

A practical lesson in economics

Contrary to popular belief, not everyone needs college, a fact that star high school basketball players have realized in the last few years.



David Diehl

The latest version of the McDonald's High School All-American game, held Wednesday night at Duke's Cameron Indoor Stadium, continued the trend of the past half-decade as four of the athletes invited are considering skipping college and going directly to the NBA.

For them, the future is now, and they're answering opportunity's knock. That tidbit alone is enough to make nauseated college basketball fans foolishly claim that athletes are becoming greedier and sports are circling the moral drain. An estimated 72 NBA scouts were at this year's game, according to the Durham (N.C.) Herald-Sun. That's three for each of the 24 players competing, and I guarantee an equal number of agents were crawling around the Duke campus this week as well.

They were all there to see Eddy Curry, "Baby Shaq," a 6-foot-11, 290-pound center who has committed to DePaul as the nation's consensus top recruit. The youngster pleased all in attendance, scoring 28 points and grabbing MVP honors.

The scouts and agents also would have been there to see DeSagana Diop (the nation's No. 4 recruit, according to Rivals 100.com), Ousamme Cisse (No. 5), who were both injured, and Tyson Chandler (No. 6) who decided not to play.

Since nabbing a guaranteed three-year, seven- to eight-figure scholarship doesn't exist, all four have said jumping to the NBA looked very enticing. In the cases of Curry and Chandler (a rail-thin seven-footer), it's almost certain.

"It would be tough to turn down millions of dollars," Curry has told the Chicago Tribune. He and the rest of this year's high schoolers have until May 13 to declare for the draft and cannot withdraw once they've done so.

This is where basketball purists groan in agony about these athletes skipping college. Admittedly, I used to groan right along with them.

Not anymore. I've asked myself, why should I even care if any of these kids go to college to play basketball? I have no interest invested in any of them, and I doubt you do, either. I'm going to watch and love college basketball whether these four are wearing Carolina Blue or Vancouver Grizzly Teal. Why should I give two shakes about these kids' decisions?

It sure isn't because I care about them having an uplifting time experiencing the collegiate atmosphere. I'm sure it isn't too hard to find a party with beautiful girls on the NBA circuit, either.

It sure isn't because I care about them having a future. If it doesn't overly concern me that one of my fellow high school graduates decided not to go to college, instead starting a plumbing apprenticeship, why should I worry about someone I will never meet who also has a much more secure financial future?

It doesn't concern me in the least that, right now, there are four professional women's tennis players ranked in the top 10 that can't buy beer - and if they don't win, they don't get paid. Wouldn't it be somewhat hypocritical not to criticize Martina Hingis, the Williams sisters and Anna Kournikova but liken these four NBA prospects as money-grubbing thugs?

In baseball, where career-ending injuries are more common and the initial contracts are significantly smaller, young, white suburban prospects skip college by the hundreds each year. Not one peep is heard even though it's doubtful that player will even see a glimpse of daylight in The Show (can you say career Double A journeyman?).

I can guarantee that if you had a son or daughter who could make millions (seriously think about it: millions) as an 18-year-old doing something they loved,

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DN File Photo

Even though his record stands at 6-1, Shane Komine is trying to rediscover the dominance he enjoyed last season for NU. Returning to this dominance means throwing more strikes early in the count and using his slider less.

Rodaway set to start game

BY VINCE KUPPIG

After his No. 2 and No. 3 starters gave up a combined seven runs in three innings against Big 12-foe Missouri, NU Coach Dave Van Horn says the eighth-ranked Nebraska baseball team is in need of finding a consistent starting rotation.

Against Oklahoma this weekend, the Huskers (19-7, 5-2) will look to senior Brian Rodaway to stop the deluge of opposing runs that have often come after ace Shane Komine has taken his start.

Rodaway is scheduled to make his first career conference start in Sunday's finale of a three-game series in Norman (10-19, 5-7) that begins tonight.

In his last action, Rodaway (1-0, 1.69 earned run average) pitched four-and-three-fourths innings of relief without giving up a run or hit against Missouri.

Rodaway, who entered this season with career 1-3 record and 8.31 ERA, said he was pitching better than he ever had.

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Komine finding his groove

BY SAMUEL MCKEWON

It's a Wednesday afternoon, and the dawn of a new technological age for Shane Komine and the Nebraska baseball team; he's charting pitches on a Palm Pilot, lounging on a picnic table and talking to a friend while the Huskers wallop Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

It's a good day for Komine. He goes out for a midweek throw between games in the doubleheader. He slumps in a long-sleeved shirt and running pants. And the new owner of the NU school record for strikeouts finally feels his pitching coming around.

"You know, I haven't been near what I think I should be this year," he says as the Panthers change pitchers. "I missed a lot of pitches I should have made."

Komine sports a 6-1 record, but his 4.15 earned run average is simply beneath him, or above him, depending on how you look at it. He knew approaching this season that'd he capture the strikeout record, barring seri-

"I'm just into pitching well. For me, good is just making the pitches."

Shane Komine
NU pitcher

ous injury. It's behind him now, the kind of moment he'll reflect on much later someday. A thing to tell the kids about.

Now is for ascending above what he's considers a mediocre season, one that his coaches aren't necessarily happy with, either. On a few occasions, Komine was flat-out fortunate Nebraska has developed into a potent hitting team in 2001; they've given him the run support he's needed to win. It can create a false sense of security.

False securities have dogged Komine for awhile earlier this year. While he, coaches and fans expected a year better than his 11-4, 2.24 ERA cam-

paign last season, some fabulous work-outs in the fall, as well as subtle changes in the team, hurt the 5-foot-8, 160-pounder.

Like many pitchers, Komine found a new way to throw strikes during fall baseball and fell in love with it: the slider. Not often what most would consider a setup pitch, Komine threw it consistently enough in the strike zone to make it a more significant part of his five-pitch repertoire. In some cases, it replaced his curve ball, always a staple in Komine's game.

And then he started throwing faster, nearly into the mid-90s. Speed's as intoxicating as anything. Komine already threw hard, but it felt good to hum even faster.

Both those fall developments, which Komine said were supported by Pitching Coach Rob Childress, backfired this spring. He got behind in

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Huskers' focus will be on Sooners

BY VAN JENSEN

With a win in its next game, the 18th ranked Husker softball team would tie a school record for consecutive victories - NU already has 16 games in a row under its belt.

The record-tying 17th won't be easy. Defending national champion and sixth-ranked Oklahoma is coming to town.

In fact, forget the streak. These are the Sooners.

"We know they're good, they know we're good, but we're just going to go and lay out everything that we have," freshman outfielder Nicole Trimboli said. "It's going to be a nice, clean game but an intense one because there is that rivalry."

NU and OU have recent history. Last year the two teams split the four games they played, but Nebraska took the upper hand by knocking Oklahoma out of the Big 12 Tournament.

"Anytime you've played teams for conference championships on the line - you finish one they finish two, they finish one you finish two - I think you develop a natural rivalry," NU Coach Rhonda Revelle said. "The last couple years it's been us battling each other."

The two teams faced each other once earlier this season, and Oklahoma came away with a 6-5 extra-innings win.

"I think what it does, since we have new players on the team, it helps demystify who Oklahoma is," Revelle said of the earlier game. "Instead of putting the label 'Defending National Champions' on, they actually have faces."



DN File Photo

The Nebraska softball team, winners of 16 straight games, will try to break the school record of 17 consecutive wins this weekend. Standing in the team's way is sixth-ranked Oklahoma, the defending national champion, who comes to town today.

Oklahoma (27-5, 2-0) plays a doubleheader against Nebraska today at the NU Softball Complex starting at 5 p.m. The Huskers also have games on Saturday and Sunday against unranked Texas Tech.

While Oklahoma tries to keep NU from setting the consecutive wins mark, the Huskers will try to keep OU pitcher Jennifer Stewart from becoming the winningest pitcher in school history. The junior needs one more win to set the record at 76. Stewart, one of four returning All

Americans for the Sooners, has compiled a 18-2 record with a 1.47 ERA this season.

The other opponent, Texas Tech (22-12, 1-1), is also led by a record-setting pitcher, senior Amanda Renfro. On March 18 against Iowa, Renfro became one of 10 pitchers with 1,000 career strikeouts. Senior Sandy Butler holds a school record herself, with 199 career hits. Butler also has a .330 career batting average.

The Saturday game starts at 2 p.m., and the Sunday game starts at noon at the NU

Softball Complex.

Sweeping the four games this weekend is obviously the only way to keep the winning streak, which Revelle says is "great for the fans."

The 17 consecutive wins would be the most since 1987, when the team went 41-11 and made it to the College World Series.

That streak takes a back seat today, though.

"At the end of the season, if we look back at a 30-game win streak that's great," Trimboli said. "Right now we're really looking forward

Jacobson lauds Frisch's effort

BY VINCE KUPPIG

While she may only play No. 4 singles for the Nebraska tennis team, Amy Frisch has been its most dominant player this season.

Frisch looks to improve on her 15-1 record this season when the Cornhuskers (15-1, 2-2) travel to Kansas State (6-6, 2-1) on Sunday.

The Huskers, coming off a 6-1 win last weekend at Texas Tech, will take their best-ever ranking of 39th up against the No. 74 Wildcats, who have been in the top 50 most of the season. Four of KSU's six losses have been decided by one point.

Individually, KSU is led by 81st-ranked Alena Jecminkova. At the No. 4 spot, Kathy Chuda (8-2) should provide a tough challenge for Frisch.

But Frisch has had little trouble overcoming challenges.

"Amy's just a winner," Coach Scott Jacobson said. "Ever since she's been here, she's won."

The junior from Crescent Springs, Ky., has compiled a 52-9 career record at NU, including a 19-3 record last season to capture the Big 12 title at No. 6 singles.

This season has been just as impressive for Frisch, whose one loss came in a 6-1 team loss at ninth-ranked Texas A&M.

The team captain's strength of mind is what carries Frisch to her success, Jacobson said.

"When she steps on the court, she always believes," he said. "She really believes in herself and believes that she has the gifts to excel at a really high level. And she does."

"Off the court, that positive energy reflects on the other members of the team, especially the younger members of our program. You can't ask for a better attitude than that of Amy Frisch."

Jacobson, who said Frisch could play the No. 1 spot at several other schools, said Frisch was happy playing anywhere to help the team.

He said her playing at the No. 4 spot was a perfect example of how deep this year's team was.

Said Frisch: "There's not much difference in our players at all. That's what makes it really good for us as far as practicing. Whoever we got out and hit with, we're all good competition for each other. "No matter how our coach switches the lineup, it seems like we end up getting wins everywhere anyway."