

# Keeping up kills NCAA

MONEY from page 10

absolutely necessary. You will not see NU forfeiting a laugher at home for a great game on the road - it costs too much money to do it. Next season, the Huskers get the rare seven home games to pad their wallet with, courtesy of Troy State, a late replacement for Texas Christian. For Byrne to fill the lost game with a stern test on the road would have been more fun for the fans, but less profitable.

And thus, the wrong option, because in order for the other sports to spend money, football has to make it.

The point Dempsey made Sunday was eventually, all these issues come back to haunt the school (not that the NCAA should talk; it moved to Indianapolis because the city promised some fancy digs). One bad year can lead to another, and so on and so on. If Nebraska were to fail to go to a bowl game one year, what would that mean financially? A serious tightening of the belt, for one. Program cutting? Eventually, it could.

It raises fair concerns - not accusations, however - of how far a program might go to stay competitive, including above and beyond the rules. Recent shake-ups in the wrestling and swimming departments seem to suggest Husker athletics is a high pressure atmosphere geared on winning, where creative tactics may have been used to nudge the odds toward the plus category.

While department officials have seemed to ferret out the problems without long-term damage, you wonder if Camelot is beginning to crack around here, if the pressure for Frank Solich to win will not rise even more next season. Former UNL administrators like James Moeser seemed to bemoan the onus of NU athletics; it is conceivable the future holds a lesser degree of autonomy for the athletic department.

Dempsey advocated schools take a larger role in managing their athletic departments, an about face of the long held position departments could handle themselves.

"Not only has the philosophy been less than effective," Dempsey said, "it's had the psychological effect of pushing accountability for the athletics programs away from campus scrutiny - exactly the opposite of what hoped to accomplish."

While Nebraska is self-sustaining, it sullies its image with purists and old boosters a little more every year with its pursuit of money and better facilities. In ten more years, the traditional inner circle of fans will look a lot like the folks who live in giant suburban homes in Omaha. Or, possibly, the investment risks the department has made will result in a margin call.

For now, the baseball stadium is the next big thing, and its existence can do no wrong. During football press conferences last fall, sportswriters would often huddle against small windows to point at its construction and wax energetic on the day it would open. When it does, I'm sure, the honeyed prose will flow from all our pens, and patrons will find the new digs verifiably sweet. The same, though, could be said of Charles Foster Kane's Xanadu Mansion.

But Kane at least remembered his Rosebud. So many schools, mired in a money pit, have forgotten. Will Nebraska?

# Wrestlers face tough Gophers

BY VINCE KUPPIG

The ninth-ranked Nebraska wrestling team will take its undefeated record into tonight's dual against second-ranked Minnesota, starting at 8 p.m. at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

With a No. 9 national ranking, first year Coach Mark Manning has guided the Cornhuskers to a 9-0 record, the best start in school history.

However it's what is behind the record that impresses the first-year coach.

"(The record) is not a big deal to me," Manning said. "It's the way we're wrestling as a team. I just care how we're doing and how we're improving."

On paper, NU faces much more of a challenge against second-ranked Minnesota than it has all season long. The Gophers feature eight wrestlers in the top 10 at their respective weight classes, four of whom are in the top three.

But luckily for the Huskers, matches aren't decided on paper but out on the mat.

"Nothing athletically is measured on paper," Manning said. "It's measured in competition."

Nebraska counters Minnesota with five of its own in the top 10 and three in the top two.

Senior All-Americans Todd Beckerman and Brad Vering are each ranked first, with junior All-American Bryan Snyder ranked second. Also ranked in the top 10 are redshirt freshman Jason Powell and senior Ati Conner at sixth and 10th, respectively.

"I think each one of them are improving and getting better," Manning said. "Sometimes they've won, but have been disappointed because they might have not performed at their highest level. That's what makes them where they're at."

One of the biggest matches of the night will occur at 133 pounds, where top-ranked Beckerman takes on third-ranked Brett Lawrence.

Powell, who entered the season unranked at 125 pounds, will look to extend his seven-match win streak with a bout against third-ranked Leroy Vega.

While the five top 10 wrestlers - Vering, Snyder, Beckerman, Powell and Conner have been paving the way for NU, Manning said he needed the whole team.

"We going to get out there and compete and not look at the scoreboard until the end," he said.

"We want to have all ten guys do that. If we do that, we're going to come out okay."

# So long Michael Vick, hello Big 12 recognition

So, Michael Vick is leaving Virginia Tech for the NFL and the big money. Big deal.

Ever since he was billed the man to revolutionize the quarterback position, we all knew old Mikey wouldn't finish his eligibility at Tech.



Joshua Camenzind

But what exactly does this mean for college football?

Well, for one, Virginia Tech will drop back down into a level of low-Top 25 mediocrity - you know the one that got spanked 41-21 by the Huskers in 1996 when they had a guy named Druckenmiller.

And secondly - this is the most important part - maybe the average college football fan can get a rest from seeing Mr. Vick every Thursday night on ESPN.

The guy's mug was on SportsCenter nightly, College Gameday weekly and CBS whenever the network could get its hands on the slippery, slimy quarterback.

But Vick's departure to one of the bottom-feeders (hopefully not the Chargers for Vick's sake) of the NFL will open some doors. How will networks and newspapers fill their time slots and pages without exciting East Coast publicity to run until the cows come home?

Media outlets and highlight shows should look out west. To the Big 12 conference, that is.

The Big 12 has always been a league looked upon as overrated and watered down. But the conference showed in the bowl season it was a group to be reckoned with in the coming years.

A perfect example took place Wednesday night in Omaha when Tennessee defensive tackle John Henderson accepted the Outland Trophy he won over Texas's Leonard Davis and NU's own Dominic Raiola.

Do people have that short of a memory that they have already forgotten last year's Fiesta Bowl in which the Huskers ran rabid over the Volunteers? My point was proven when K-State buried Tennessee in the Cotton Bowl.

The Outland was voted upon before Jan. 1, but voters should keep that in mind when contemplating making Henderson a back-to-back winner in 2001.

Florida State Coach Bobby Bowden probably would vote now for Davis or Raiola after admitting to overlooking the league. His opinion quickly changed to the tune of a goose egg for his offense in the Orange Bowl, so why can't others come to realize what type of football is played in the plains?

Sure, Texas Tech got waxed in the first half of its game against East Carolina and Texas A&M's Independence Bowl matchup with Mississippi State was unexpectedly moved to the Arctic North and the team managers from Texas forgot to pack the stick-um for its game with Oregon. But the Big 12 was impressive.

Nobody gave Iowa State much of a shot to win against a surely dominant Pittsburgh team from the great Big East, which just happens to be one of the most overrated football conferences in the nation.

# Powell makes it known he is a top-ten wrestler

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top-ranked Big 12 wrestler in his weight class.

The soft-spoken Powell, who leads by example on the mat, doesn't personally take credit for his recent success.

"The coaches have helped me with different stuff, stuff that I'm doing wrong in my matches," he said. "They've corrected me. That's how I've improved."

Assistant Coach Terry Brands, who works with Powell during practice, credits his success to his high level of confidence.

"No matter who he's going to go out and wrestle, he thinks he's going to pin them," Brands said. "Anything less, he's not happy with himself. He holds a high standard for himself and that goes a long way."

Said Manning: "He's got a big heart and a big desire. He's a very determined wrestler. He's putting in the work to make it happen."

Leading the team with six pins, Manning said Powell was a crowd pleaser.

That's just his style.

"He's exciting, is dangerous and can put you on your back at any time," Manning said. "He's fun to watch. He gets out and gets after it. He's the ultimate competitor. He finds a way to win and is a gamer."

Utilizing those qualities, Powell may have the opportunity

Sports Profile

### Breakdown of Jason Powell, FR

- Rank: #6 at 125 pounds
- Record: 13-3, 8-1 duals
- Pins: 6 - leads team

The Midwest City, Okla. native has beaten three other wrestlers ranked in the top 10.

to make some history at Nebraska. In its prestigious wrestling history, NU has never had a four-time All-American. Powell, with his talent and attitude, has coaches believing he could be the first to do that, and maybe even more.

"He has the potential to win four national championships," Brands said.

The 19-year-old, who said he hoped to sometime compete at the Olympics, has nowhere to go but up. Powell is on his way there, but still said he hasn't reached his potential.

"I still have a long ways to go as far as getting better," he said.

# Cepero paces Huskers in tenth straight home win

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Wildcats would go through another major drought as they failed to hit a shot from the floor for seven minutes in the middle of the second half.

Greichaly Cepero, playing in just her sixth game after playing volleyball this fall, led the

Huskers in both scoring and rebounds with 14 points and was a major force on the defensive end. Cepero's eight boards led the Husker's who had three others with seven rebounds.

"Greichaly played really good defense," Sanderford said. "And she finally got on the boards tonight."

Sports News that continues to Kill It-Boom.

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2. If selected, interview on January 16, 2001.
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