

When healthy, Augustine mans point

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win over Winthrop on Nov. 27. And just when Augustine was starting to feel comfortable, he fractured a rib while defending a Murray State player on Dec. 30. "I really felt I was getting my wind back, and then that happened," said Augustine, who then sat out the ensuing home game against Creighton. The 6-foot, 185-pounder said playing with injury contributed to the snowball of ailments he received. "There is no doubt that just because of the fact that I was over-coming injuries and wasn't in shape that was a factor," he said. His coach agreed. "Those injuries probably could have contributed to his back injury, which then led to a groin injury," Collier said. But when he did come back, Augustine showed exactly what type of impact he could have. After first trying to make a go

of it against Winthrop, Augustine did not hit the hardwood again until the Huskers traveled south to play Miami and take part in the San Juan Shootout. His impact was felt immediately in those games, as NU won its first road game since 1998 behind 12 points from the player who was recruited by such schools as Duke, Kansas, Stanford, Notre Dame and UCLA. Augustine followed up that performance by helping NU win three more in San Juan by scoring 10, 13 and eight points, respectively. But Augustine's impact hasn't been entirely positive, despite totaling 27 assists to go along with a seven-point average. The point guard hit only one of six free throws against Miami, had nine turnovers against Kent State and fouled out in a four-point loss at Minnesota. Augustine said the growing pains have come from trying to get a feel for his teammates and

the game after more than a year away from basketball. "The turnovers that we have had are because people are trying to make plays," said Augustine, who left the University of Southern California and enrolled at Fullerton, but did not play to save a year of eligibility. "The main thing is getting the offense on the same page and getting used to play with each other. "Our team hasn't been together for the entire season." Augustine has just been one of the missing puzzle pieces. Kimani Ffriend and Rodney Fields were suspended for the first two exhibition games and the opener at Oral Roberts, John Robinson didn't become eligible until the final game in Puerto Rico and Cary Cochran has been battling a sprained ankle for the past few games. Augustine said Robinson's and his absence hurt NU the most. "I think we run a lot smoother

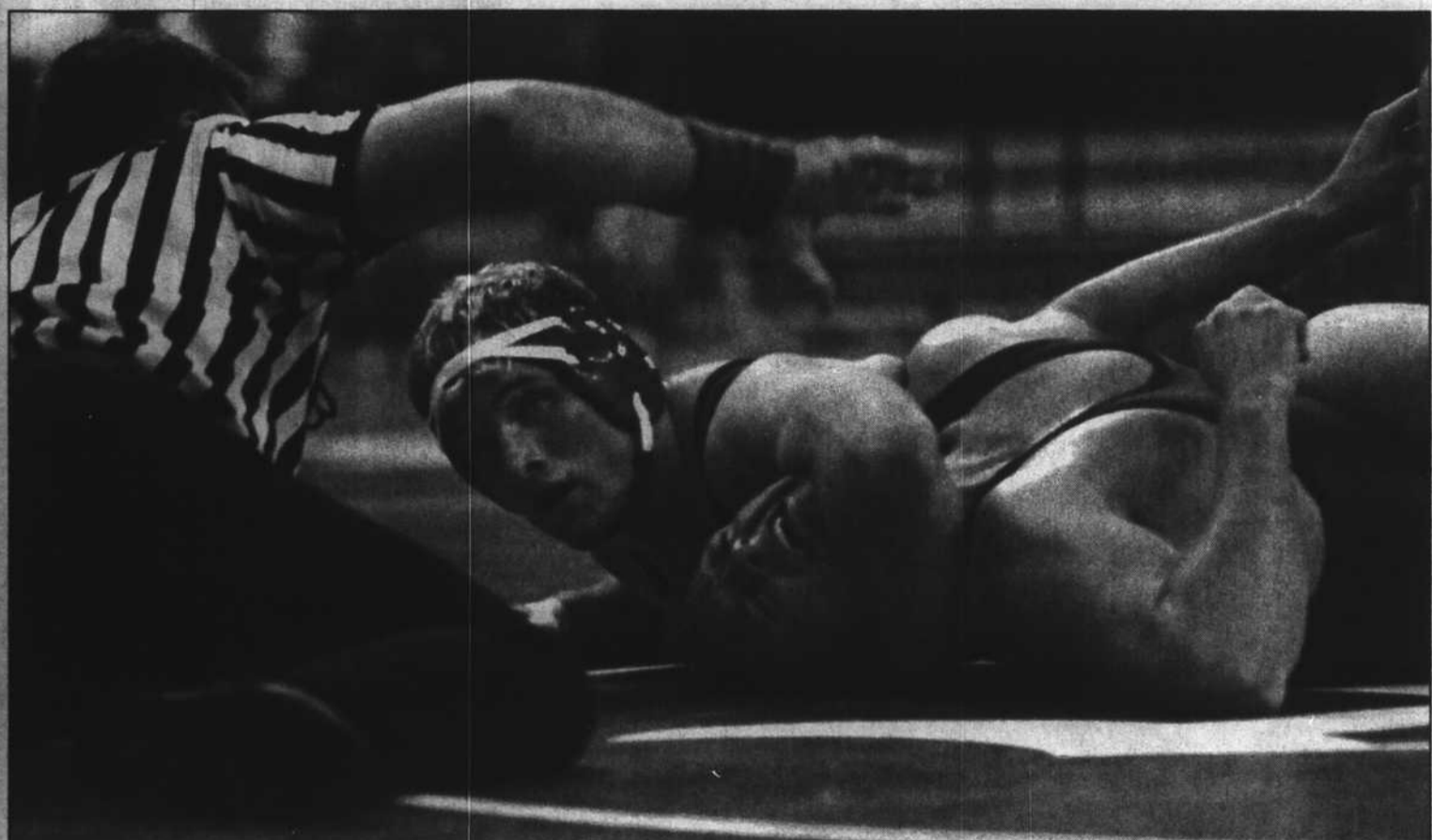
with me or John (Robinson) in the game because the thought process of a point guard is entirely different than a 2-guard," he said, referring to NU's alternatives at point guard - Cochran and Cookie Belcher. Ffriend is reaping the benefits of having a true point guard on the floor at times this season. "This year I have gotten more passes in difficult situations than I would have had last year," Ffriend said. "It makes it harder for the defense to play us because we have someone who is a general with the ball." Barring more injury and with the help of medication, Augustine will be looking to hook up with Ffriend against Texas on Saturday. He said sharing time with Robinson and having to deal with being short of breath at times won't hold him back. "I'd rather play 20 minutes hard than see 35 minutes of playing time anyways," Augustine said.

Cochran's long range bombs needed vs. UT

COCHRAN from page 10

It's beyond the arc where the junior guard makes his basketball living. Cochran has taken 93 shots this season. Seventy-five have been trifectas. NU hopes Cochran gives No. 22 Texas a heavy dose of three-point bombs on Saturday afternoon when the Longhorns (12-2, 2-0) come to Lincoln. The Horns ride into town with a seven-game winning streak led by senior guard Darren Kelly, who is averaging 20 points per game. Texas has enough weapons to keep Nebraska Coach Barry Collier up at night. "They're a very good defensive team ... excellent strength and a very good rebounding team," Collier said. "We have to do a good job of boxing out, taking care of the basketball and getting good passes inside to get high-percentage baskets." Turnovers have been of particular concern to Collier and NU throughout the first part of the season. The Huskers gave it away 24 times in Saturday's game against Missouri. The Huskers may have not taken the Tigers all the way to the buzzer had it not been for Cochran. Putting on a shooting exhibition, he hit all five shots he took from three-point range in

the 68-66 loss. "It's almost as if his shots are worth more to (Nebraska) than three points," Missouri Coach Quin Snyder said. "They're a team that seems to feed off those shots." Although his minutes are down ever so slightly, Cochran's three-point shooting is 14 percent higher than last season's numbers, and his scoring average has climbed from the 7.7 points per game he put up as a sophomore. Cochran said the inside presence of senior center Kimani Ffriend and senior forward Steffon Bradford has helped him find open shots. He also hasn't had to play point guard as much this season with the addition of junior guard transfers Kevin Augustine and John Robinson. "Playing off the point allows me to run the lanes and spot up a little bit," Cochran said. "Point takes a little out of you if the guy mans you up. (Augustine and Robinson) are natural point guards ... I'm not." Collier said that Cochran is in his natural and most dangerous position when lined up as the shooting guard. "He's shooting it confidently," Collier said. "Clearly those are big baskets because he's generally scoring three at a time instead of two."



NU senior Brad Vering awaits a pin call on Minnesota's Eli Ross. Vering, a defending national champion, is undefeated this season. Derek Lippincott/DN

Huskers jump out front early, can't hold on to win

DUAL from page 10

didn't match it." The Cornhuskers led off the dual with a losses at 174 and 184-pounds but then performed its best wrestling of the night, winning three straight matches, including a Jason Powell upset of third-ranked Leroy Vega. The three wins gave Nebraska its 12-7 lead and a head full of steam going into Beckerman's match. Powell's win was one of the bright spots of the dual, as the sixth-ranked freshman from Midwest City, Okla., beat his fourth top-ten opponent of the year. Badly running out of gas in the

third period after taking a 9-4 lead in the second, Powell held off Vega for a 13-11 decision. Wrestling an energetic first two periods taxed Powell enough to let Vega back into the match and almost cost him a win. Powell said the plan was to get out to a quick start against Vega and set pace for the entire match. "If I paced myself," Powell said, "I could have looked better out there, but that doesn't mean anything out there." Other bright spots in the otherwise demoralizing loss came at 141 and 149-pounds. Manning praised unranked freshman wrestlers Dusty Spaulding and

"Wrestling is a streetfight with rules. Minnesota wrestles that way. You got to be ready. You can't be out there ready for tiddlywinks. You got to want to battle."

Mark Manning
NU wrestling coach

Travis Baker for their efforts at those respective weights. Spaulding lost a 9-5 decision to sixth-ranked Chad Erikson, but Manning said the lessons that Spaulding learns now combined with his effort could make him into an All-American later. To generalize the dual, Nebraska didn't fight back when it was attacked, Manning said. "If you don't fight," he said, "you don't look good. I've never seen a fighter look bad."

Home opener to be tough test against eighth-ranked Beavers

BY KRISTEN WATERS

The sixth-ranked Nebraska women's gymnastics team will host its first home meet against Oregon State on Sunday, Jan. 14, at the Devaney Center. "We're definitely going to enjoy the positive home crowd atmosphere," Coach Dan Kendig said. "It will be good to have friends and family there supporting the team." The Huskers made their 2001 season debut last weekend with a record-breaking performance and second-place finish at the Maui Invitational in Wailuku, Hawaii. NU finished the competition with a score of 194.95, breaking the previous school opening-meet record of 193.725 set in 1999. Nebraska finished runner-up to top-ranked UCLA, which scored 196.20. Making the season opener even more impressive, the Huskers competed without sophomore All-American A.J. Lamb, who sat out with a back injury and will not return this weekend. Sophomore Bree Dority O'Callaghan and junior Laura Goss were also limited due to injuries. "A.J. is out with a sprain but will be back next weekend,"

"We're definitely going to enjoy the positive home atmosphere."

Dan Kendig
NU women's gymnastics coach

Kendig said. "Bree and Laura are looking good and will probably do two events on Sunday." Freshmen Alecia Ingram stepped up and led the way for the Huskers by winning the all-around competition with a score of 39.425. Ingram also tied a 1997 NU record by scoring a 9.90 on the vault. "Our freshmen did a great job at Maui," Kendig said. "They hit 13 out of 14 routines." The Sports Illustrated No. 8 Beavers will not be an easy victory for the Huskers. OSU returns 11 letter winners from its 1999-2000 season and is led by second team All-American senior Katrina Severin. "Oregon State is a veteran team," Kendig said. "They've got a great coaching staff there. It's going to be a tough meet, no doubt." NU will take on OSU at 2 p.m. in the Devaney Center. "We're just looking to improve from last weekend and go from there," Kendig said.

Cyclone swimmers on deck

BY TOBY BURGER

The NU swimming and diving team rolls into Ames, Iowa, on Saturday for a 1 p.m. dual against the Iowa State Cyclones. Both the men's and women's teams are 3-2 in dual competition. For the women, it is the first Big 12 dual of the season, while the men suffered an early season loss to Texas A&M. Interim Coach Paul Nelsen said the team is ready for Ames and the Big 12. "We're excited," Nelsen said. "They want to compete. They don't want to be competitive - they want to compete, race and win." Neither team will have an easy time against ISU. The Cyclone men have a 2-1 record and are currently No. 25 in the latest CSCAA poll. The women are unranked, but enter Saturday with a 4-1 mark. Nelsen and his team will have a little more depth heading into conference action courtesy of three European swimmers who joined the team after first semester. The women's side gains the services of Barbara Auer (backstroke) and Christine Schriener (distance). Both hail from Austria. German Andreas Campioni (backstroke) joins the men's team. The team also regained the talent of All-American Elvira

Tracksters open season today

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Both the Cornhuskers men's and women's track teams begin defense of their conference crowns this weekend. Nebraska, whose men and women both begin the year ranked No. 16 nationally, travel to Manhattan, Kan., for the Wildcat Invitational hosted by Kansas State University. The team-scored event begins today for the women and Saturday for the men. "We feel like we're in good shape," Nebraska Coach Gary Pepin said. "We're going down there with the majority of our team. It should be a good start for us." Nebraska is planning to take

Johnson top dog at plate

BASEBALL from page 10

are expected to fill the catcher spot by platoon, Van Horn said. In the outfield, returning starters Adam Stern and John Cole, along with Jeff Leise, who saw action in 29 games as a true freshman last season, will ease the loss of Strong. The top returning player for NU in the field may be senior first baseman Dan Johnson. In his first season at NU, Johnson, a junior-college transfer, hit .368 and pounded a Big 12 conference-high 21 home runs. Johnson followed the long

road to Nebraska. The slugger played for both Butler and Iowa Western Community College before finding a home in Lincoln. But after a successful season last year, Johnson said Van Horn is continuing to build the program. "He took a program that was below average and turned it to one of the elite schools in the nation," Johnson said. "They know their baseball, and they get across to everybody. They can take an average person and turn him into a great player."

Tracksters open season today

FROM STAFF REPORTS

75 athletes to the meet, which has six teams competing on the women's side and four on the men's. Of the 75 athletes, NU is taking seven of its 10 returning All-Americans - pole vaulter Eric Eshbach, triple jumper Sheldon Hutchinson, high jumper Shaun Kologinczak, sprinter Lesley Owusu, hammer thrower Melissa Price, sprinter Jelena Stanisavljevic and high jumper Jessica Thompson.



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