is shameful nonetheless.

This act was Notre Dame fans selling their tickets to Husker fans on Saturday, and it was another setback to the Golden Dome in its attempt to regain its status in college football.

Don't get me wrong, Notre Dame fans may be some of the most devoted I have ever seen. They drive and fly into South Bend every football Saturday from all around the country to watch their beloved Irish do battle.

But they committed a cardinal sin.

Irish fans sold out. They put financial gain in front of their passion (the team), and it was a disgrace.

At that time, of the nearly 20,000 who had entered the stadium, about 15,000 were wearing red.

K n u t e Rockne and the Four Horsemen are turning in their graves.

And the people in South Bend, Chicago and every other ND hotbed know it.

ND players were admittedly fired up when they came out of the tunnel for the first time before kickoff. But not for the same reasons as every other game.

At that time, of the nearly 20,000 who had entered the stadium, about 15,000 were wearing red. That's not an encouraging site if you are trying to dethrone the No. 1 team in the country.

And the blame isn't solely on the fans. Reports of university officials selling tickets to Husker fans were abundant, with one fan claiming to have rounded up 40 seats from ND faculty and staff by himself.

You could see many ND players were beside themselves, as was athletic director, Kevin White.

"When I was on the field before the game I wish I was color blind," White told the South Bend Tribune.

When it comes down to it, the Irish lost the only edge they had going into the game against the Huskers—home field advantage.

That same advantage proves so crucial in places like Cameron Indoor Stadium at Duke, Allen Fieldhouse at Kansas, Neyland Stadium at Tennessee and The Swamp in Florida.

NU fans are well accustomed to finding their way into stadiums at Manhattan, Kan., and Boulder, Colo.

But that is expected from fans of that caliber. I thought Notre Dame faithful would exhibit more class and walk away from temptation.

The Irish unfaithful proved everything has a price.

Some NU fans paid nearly \$1,000 a ticket, while most divvied up a couple hundred to gain entrance into ND Stadium.

And what a game they saw. ND fans who didn't sell the pride of their team away for a nominal figure tried their best to compensate. But the only real noise came from the students—the only section not infiltrated by red.

Fans who decided to watch the game in the parking lot or at a bar missed one of the classic games of all time.

And I hope they regret it. Because next year, unless they are one of the lucky 4,000 (not 25,000), they won't have the chance to see ND play in Lincoln.

In fact, I hope they don't get a chance to see Notre Dame at all next year. Or any year after that.

Because with the heart they displayed last weekend, Irish players deserve better.

Lindland takes long route to Olympics

BY DAVID DIEHL

Persistence has taken Matt Lindland to the highest level of wrestling.

It was persistence off the mat, though, that made Lindland an American Olympian.

In a bizarre sequence of events, the 1993 Big Eight Champion fought all the way to the Supreme Court for a place on the 2000 U.S. Greco-Roman wrestling team, a spot that he didn't have, then he had, then didn't and now finally has.

"When (USA Wrestling and the U.S. Olympic Committee) saw I had a chance of winning my spot they started not playing by the rules," Lindland said.

The former Nebraska assistant coach can now rest assured he'll be vying for the Greco-Roman gold medal at this month's XXVIII Olympiad in Sydney.

A trying timeline of events ended with the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that USA Wrestling and the USOC had acted improperly in removing Lindland from the National wrestling team.

The bizarre story involving Lindland, his opponents and various Olympic gov-

erning bodies goes something like this:

■ Lindland lost a 2-1 overtime decision to Keith Sieracki in the finals of the Greco-Roman Olympic qualifying tournament in Dallas on June 24. That's where the games began.

■ Lindland filed two on-site protests contesting that he was tripped (Greco-Roman style disallow any maneuvers below the waist) and the match was improperly scored. Both were denied on the spot.

■ Lindland took his case to the Greco-Roman Sport Committee in July where it was denied once again this past July.

■ In his third and final step, Lindland went to an arbitrator to decide the case. As USA Wrestling rules dictate, the judgment of an arbitrator is final and binding.

The arbitrator ruled in favor of Lindland because the nine-member Greco-Roman sport committee had four members removed from the case, and Lindland's team of testimony wasn't heard. The arbitrator ordered the match with Sieracki re-wrestled. Lindland subsequently won the match, wrestled last month in Colorado Springs, 8-0.

■ Sieracki ultimately filed a second arbitration on the initial match, and won. The USOC and USA Wrestling went by that arbiter's ruling until the case ended up at the Supreme Court, who demanded Lindland back on the team at the 167.5 pound spot.

The whole situation was arduous for Lindland, who said certainty of his spot on the team didn't come until he was flying to San Diego to prepare to depart for the games with his team.

"I deserve it," said Lindland who had beaten Sieracki eight straight times before the Dallas match. "It's in my past performances and also on the videotape (of the Dallas match). It shows the match. They scored it totally wrong."

In fact, Lindland said, after the match in Dallas, Olympic Greco Coach Dan Chandler told Lindland he thought there was a conspiracy.

"It was that bad," Lindland said from Canberra, Australia where he's training for the games.

At the same time, Sieracki was fighting for a spot that he thought he deserved. "I'm pretty disappointed the way it

works out," Sieracki said. "Somebody dropped the ball and this happened."

As for the re-wrestle, which was in Colorado Springs, where Sieracki resides and competes for the U.S. Army, Sieracki said he wasn't in top form.

"The whole deal with that is it wasn't Kieth Sieracki stepping out there with Matt Lindland," he said.

While the bottom line remains that Lindland is Down Under, and Sieracki will be home for the games, in the wake of the whole ordeal is a cluttered jumble of mistakes and questions of who was right, who was wrong and who deserves to be in Sydney.

"Adversity can crush you or make you stronger," Lindland said. "I chose the high road and used what I've went through to make myself stronger."

Sieracki has a different spin on the proceedings, saying it all ended in, "a ruined dream."

"Now I ask if I have the motivation and desire to (try for an Olympic spot)

Please see LINDLAND on 11

Cook: Focus is on Texas, not poll

BY SEAN CALLAHAN

First-year Nebraska Volleyball Coach John Cook knows how to get attention.

In less than two weeks Cook has his young Cornhusker squad unbeaten (7-0) and ranked No. 1 in this week's poll.

Time for the next step. After a testing non-conference schedule with victories over four ranked opponents, it's time for the Huskers to move on to the Big 12.

Tonight Nebraska will open Big 12 play at home against rival Texas Longhorns. At 1-4, the Longhorns are somewhat down this season, but Cook still expects a competitive match.

"I'm not worried about being ranked No. 1," Cook said. "I'm just worried about Texas. If there's one team you don't want to lose to around here, it's Texas."

UT has had a tough time putting a solid lineup together on the court this season, Cook said.

Three players transferred to other schools in the off-season, creating chemistry problems, he said.

"I think there's something happening internally down there that may have started all this," Cook said. "Now they're in a position where they are playing a lot of young players and trying to figure out their lineup."

Tonight, the Longhorns face a Husker team that, despite a coaching change and the redshirt of Nancy Meendering and because of its summer trip to China, has the perfect chemistry.

Sophomore middle hitter Amber Holmquist said that the chemistry of NU is more important to the team's early success than skill or experience.

"Just in the long matches that we've had we've been able to stick with it as a team, and we play as a team unit," Holmquist said. "It's not any one player that sticks out. We're all together, and we finish together."

"To me, that's the strongest aspect of this team."

Senior Angie Oxley saw the same team concept as Holmquist, and said the balanced attack of this year's team differed from years past.

"Since I've been a freshman we've always been a good team with a lot of good players, but we've always went to only one or two players," Oxley said.

"This year we're more solid and closer as a team. All of our hitters are getting an equal number of kills."

The No. 1 ranking is rewarding, Cook said, but it can also be dangerous.

"I think it's a real testimony on how hard our team has worked to deserve the respect of being ranked No. 1," Cook said. "I'm very happy for our team and that they're getting rewarded for that."

"The first thing I'm going to tell them in practice today is that No. 1 ranking means nothing right now, and Texas means everything. If we want to take control of the Big 12 we have to start with Texas."



Scott McClurg/DN

Setter Greichaly Cepero and the NU volleyball team start Big 12 play at 7 tonight at the Coliseum against the Texas Longhorns. Nebraska is looking to retain its spot atop the polls against a struggling UT squad.

Sasse leads women's golf team to first-place finish in invitational

■ She came within one stroke of tying a school record while three of her teammates finished in the Top 18 on Tuesday.

BY DAVE BRANDON

The performance of the Nebraska women's golf team Tuesday exhibited all the qualities coaches love to talk about: heart, determination and desire.

Despite struggles in the final round, the No. 23 Huskers won the Alltel Husker Invitational at Yankee Hill Country Club.

Paced by Junior Sarah Sasse, Nebraska finished with a score of 901,

thirteen strokes ahead of second place Texas Tech.

Much of the comfortable win can be attributed to the play of Sasse, who came within one stroke of tying the school record for a 54-hole tournament with a score of 217 (+1).

Husker Coach Robin Krapfl said Sasse showed heart during the tournament.

"She's a fantastic player," Krapfl said. "She struggled today, but she dug deep and made some birdies when she had to."

Sasse said composure played a big role in the victory.

"I got mad, but I didn't take myself out of shot," Sasse said. "I was able to keep my head on my shoulders."

Sasse wasn't the only Husker who finished impressively. In fact, the

Huskers had four players who finished among the top 18.

Junior Amanda Sutcliffe finished in a tie for third place, netting a score of 226.

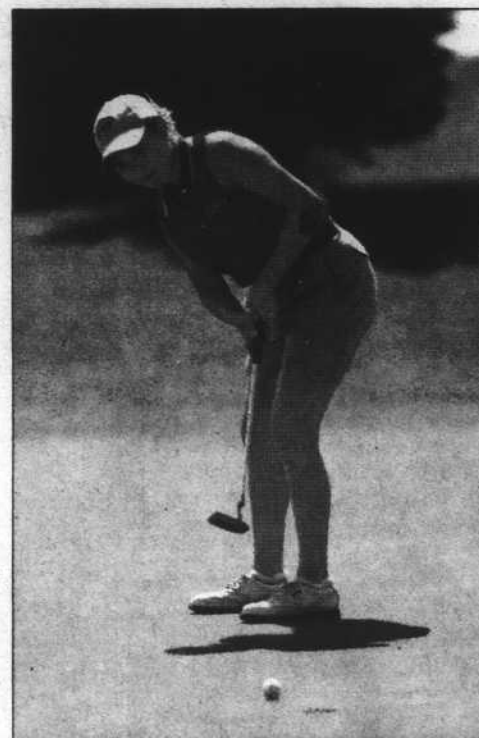
Right behind her was senior Amy Roux, who finished in a tie for seventh place at 227. Junior Catha Fogelberg placed 18th at 231.

Krapfl said the Huskers used determination to achieve the victory.

"I think we dug deep," Krapfl said. "We were determined to win this tournament."

Sasse agreed, saying the team is ready for this weekend's trip to Florida.

"I think our team is great," she said. "Last year we had our best team ever, and this shows us what we're capable of doing this year."



Steven Bender/DN

Nebraska junior Sarah Sasse won the individual title at the Alltel Invitational, shooting a score of 217. The Huskers won the team title at the tournament.