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HUSKERS

ILLUSTRATED

FEBRUARY 2023

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AMENDING HUSKER HISTORY

Huskers Illustrated Unearths the NU Volleyball Team Lost in Time



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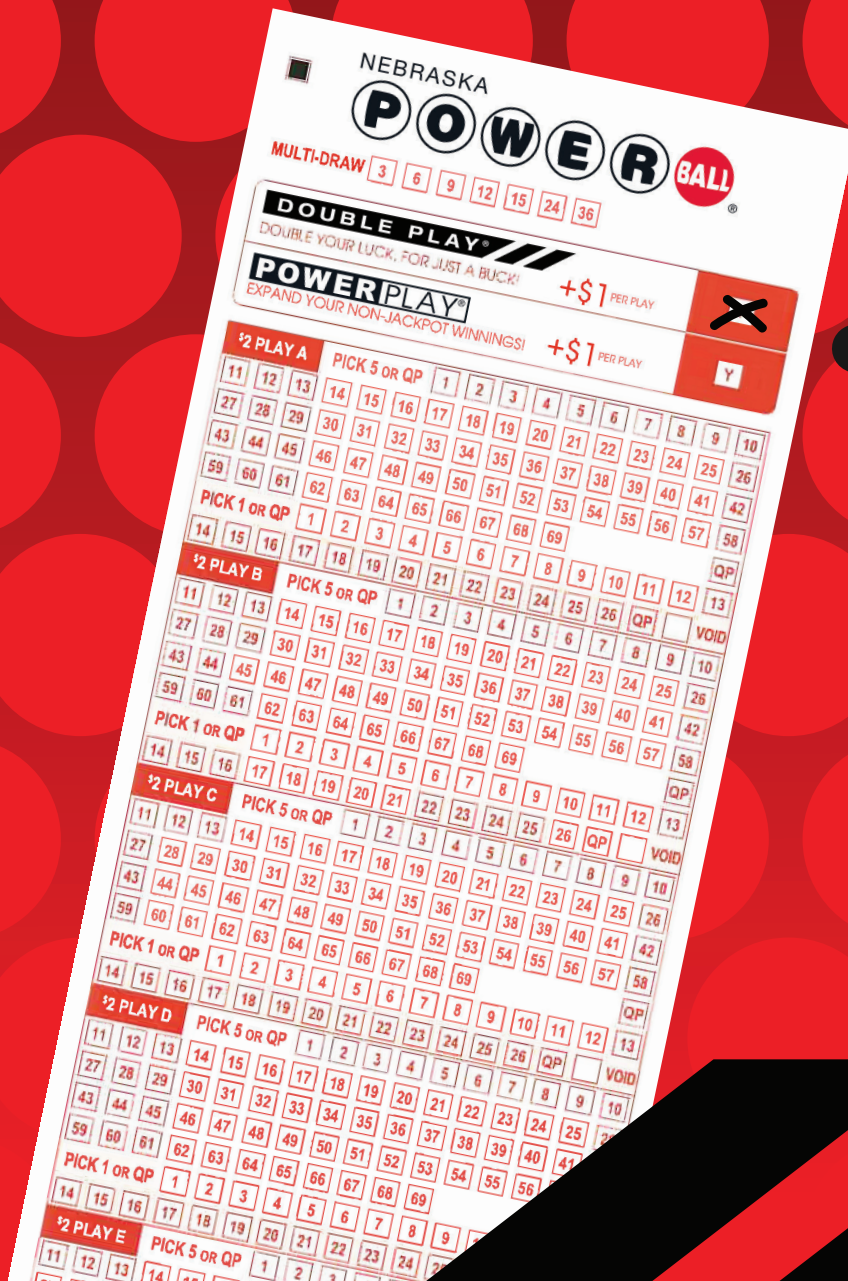
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The 1974 Husker volleyball team finally gets its due.

The next Huskers Illustrated edition will mail in late March.

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A photograph of Axelina Johansson, a shot put athlete, in a red singlet with "BIG" and "248" on it. She is smiling and pointing her right index finger towards the right. The background is a blurred indoor track.

If the Second Throw Isn't Good Enough ...

Axelina Johansson set a new Husker women's shot put record on her second toss at the indoor Frank Sevigne Husker Invitational in February. Yes, it was a very good throw. But not good enough for Johansson, a sophomore from Hok, Sweden. So, on her third throw, she recorded a toss of 63-4, which broke the school record again. Both throws flew further than the previous record of 60-7 turned in by Tressa Thompson in 1997. Johansson's new school record vaulted her to No. 1 in the NCAA this season, and it was the second-best shot put throw worldwide in 2023. She is now the Swedish indoor national record-holder, and her throw is the second-best collegiate indoor throw of all-time.

A basketball player's arm is visible on the right side of the frame, holding an orange Adidas basketball. The background is a large, blurred crowd of spectators in a stadium, with many wearing red. A referee in a black and white striped shirt is visible in the lower center of the frame. The overall scene is a basketball game in progress.

Kudos for Keisei

Keisei Tominaga's twisting under-hander between two Penn State Nittany Lions accounted for two of his career-high 30 points in a 72-63 Nebraska win on Feb. 5 at Pinnacle Bank Arena. It was the first 30-point game by a Husker since Alonzo Verge had 31 against Michigan on Dec. 7, 2021. Tominaga's outburst marked his third 20-point game of the season. The junior from Moriyama Nagoya Aichi, Japan, hit five 3-pointers in the Penn State win – a season high for any Husker.



REGGIE RYDER/HUSKERS ILLUSTRATED



The 1974 Husker volleyball team, Nebraska's first that played under the guidance of the athletics department with scholarship players. Front row: Vicki (Ossenkop) Highstreet, Laury (Harmon) Riley, Susie Heiser, Marcia Bartak, Ann Richardson. Back row: Coach Pat Sullivan, Janice Kruger, Cheryl (Nolte) Henry, Eldeana Edeal, Linda (Brown) Dutton, Denise Stange, Jan Zink, Ann Garrett, manager Sandy Stewart, manager Deb Van Fleet.

Rewriting History

The 1974 Volleyball Team Claims Its Spot in Husker Annals

By Lincoln Arneal

The 1974 Nebraska volleyball team exists in the pages of Cheryl (Nolte) Henry's scrapbook – filled with clippings of photos and stories of its exploits.

The team exists in the memories of first-year coach Pat Sullivan, the dozen players and the scant fans who watched them play home matches in Mabel Lee Hall.

The team also exists in a letter sent to Henry on Dec. 13, 1974, apologizing for the delay in her financial aid. It was the first time NU female student-athletes had received scholarships for participating in athletics. Nebraska had run into “snags which caused considerable delay and uncertainty” about the disbursement date.

However, the 1974 team does not exist

in the official record book of Nebraska volleyball. Despite being the first team supervised by the athletics department and awarded athletic scholarships, 1975 is the first season recognized in program history.

That means the wins and losses don't count in Sullivan's career coaching record, and the three seniors on that team – Henry, Vicki (Ossenkop) Highstreet and Denise Stange – are not recognized as letter winners in the media guide or on the wall outside the Nebraska locker room.

“We tell our kids this – we were the first, you know?” Henry said. “Then, we take them to Devaney, and our names aren't there.”

The reasons provided by the NU athletics department why the 1974 team

isn't recognized are a lack of records and tradition. In 2000, the athletics department celebrated 25 years of women's sports at Nebraska, commemorating 1975 as the first season. Also, a complete list of results for the first year didn't exist, so adding them to the record book was all but impossible.

“We just kind of fell through the cracks,” Highstreet said. “It's like they were trying to catch up, and they really didn't catch up.”

According to Nebraska media guides, the first official season of competition for most women's sports happened during the 1975-76 academic year, including volleyball, gymnastics, tennis, softball and swimming and diving – even though all those sports competed the previous year. Women's basketball is the outlier and cites

the 1974-75 team as its inaugural season, going 9-7 under Jan Callahan.

However, for the first time, the complete results of the first volleyball team with scholarship student-athletes have been compiled through newspaper archives. In 1974, the Huskers went 25-10-1 and finished second in the Nebraska state tournament and sixth in the AIAW, or Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women, regional tournament.

Now with those records and conversations stemming from a reunion last fall to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the passing of Title IX, members of the 1974 team can be included in the storied history of Nebraska volleyball.

“Can I live without being recognized? Well, that’s fine. But if you’re going to recognize it, let’s do it historically accurate,” Stange said. “Why are you ignoring us if we got scholarships? We’re no different than the next year – ’75. They were not the first class. The names are all over, starting with ’75. Their names are engraved on the walls at the Devaney Center. We aren’t that much of an ego people, but if you’re going to tell the story as a university and tell it historically, let’s do it accurately.”

The Coach

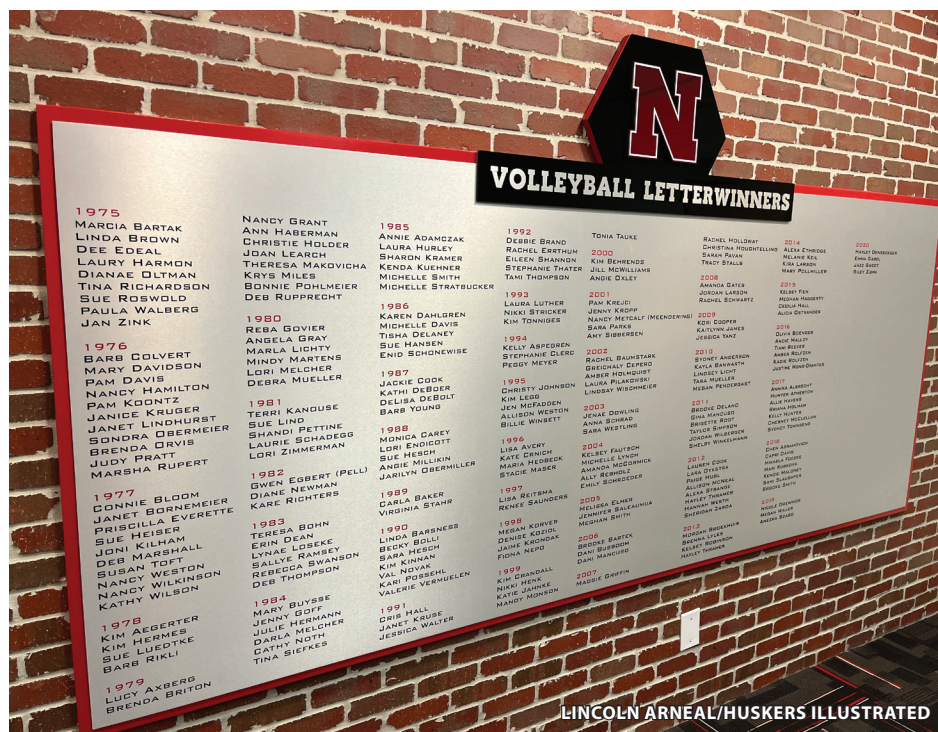
Sullivan was on the job hunt in 1973. She was about to finish her master’s degree at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, when she traveled to Minnesota for a national physical education conference hoping to find a place to start her career.

While there, she ran into Gail Whitaker, who had graduated from Smith College a year earlier and was the tennis coach at Nebraska. Whitaker connected Sullivan with Madge Phillips, the head of the NU PE department, who was looking for someone to teach and coach swimming. After an interview, Sullivan was offered a job.

After some hesitation, Sullivan received encouragement from friends on the East Coast. Seek out new experiences, they said.

“So I did, and I took their advice and would be forever grateful for that advice,” Sullivan said. “Because it was so different. It’s so different from the Northeast, and it opened up lots of doors and provided new experiences. I just put myself out there.”

After Sullivan’s first year, the volleyball coach position opened after Margaret Penney, the coach of the team that operated under the PE department, stepped down.



The Nebraska volleyball letter-winners board at the Devaney Center does not list members from the 1974 team.

The Nebraska administration knew Sullivan had volleyball coaching in her background, so she readily agreed to add another sport to her duties.

“I really wanted to be involved in the volleyball world,” Sullivan said. “That was really where I felt like I belonged.”

Despite feeling at home on the volleyball court, juggling her duties was challenging. For two years, Sullivan pulled double duty, coaching volleyball and then switching her focus to swimming. A few times, the sports overlapped.

Sullivan recalled one weekend when Nebraska was hosting a volleyball tournament in Mabel Lee Hall, and the swimming team was competing in the Big Eight relays in Kansas. Sullivan left the volleyball team in the hands of a local club coach while she accompanied the swimmers to Lawrence, Kansas.

On the volleyball court, Sullivan inherited a large group of talented players from the PE supervised team. According to a 1974 season preview in the Lincoln Journal Star, the team went 14-3, winning the state title and eventually placing sixth in the regional tournament. Behind a talented group, she helped NU improve on the court and achieved a winning record as an athletics department team.

“I was biting off a big chunk when I went to Nebraska, but we just built,” Sullivan

said. “We were very successful in Year 1 and just kept on going, and I just kept on learning. You don’t ever quit.”

Although the team was successful in the PE era, Sullivan added more credibility. Practices became more structured and intense. The group began doing different drills. Everything had a purpose. Individual development led to team development.

“Practice definitely went up a level,” Highstreet said. “The intensity – that definitely grew with her coming. She had the strategic mind for it. I think that legitimized what we were doing a little bit more.”

While she was only five years older than some of her players, Sullivan commanded the room and earned the players’ respect. She didn’t talk down to players if they didn’t understand a concept but would break it down into steps to help them master it.

Janice Kruger, a sophomore on the 1974 team, described Sullivan as a player’s coach and quite skilled at teaching the nuances with new techniques. Sullivan used motivation to keep improving and pushing her players forward. She’d take a simple concept like adding a short set to the middle blocker, teach the setter the move, implement the footwork for the attack and work on the timing between the two players.

“She keeps everybody rowing in the same direction, and it was managed in such

WPE 206
December 13, 1974

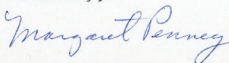
Dear Cheryl ,

As you know, this is our first year for granting financial aid for women athletes and we have some first year snags which caused considerable delay and uncertainty concerning the date that financial aid checks would be ready. The first semester checks are now at the Bursar's Office, Administration Building 204. If you have not already picked up your check, please do so soon.

We know now that second semester checks will not be ready until the end of March. This late date is due to the fact that we must wait until after the last date for dropping classes (March 7) before specific amounts of the grants can be determined, and then there is the processing period. This means that you will have to pay your tuition for second semester before your check is ready. I'm sorry about this, but hope that knowing in advance will be helpful in planning your finances.

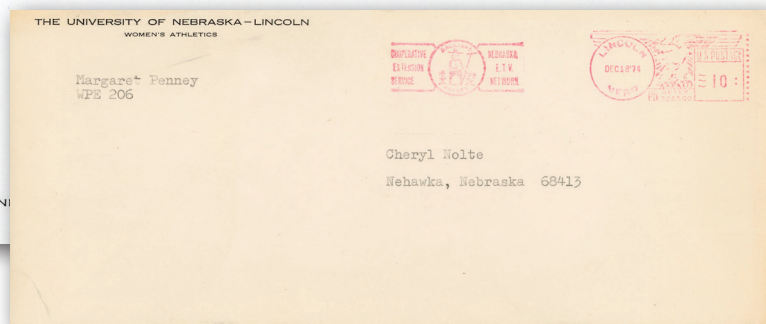
Here's wishing you a pleasant holiday.

Sincerely,



Margaret Penney
Coordinator of Financial Aid for
Women Athletes

MP:lgm



Cheryl (Nolte) Henry's letter from the NU athletics department apologizing for the delay in her financial aid for the 1974 volleyball season.

a way that people know what's going on," Kruger said. "People know expectations, and people have fun doing what they're doing. She was the best I've ever had. And I had a really good high school coach. Pat took it to another level."

The Reunion

They came from Florida, Oregon, Massachusetts and all corners of Nebraska.

In late October, members from Nebraska's first volleyball teams gathered for a weekend to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the passing of Title IX legislation and the beginning of women's athletics at NU. Sullivan and 14 members

from the early days gathered for a weekend of honoring the past, catching up with friends and enjoying the legacy they helped create.

Initially, the gathering was more limited. When invites were sent out, it was just for members of the 1975 team. However, when Sullivan saw the list, she sent an "extended email" to Nebraska volleyball's director of operations, Lindsay Peterson, making the case to include the seniors of the 1974 team and the manager for both teams, Sandy Stewart.

"I said we have one chance to get this right," Sullivan said. "This kind of a celebration isn't going to happen again

anytime soon, and these people are already old. So make this happen."

Soon invitations went out to the 1974 seniors and a few others left off the initial list. The ceremony would now honor the first two Husker volleyball teams.

Once the weekend arrived, the festivities started on a Friday with the former players visiting a Husker practice session. They shared a few thoughts with the current team and swapped stories.

NU coach John Cook said he received several notes afterward from players back for the reunion about how they appreciated interacting with the team and getting to know them. As fun as it was for the original members to meet the modern iteration of the Huskers, he thought the student-athletes also gained a new perspective from hearing about the early days of the volleyball program.

"I thought it was really great for our players to hear their stories because we talk about having an attitude of gratitude for everything they get now because they get a lot and more than any time in college sports for women," he said. "We tell them the greater the rewards, the greater the responsibility. We're trying to instill that in them. So it was good for them to hear that."

That evening, the reunion included a banquet at Devaney Center where Cook talked to the group, and they shared memories from their playing days and caught up on each other's lives. They also toured the Husker locker room, training facilities and medical treatment room — a far cry from what they used in Mabel Lee Hall.

Even though they stayed connected a bit over the years through phone calls, emails and Facebook, Kruger said it was a different energy when everyone was in the same room.

"That was a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful treat to be able to connect there," Kruger said almost three months later. "It's almost like it was just yesterday. It's a strong connection. It was just special times with special people. When you're that young and you're going through so many changes and growth, those things are significant in your life."

On Saturday, they gathered at Susie Heiser's family tailgate before being introduced as a group at Memorial Stadium during the Nebraska-Illinois football game.

That evening at the volleyball match against Maryland, 15 members of the 1974 and 1975 teams were honored after the second set, each individually introduced. The crowd never sat down, giving them a standing ovation the entire time they were on the court.

“That gave us all goose bumps,” Stewart said. “Having our picture up on the big screen at the Devaney Center and being introduced individually, we were getting the applause that we never got. That was really special.”

The current edition of the Huskers honored the original teams by wearing special jerseys that mimicked the look of the first team – a red outline of the state with the number inside and a red Iron N under the panhandle.

Despite her early protests about the invite list, Sullivan said the weekend couldn’t have gone much better.

“I wish we had a little bit more time just to connect, but I’m really pleased with the way the university handled their part to honor those people,” she said. “It was really about them and their contributions to the early days of Nebraska athletics.”

The Season

During the summer of 1974, the athletics department underwent transformative change. To comply with Title IX legislation passed two years earlier, sports began to migrate to the jurisdiction of the athletics department, and scholarships were offered for the first time. No longer would Sullivan report to the PE department. Her new boss would be Bob Devaney, the athletic director and recently retired football coach.

The change increased the women’s athletics budget from \$15,000 to \$60,000, with half allocated for full-tuition waivers. According to an article in the Daily Nebraskan, 39 women received scholarships across seven sports: volleyball, women’s basketball, gymnastics, softball, swimming and diving, tennis and field hockey. (Track and field competed in its first season in the spring of 1975, while field hockey was dropped after the 1976 season.)

The budget also paid for food, lodging, equipment, officials and transportation. It also included funds for a search to hire an assistant athletic director just for women’s athletics, which led to 25-year-old Aleen Swofford’s hiring in the summer of 1975. It was a whole new world for the players, who often had to pay for food and lodging when the programs were part of the PE department.

For the first four who received scholarships – Henry, Stange, Highstreet and Heiser – there wasn’t much fanfare. Social media didn’t exist to share the news. There were no signing ceremonies. Scholarships weren’t life-changing financial windfalls. When Kruger received a scholarship the following year, she learned about it through a casual conversation with Sullivan.

“I don’t even know if people knew” who was on scholarship, Kruger said. “It wasn’t something we talked about really. It wasn’t a real big deal.”

It wasn’t a smooth process either. Henry didn’t receive notification that her scholarship check was ready until Dec. 13 – the Friday before finals and three weeks after the volleyball season had ended. (In a twist, the woman in the bursar’s office who sent the scholarship letter was Penney, the former PE era coach.)

While there could have been some division between



COURTESY PHOTO

The Husker volleyball team plays Kearney State College at Mable Lee Hall in 1974.

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-OMAHA
at
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN
Wednesday, October 16, 1974

UN-L Roster

NAME	NUMBER	HOMETOWN
Marcia Bartak	10	Merna, NE
Linda Brown	14	Winona, MN
Eldeana Edeal	20	Lexington, NE
Nancy Hamilton	22 (red)	Lincoln, NE
Susie Heiser	12	Columbus, NE
Ann Garrett	19	Burchard, NE
Janice Kruger	17	Randolph, NE
Cheryl Nolte	21	Nehawka, NE
Vicki Ossenkop	11	Waverly, NE
Ann Richardson	18	Kearney, NE
Denise Stange	16	Yutan, NE
Paula Walberg	13	Elmwood, NE
Jan Zink	15	Sterling, NE

COACH: Pat Sullivan

MANAGERS: Sandy Stewart
Deb Van Fleet

UN-O Roster

Patty Dennis	45	Mickey Gehringer	23
Conni Holys	33	Joy Leger	55
Pat Linson	31	Judy Melius	15
Mary Jo Miklas	25	Janice Nelson	21
Cindy Rudloff	41	Lindy Rudloff	51

COACH: Connie Claussen

A program from a 1974 match between Nebraska and Nebraska-Omaha shows an NU roster dominated by Nebraskans.



NU COMMUNICATIONS (2)

Pat Sullivan, the first Nebraska volleyball coach, waves to the crowd at the Nebraska-Maryland match in October when the 1974 and 1975 Husker volleyball teams were recognized at the Devaney Center. Each player was introduced after the second set as the approximately 8,000 in attendance gave them a standing ovation.

scholarship players and those not receiving aid, Sullivan ensured it didn't get in the way of any relationships. The low-key nature of awarding the first scholarships was part of her general approach. Sullivan tried to keep what was happening on the court separate from what was happening in the outside world.

On the court, it was smooth sailing for most of the 1974 season. The Huskers went unscathed through the first few weeks, winning their opening nine matches against in-state competition. After dropping a match to Chadron State, NU faced its toughest battles of the year at a tournament in Kansas. NU beat Missouri but split sets against Drake before losing to Kansas and regional power Southwest Missouri State.

The Huskers finished the regular season 14-4-1 before the state tournament. NU suffered its second loss of the year to Nebraska-Omaha but rebounded to make the title match against Kearney State. The Lopers controlled the match and won the title, but with a runner-up finish, the Huskers qualified for the AIAW Region VI tournament. NU went 4-2 in pool play to advance to the top eight. However, it stumbled on the final day and finished in sixth place with another loss to Kansas.

While reminiscing with players during the reunion, Sullivan pulled back the curtain for the first time on what was happening behind the scenes that first season. She was constantly working on getting all she could to support her team. She talked about

how they got kicked out of the UNL Rec Center racquetball courts, even though they had keys to the building. Sometimes, small details get overlooked when you're launching an athletics department — like keeping records. However, whenever she could, Sullivan was there fighting for her players.

Support beyond the court was nonexistent. If a player needed an ankle taped, she better get in line to have a coach do it or learn how to tape it herself. If a player wanted to work out, she could use one universal weight-lifting machine, but she'd have to develop the workouts herself.

The players who had played as part of the PE department team didn't know about the transition until it was almost complete.

"It was unbeknownst to us at that time that (Sullivan) was an employee of the athletics department and fighting new Title IX battles for our team," Stange said. "As oblivious college seniors, we just continued to practice hard and improve as a team just as in the previous years because we loved the sport of volleyball."

The Legacy

The history of Nebraska volleyball begins before 1974.

As alluded to several times above, the sport was played under the supervision of the university's PE department for four years before transitioning to the athletics department and awarding scholarships. The team often played nearby schools and

participated in now-defunct AIAW regional tournaments. During the 1960s, many women's athletic competitions that existed as intramurals began evolving into club and extramural competitions.

Stange is grateful for the dozens of women who played volleyball as part of the PE department before she arrived on campus. She called those players the true pioneers, playing the sport even before Title IX.

"It wasn't like there was no volleyball at UNL until '74 or '75," she said. "That's why we don't want to step on their toes either. It was just by chance of timing and our age that we were in that first group. It's nothing special we did."

Volleyball also existed on the high school level in Nebraska long before the first NU team took the court. Having a foundation of high school players allowed the Huskers to pack rosters with Nebraska natives and win most matches early on. That early success has allowed Nebraska never to have a losing season in program history.

Sullivan said the high school coaches produced strong, fundamentally sound players. So when she got them in the gym at Nebraska, she wasn't starting from scratch. Then, when she did start recruiting, she stayed local and didn't have to travel far to find high-level players, and it helped that Nebraska kids wanted to go to Nebraska.

"I don't know that I was smart enough to know what I was doing was what needed to happen," Sullivan said. "At the time, we



LINCOLN ARNEAL/HUSKERS ILLUSTRATED

Members of the 1974 and 1975 Husker volleyball teams huddled just off the court after being honored. “I’m really pleased with the way the university handled their part to honor those people,” Sullivan said. “It was really about them and their contributions to the early days of Nebraska athletics.”

were going to move fast because pretty quickly, other people were going to catch up. So we needed to lay that groundwork. We needed to hold on to the kids from Nebraska. I needed to get better fast.”

Women’s athletics would continue to expand at Nebraska. With Swofford’s hiring in 1975, one of her first initiatives was to start a women’s sports information department – which might explain why records for 1974 teams don’t exist. Women’s sports employed their own athletic trainers, and Stewart assisted with fall sports. Golf was added for the 1975-76 school year. Scholarships and the budget continued to grow and women could begin lifting weights in Schulte Field House, where the football team worked out.

As time passed, the original Nebraska volleyball team moved on and spread out while continuing to impact the volleyball world all over the country.

Sullivan stepped away after the 1976 season and went into administration as an assistant athletic director. She thought it would be a long-term career move. The following year, she set up the first academic support system for women student-athletes, ran tournaments and provided support for whatever the women’s programs needed.

After helping out with a regional club volleyball team, Sullivan realized she still had a passion for coaching. She left Nebraska and headed back East to become the volleyball coach at George Washington. Sullivan led the Colonials for nine seasons,

accumulating a record of 289-140. After retiring from coaching in 1987, she earned her doctorate in higher education from GW in 1989 and was inducted into the school’s athletics hall of fame in 1995. She remains the winningest coach in program history.

Sullivan wasn’t the only person from that first team who went on to coaching success.

Kruger coached at Nebraska-Omaha and led the Mavs to a trio of third-place finishes in the NCAA Division II tournament and won two AVCA national coach of the year awards. She later worked at Maryland for 20 years and became the all-time winningest coach in the Atlantic Coast Conference with 363 victories.

After short stints as an assistant at Houston and LSU, Stewart coached Iowa from 1982-88, winning 136 games. The Big Ten coach of the year in 1983, she is still the winningest coach in Hawkeye program history.

Many others coached at the high school level or worked as referees. Their passion for the sport shouldn’t be a surprise as many early players weren’t recruited and chose to play the sport independently. Plus the coaching path was natural since many were physical education majors and were going into teaching.

For now, the 1974 team’s legacy isn’t found in any record book at Nebraska, but they know they set the program on an early path to success. After Sullivan left, Nebraska hired Terry Pettit, who would eventually win NU’s first national

volleyball championship in 1995, just more than two decades after the original Huskers played in front of family and friends with ankles they taped themselves.

Sullivan said she is proud of the groundwork those early teams laid. However, she’s also passionate that all the players get credit for their contribution, especially that 1974 team. She regrets not correcting the oversight earlier.

When she returned for the 25-year celebration of women’s athletics at NU, Sullivan noted the 1975 team was recognized as the first. Alarm bells went off in her head, but she didn’t know how to correct the record.

“I feel like we’ve got a window here to make something happen,” Sullivan said. “Had I not been coaching somewhere else and heavily involved in like a million other things in my career, I would have taken care of that way back in 1977. I would have made that happen then, but that wasn’t high on my list. We weren’t posting stuff online. There weren’t media guides that everybody was looking at. We didn’t have that. I just took it for granted.

“I remember when we went back for 25 years, even at that point, they were saying ‘75 was the first team. I just thought, ‘Well, you’re wrong.’ But what am I going to do about it now? Yeah, I should have jumped on it. I should have, would have, could have, right? But it’s not too late.”

Consider the record corrected.

Adding More To The Mix

With a Host of New Huskers Signed, Spring Drills Will Be Intense

The hay is in the barn.

Now, the chore is to get rid of some of it.

Harsh, yes. Unfortunately, that's what needs to happen – particularly nowadays – in the not-so-nice world of big-time college football. And particularly when a new coach takes over.

That new Husker coach, Matt Rhule, and his staff wasted no time in signing 32 new Huskers in December. They then grabbed

seven more in February.

In all, that's 39 new scholarship Huskers – 11 portal transfers and 28 from the high school or junior college ranks.

That means Nebraska has 103 scholarship players on its roster. By next semester, that number must be down to 85.

The players have already done the math.

That's why this spring, while brutal for players, will be so very interesting to fans hoping the 4-8 and 3-9 era can be swept out

the door.

The Huskers currently are in winter conditioning under a new strength and conditioning staff led by Corey Campbell. It's not for the faint of heart.

Spring drills will start in mid- to late-March with the Red-White Game on April 22. At that point, fans will be able to judge much of the new talent for themselves.

Here are the seven newest Huskers who signed with Nebraska in February.



247Sports: 3 stars

On3: 3 stars

Rivals: 3 stars

Other Offers: Air Force, Bowling Green, BYU, Nevada and Wyoming

CORNERBACK

D'ANDRE BARNES

6-0, 175 | AURORA (COLORADO) REGIS JESUIT

D'Andre Barnes was a standout in football and track and field at Regis Jesuit High in suburban Denver. On the gridiron, he was a defensive back, wide receiver and kick returner.

As a senior, Barnes caught 37 passes for 785 yards and nine touchdowns. On defense, he recorded 55 tackles with six interceptions, one of which he returned for a touchdown. Barnes averaged 27.4 yards on nine kickoff returns with a 92-yard touchdown and 7.2 yards on 13 punt returns. Barnes was an honorable mention all-state selection as a senior. As a junior, he had 37 receptions for 645 yards and seven touchdowns. He made six tackles and had one interception on defense while averaging 24.2 yards on nine kickoff returns. Barnes had one pass breakup as

a sophomore and averaged 44.2 yards on five kickoff returns, including a 99-yard touchdown.

On the track, Barnes was the Colorado 5A 200-meter dash champion as a sophomore with a winning time of 21.69 seconds. He also finished third (10.91) in the 100-meter dash.

Barnes is regarded as a three-star prospect and is ranked among the top 80 cornerbacks in the country by On3. Barnes chose Nebraska over BYU, Air Force and Wyoming, among others.

Quotable

"Hey we got a guy that's under the radar ..."
— *What Barnes' high school coach told Husker assistant Marcus Satterfield who called when in the Denver area visiting high schools*



247Sports: 3 stars

On3: 3 stars

Rivals: 4 stars

Other Offers: Kentucky, Michigan State, Purdue and Tennessee among others

WIDE RECEIVER

DEMITRIUS BELL

6-1, 175 | NASHVILLE (TENNESSEE) MCGAVOCK HIGH

The one-time Michigan State commitment who was originally pursued by Nebraska's previous staff gives Nebraska yet another player with four-star accolades in its huge group of newcomers for 2023.

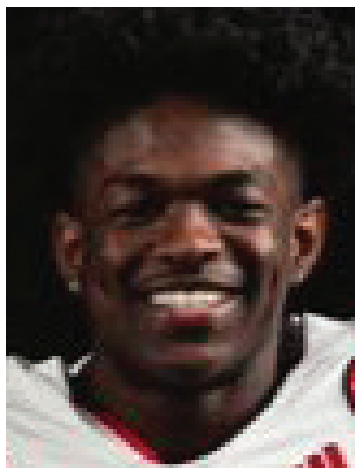
In his two varsity seasons at McGavock High in Nashville, Tennessee, the explosive and elusive Bell – one of the top unsigned prospects remaining nationally heading into the February signing day – rang up 1,200 receiving yards and 15 touchdowns, while also taking carries as a running back and playing safety. As a senior he had 59 catches for 702 yards and eight

touchdowns. He also carried for 274 yards and threw for two touchdowns.

His accomplishments drew offers from as many as 30 schools, including Georgia and Alabama, but he was reportedly being pursued the hardest by Kentucky, Tennessee and Purdue. An in-home visit by Husker coaches and a return visit in January to Nebraska turned the tide in favor of the Huskers.

Quotable

"Me and coach Rhule instantly connected."
— *Bell to Inside Nebraska after a group of Husker coaches visited his home in Nashville*



247Sports: N/R
On3: N/R
Rivals: N/R
Other Offers: North Texas



247Sports: 3
On3: 3
Rivals: 3
Other Offers: Arizona State, Michigan State, Tennessee and Washington among others.

WIDE RECEIVER

JEREMIAH CHARLES

6-2, 175 | ARLINGTON (TEXAS) MARTIN HIGH

Jeremiah Charles is a long and lean athlete perhaps better known for his basketball and track and field exploits in Texas than his football resume. That's about to change.

Charles is following his high school coach, Bob Wager, to Nebraska from Martin High in Arlington, Texas, after joining the football team as a senior. Now that Charles has turned his attention to football, Wager sees a big future for the twitchy receiver who has no recruiting service rankings for the simple reason he hadn't played football until this past fall.

Charles grabbed 23 passes for 452 yards and five touchdowns in his only high school season. In track and field, he owns a 47-4 triple jump as

a junior and wowed Husker coach Matt Rhule at a high school basketball game this winter when he threw down four dunks from his guard spot.

Quotable

"As soon as the first game, man, he just took off. It was like nobody could cover him. That was the cool thing about it. His stride is so long. He's so jumpy, so springy, that he was dynamic whether it's running the route or fly sweeps to him, handing it off to him. He was hard to take down."

— Arlington Martin wide receivers coach Brady Cagle to 247Sports on how quickly Charles made in impact in his first season

DEFENSIVE LINE

SUA LEFOTU

6-4, 285 | BELLFLOWER (CALIFORNIA) ST. JOHN BOSCO HIGH

A one-time commitment to Washington, Sua Lefotu is the No. 73-ranked player in California, according to Rivals, and had offers from a host of Pac-12 schools.

Lefotu's development was slowed by knee injuries as a sophomore and junior, and one commitment report had him not even starting as a senior, which is not as indicting as it may sound after considering the amount of talent on his high school team, a renowned California prep powerhouse considered the top team in the nation. Still, good showings at camps and a solid senior season — starter or not — at John Bosco had schools hot on the trail of a blossoming player overshadowed by several star teammates. It was Nebraska that snuck in and landed him

after the new staff first made late contact in mid-January. In a visit to Lincoln, he found supportive coaches, a new facility and a good place to develop.

Lefotu is quick on his feet, and his big frame gives him much room to grow, something Nebraska will be counting on.

Quotable

"I had a great visit to Nebraska and knew on the visit that (it) was home for me. I loved everything about the trip and felt a connection with the coaches and the players so I can't wait to get going."

— Lefotu to 247Sports on the official visit to Nebraska that sealed his commitment

2023 Future Huskers

18 - Defense | 19 - Offense | 2 - Special Teams



247Sports: 3 stars

On3: 3 stars

Rivals: 3 stars

Other Offers: Iowa, Michigan State, Rutgers and Vanderbilt

TIGHT END WIDE RECEIVER

ISMAEL SMITH FLORES

6-5, 210 | ARLINGTON (TEXAS) MARTIN HIGH

The Iowa legacy decided to make Nebraska his college home after visiting Lincoln the third weekend in January after his highly regarded high school coach, Bob Wager, was hired as Nebraska's tight ends coach.

Smith Flores still has a body built for basketball, his primary sport before joining Wager's football team at Martin High in Arlington, Texas, as a senior when he had 15 catches for 362 yards and three touchdowns. His speed, size and ability to make catches in a crowd had football coaches showing instant interest, and basketball soon took a backseat to football as a college option.

Smith Flores, who went from unrated to a three-star football prospect seemingly overnight, lined up mostly as an outside wide receiver in his single year of high school football, but will undoubtedly add muscle at Nebraska, which sees him as a versatile piece in an

eventual "positionless" offense that utilizes interchangeable parts and will expect much from its tight ends.

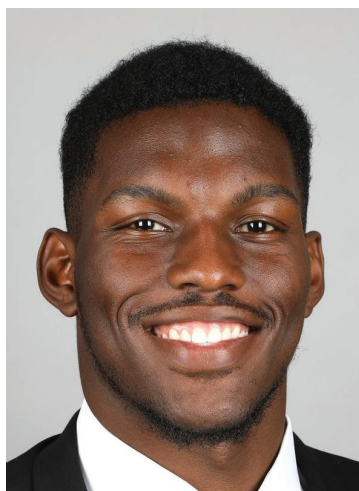
Smith Flores' father, Leroy Smith, was an All-American defensive end for the Hawkeyes in 1991.

Quotable

"It was definitely the coaching staff for me. Everyone that is there showed me a lot of love and they were all very genuine. Another big thing was Matt Rhule. He's turned around every collegiate program he's been at so I have a lot of confidence in him. Also, it's the fan base at Nebraska and their culture. Those fans deserve everything that is coming their way. I want to be part of that, want to be part of that culture, be part of that rebranding, and win some games for the Nebraska fans."

— Flores in an interview with On3 after committing to Nebraska

TRANSFER PORTAL



Previous school:
LSU, Florida and Georgia

TIGHT END

ARIK GILBERT

6-5, 250 | MARIETTA (GEORGIA) HIGH

Nebraska will be the fourth stop for the much-traveled but uber-talented Arik Gilbert, who possesses tantalizing potential but was caught in a numbers crunch last season at national champion Georgia.

Originally from the Atlanta suburb of Marietta, Georgia, Gilbert left the state for LSU out of high school where he made an instant impact in the shortened COVID-19 season of 2020, starting eight games and making the Freshman All-SEC Team as voted by the league's 14 head coaches. Twenty-four of his 35 catches that year resulted in either a first down or a touchdown and 11 came on third or fourth down. Still, Gilbert left LSU for Florida briefly in the winter of 2021 and then left for Georgia that same spring where he redshirted.

In 2022, he was part of a loaded tight end room and played in only three games, hence the transfer to Nebraska where he will focus on getting his career back on track. The Huskers

reportedly are organizing a support plan for Gilbert, who has three seasons of eligibility remaining.

The addition of Gilbert gives Nebraska the top-rated tight ends nationally in consecutive classes – Gilbert in 2020 and Thomas Fidone in 2021.

Gilbert's high school honors are almost too numerous to list but are headlined by being named the Gatorade National Player of the Year in 2019 and the highest-ranked tight end in the 2020 class by Rivals. He was a five-star prospect by all the major services, catching 105 passes for 1,860 yards (124.0 yards per game) and 15 TDs as a senior.

Quotable

"He continues to grow. We're just trying to help Arik as a person and a student right now."

— Georgia coach Kirby Smart during the 2022 season



Previous school:
Georgia

OFFENSIVE LINE

JACOB HOOD

6-8, 350 | NASHVILLE (TENNESSEE) HILLSBORO HIGH

Jacob Hood is the third former Georgia Bulldog to land at Nebraska since that program won its second national title in a row – and that’s a good place to start.

Another good place: Hood is huge and has long arms, ideal for a tackle. Now, can he move? Nebraska will find out soon. Unlike the other former Dawgs and SEC vets now on NU’s roster, Hood is much more of a long-term project, which befits his age and experience. It wasn’t long ago that Hood reportedly weighed more than 400 pounds but shaved more than 50 off his frame before entering Georgia. A reported surgical procedure on his ankle set him back before last season, and he didn’t play a

single down in 2022 after redshirting. He will have four seasons of eligibility at Nebraska.

Hood drew lots of attention out of high school where he was a four-star prospect by Rivals and PrepStar and ranked among the top prospects in Tennessee at Nashville’s Hillsboro High. He picked Georgia over schools like Auburn, Florida, Miami and Ole Miss.

Quotable

“He’s really young and has a lot of football in front of him. He’s a massive kid and he wants to learn.”

— Hood’s high school coach Maurice Fitzgerald in August 2021 as reported by Main Street Nashville

WALK-ONS

WILL DEPOOTER

Long snapper | 6-1 | 200
Omaha Westside

MASON JONES

Defensive back | 6-0 | 185
Omaha Burke

TREVER RUTH

Fullback | 6-0 | 230
Seward High
Previous school:
Nebraska-Kearney

GAGE WAGNER

Running back | 5-10 | 185
Arlington (Texas) Martin High

From Coast to Coast

The future Huskers are from 15 states, including Nebraska (12), Texas (seven), Florida (five), Pennsylvania (three), Georgia (four), California (two) and Virginia (two). Colorado, Hawaii, Maryland, Missouri, New Jersey, Oklahoma, South Dakota and Tennessee all have one.



Building A Winner

**A Huge Cast of Analysts,
Graduate Assistants, Strength Staff
and Support Staff is Ready to Roll
Under Rhule**

Did Nebraska get it right this time?
A football program once so used to pushing all the right buttons suddenly began pushing all the wrong ones about 25 years ago.

Different coaches with different levels of experience have come and gone. All had different beliefs on acquiring the Jimmys and Joes and aligning the X's and O's. Despite lots of hype and high hopes, each, in his own way, ultimately seemed worse than the previous. None will go down in any Husker hall of fame.

Now comes the next iteration: Matt Rhule. And hope is spiking again. The pessimists' view – understandable in light of the death spiral authored by Callahan, Pelini, Riley and Frost – holds that hope is the gateway to despair.

Perhaps, but consider this from Albert Einstein: "The only source of knowledge is experience."

Rhule's experience sets him up particularly well to avoid despair at Nebraska.

He's done the college job successfully before – twice. And then he took that knowledge to the NFL where ... it didn't work.

Consider that more valuable experience.

Upon his hiring at NU, Rhule set about hiring 10 new full-time coaches and then signing 39 new scholarship players.

A little less publicly, he has also put together a monstrous group of other staff members. It's one thing to have lots of resources, as he does at Nebraska. It's another to use those resources wisely. It starts with hiring.

You can tell a lot about a coach based on supportive hires. That Rhule has hired so many – many with new titles and responsibilities – is a sign he knows exactly what he wants to do. That he has done it so quickly supports that view.

Besides the on-field coaches and strength staff previously announced, here are the various analysts, graduate assistants, strength staff and others who are part of Rhule's new administration:

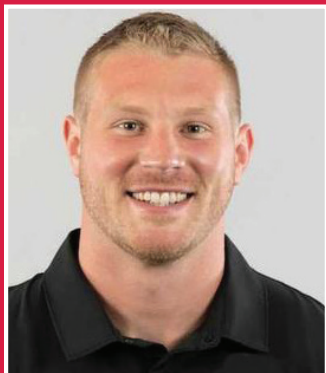
- **Mitch Cholewinski**, coordinator of football sports science. **Previous:** Associate director of applied sports science, Texas.
- **James Heiss**, associate director of football strength and conditioning. **Previous:** Assistant director of strength and conditioning for football, Buffalo.
- **Matt Hobbs**, assistant director of strength and conditioning. **Previous:** Sports physical therapy fellow, Northwestern.
- **Tyler Miles**, assistant director of football strength and conditioning. **Previous:** Assistant director of sports performance for football, Duke.
- **CJ White**, assistant director of football strength and conditioning. **Previous:** Director of strength and conditioning, Jackson State.
- **Kevin McGarry**, senior defensive analyst. **Previous:** Defensive analyst, Syracuse
- **Adam DiMichele**, offensive analyst. **Previous:** Director of player personnel, Temple
- **Christian Ellsworth**, offensive analyst. **Previous:** Offensive graduate assistant, South Carolina.
- **Josh Martin**, special teams analyst. **Previous:** Offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach, Little Elm High in Texas
- **Frank Verducci**, recruiting and personnel analyst. **Previous:** Offensive analyst, Nebraska.
- **Josh Bringuel**, defensive quality control coach. **Previous:** Graduate assistant with emphasis on linebackers, Syracuse.
- **Jack Potenza**, defensive quality control coach. **Previous:** Graduate assistant with emphasis on defensive line, Syracuse.
- **Phil Simpson**, defensive quality control coach. **Previous:** Head coach, Homestead (Florida) High.
- **Mikey Daniel**, developmental performance quality control coach. **Previous:** Running back/fullback, USFL's Pittsburgh Maulers.
- **Caleb Jones**, developmental performance quality control coach. **Previous:** Human performance intern, Carolina Panthers.
- **Austin Larkin**, developmental performance quality control coach. **Previous:** Defensive end, Carolina Panthers.
- **Aaron Coeling**, graduate assistant. **Previous:** Graduate assistant, Nebraska.
- **Shevin Smith Jr.**, graduate assistant. **Previous:** Player and student coach, Baylor; intern, Indianapolis Colts.
- **Mike Williams**, graduate assistant. **Previous:** Receiver, Nebraska.

SUPPORT STAFF

- **Susan Elza**, chief of staff. **Previous:** Director of athletics for the University Interscholastic League, the governing body of Texas high school extracurricular activities.
- **Sean Padden**, general manager. **Previous:** Vice president of football operations, Carolina Panthers.
- **Jarrett Wishon**, assistant to the head coach. **Previous:** Special agent and criminal investigator with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives from 2014 until joining the Carolina Panthers in March of 2022 as assistant to the head coach.
- **Gordon Thomas**, director of football operations. **Previous:** Assistant director of football operations, LSU
- **Kiara Mayo**, assistant director of football operations. **Previous:** Football director of operations, Lamar
- **Charlie Foley**, football operations assistant. **Previous:** Video intern, Carolina Panthers.
- **Joni Duff**, administrative assistant to the head coach. **Previous:** Football Administrative Assistant, Nebraska.
- **Vince Guinta**, senior director of player personnel and recruiting. **Previous:** Senior Director of Player Personnel, Nebraska.
- **Mike Wallace**, director of football advancement. **Previous:** Director of player personnel, Baylor
- **CJ Cavazos**, director of football relations. **Previous:** Director of college and professional relations, XFL.
- **Ron Brown**, director of player support and outreach. **Previous:** Senior offensive analyst, Nebraska.
- **Gus Felder**, director of football player development. **Previous:** Player engagement manager, Carolina Panthers.
- **Omar Hales**, director of player personnel – high schools. **Previous:** Special teams coordinator, Eastern University.
- **Brittany Oligmueller**, director of on-campus recruiting. **Previous:** Recruiting assistant, Nebraska.
- **Kristin Coggin**, director of football nutrition. **Previous:** Director of football nutrition/director of performance nutrition, South Carolina.
- **Cole Gerke**, director of football video technology. **Previous:** Video assistant, Nebraska.
- **Hunter Krehnke**, director of graphic design. **Previous:** Director of graphic design, Nebraska.
- **Ryan Callaghan**, associate director of player personnel. **Previous:** Assistant director of player personnel, Nebraska.
- **Keith Williams**, assistant director of player personnel. **Previous:** Assistant head coach, offensive coordinator and strength and conditioning coordinator, Bethel (Tennessee) University.
- **Jared Folks**, football player development assistant. **Previous:** Graduate school, East Tennessee State.

Coaching Staff Topped Off

Matt Rhule Adds Three Final Names to His Stable



Rob Dvoracek
Linebackers

Rob Dvoracek joins the Nebraska staff after spending the previous two seasons coaching for the Carolina Panthers of the NFL. Overall, Dvoracek has spent five years working on Matt Rhule's coaching staffs.

With Dvoracek as a coaching assistant, the Panthers ranked second in the NFL in total defense in 2021. He was then a defensive assistant in 2022. He previously spent the 2019

and 2020 seasons at Lehigh as the defensive ends and outside linebackers coach. He worked as a defensive quality control coach on Rhule's first two Baylor teams in 2017 and 2018. Dvoracek played for Rhule for one season at Temple in 2013, before suffering a career-ending injury and subsequently working as a student assistant coach with the Owls.

COACHING CAREER

2022: Carolina Panthers (defensive assistant)

2021: Carolina Panthers (coaching assistant)

2019-20: Lehigh (defensive ends/outside linebackers)

2017-18: Baylor (defensive quality control)



Garret McGuire
Wide Receivers

Among the youngest Power Five assistants in the country, Garret McGuire, who turned 24 in February, has already worked on an NFL staff for two years directly following his playing career at Baylor.

McGuire worked as a coaching assistant (2021) and an offensive assistant (2022) on Matt Rhule's staffs at Carolina. He was a

quarterback, special teams player and two-time first-team Academic All-Big 12 selection at Baylor, playing for three seasons while Rhule was the Bears' head coach. McGuire's father, Joey, is the head coach at Texas Tech and was an assistant coach under Rhule at Baylor for four seasons.

COACHING CAREER

2022: Carolina Panthers (offensive assistant)

2021: Carolina Panthers (coaching assistant)



Bob Wager
Tight Ends

Regarded as one of the top high school coaches in the country, Bob Wager now comes to Nebraska to coach at the major college level. A native of Johnstown, New York, he has been a head coach for more than 20 seasons in Texas high schools, posting a record of 206-100-1. Wager has helped develop numerous FBS and NFL players at the prep level, including No. 1 NFL Draft pick Myles Garrett.

Wager most recently spent 17 seasons as the

head coach at Arlington Martin High, among the largest schools in Texas' largest classification. He led the Warriors to the state playoffs in each of his 17 seasons and posted a 143-64-1 record. Wager's teams at Arlington Martin had seven undefeated district championships, including in each of his final four seasons. Wager has coached in the Under Armour All-America Game 10 times, serving as a head coach in 2022.

COACHING CAREER

2006-22: Arlington Martin High (head coach)

2005: Kaufman High (head coach)

2002-04: Groveton High (head coach)

1998-2001: Tolar High (head coach)

1994-97: Sam Houston High (assistant coach)

1993: Carter Junior High (assistant coach)

Nebraska Football Assistant Coaching Salaries

Marcus Satterfield – Offensive Coordinator, \$1.4 million
Tony White – Defensive Coordinator, \$1 million
Evan Cooper – Secondary, \$670,000
Ed Foley – Special Teams Coordinator, \$550,000
Corey Campbell – Strength And Conditioning, \$450,000
Terrance Knighton – Defensive Line, \$400,000

Donovan Raiola – Offensive Line, \$325,000
Bob Wager – Tight Ends, \$315,000
E.J. Barthel – Running Backs, \$285,000
Garrett McGuire – Wide Receivers, \$285,000
Rob Dvoracek – Linebackers, \$285,000

around CAMPUS



N WOMEN'S GYMNASTICS

Huskers Lose to Iowa But Win Three Events

Although falling to No. 17 Iowa, the Nebraska women's gymnastics team claimed three event titles against the Hawkeys in early February. Kinsey Davis won the vault title (9.850), Emma Spence finished first on the uneven bars (9.825) and Sophia McClelland had a 9.925 to win on balance beam.



Sophia McClelland on the balance beam.

N BASEBALL

Three to Have Jerseys Retired

The jerseys of former Nebraska baseball All-Americans Darin Erstad, Alex Gordon and Shane Komine will be retired during a March 24 ceremony.

They will be the first jerseys ever retired by the NU baseball program.

"It is fitting that Darin Erstad, Shane Komine and Alex Gordon are the first Husker baseball players to be honored with a retired jersey," said Athletic Director Trev Alberts. "Each of them left a lasting legacy of excellence and helped elevate Nebraska baseball to new heights."

Erstad was the No. 1 overall pick in the 1995 MLB draft and had a 14-year career in the majors. He was also the starting punter on Nebraska's 1994 national championship football team.

Gordon was a two-time Big 12 player of the year and the No. 2 overall pick in the 2005 MLB draft. He played all 14 seasons of his major league career for the Kansas City Royals.

With Komine as its ace on the mound, Nebraska had its first two 50-win seasons in program history in 2000 and 2001. Komine also helped lead the Huskers to their first two College World Series appearances in program history in 2001 and 2002. He pitched in two seasons in the majors for the Oakland Athletics.

N RIFLE TEAM

Ossi Leads NU to Third at PRC Championships

The No. 6-ranked Nebraska rifle team finished third at the Patriot Rifle Conference championships in Fairbanks, Alaska, with a final aggregate score of 4,724.

Junior All-American Cecelia Ossi led the Huskers in the aggregate with a score of 1,187, a personal best.

WHERE'S FOLEY?

 Ashland Greenwood High School	 Elkhorn North High School	 Omaha Burke High School	 Omaha South High School
 Bellevue East High School	 Millard North High School	 Omaha Central High School	 Omaha Westside High School
 Bellevue West High School	 Millard South High School	 Omaha Creighton Prep High School	 Papillion La Vista High School
 Bennington High School	 Millard West High School	 Omaha Gross Catholic High School	 Papillion South High School
 Boys Town High School	 Omaha Benson High School	 Omaha North High School	 Platteview High School
 Elkhorn High School	 Omaha Bryan High School	 Omaha Roncalli Catholic High School	 Ralston High School
 Elkhorn South High School	 Omaha Buena Vista High School	 Omaha Skutt Catholic High School	 Yutan High School

Omaha Area Schools



Notice to all Nebraskans:
You may have already, or soon
will, run into a heretofore outsider
in your community.

There is no need for alarm.

This man, whose energy belies his soft middle age, is sorta blocky, bald up top and tightly shaven on the sides. He'll be wearing glasses and an "N" somewhere on his attire. He'll also be talking in the tones of an East Coaster – if not to you, then to someone nearby.

Don't call the cops.

This man is on your side.

And he's just as fascinated by you as you will be with him.

His name is Ed Foley, and he'll be looking for two things: A local eatery and the next local kid good enough to don a Husker football uniform.

If you know of either, point Foley in the right direction. The restaurant will be easy. Much more difficult will be pinpointing the next local Husker. Remember, it's not just the kids currently in high school. Maybe he's a seventh-grader in the local junior high who even the eighth-graders can't corral. Maybe there's a kid in the next burg over who seemed unusually strong and fast while running roughshod against your local 11. Or 8. Maybe 6?

Foley is on a quest to visit every high school in the state. He's old school. And

he's tireless.

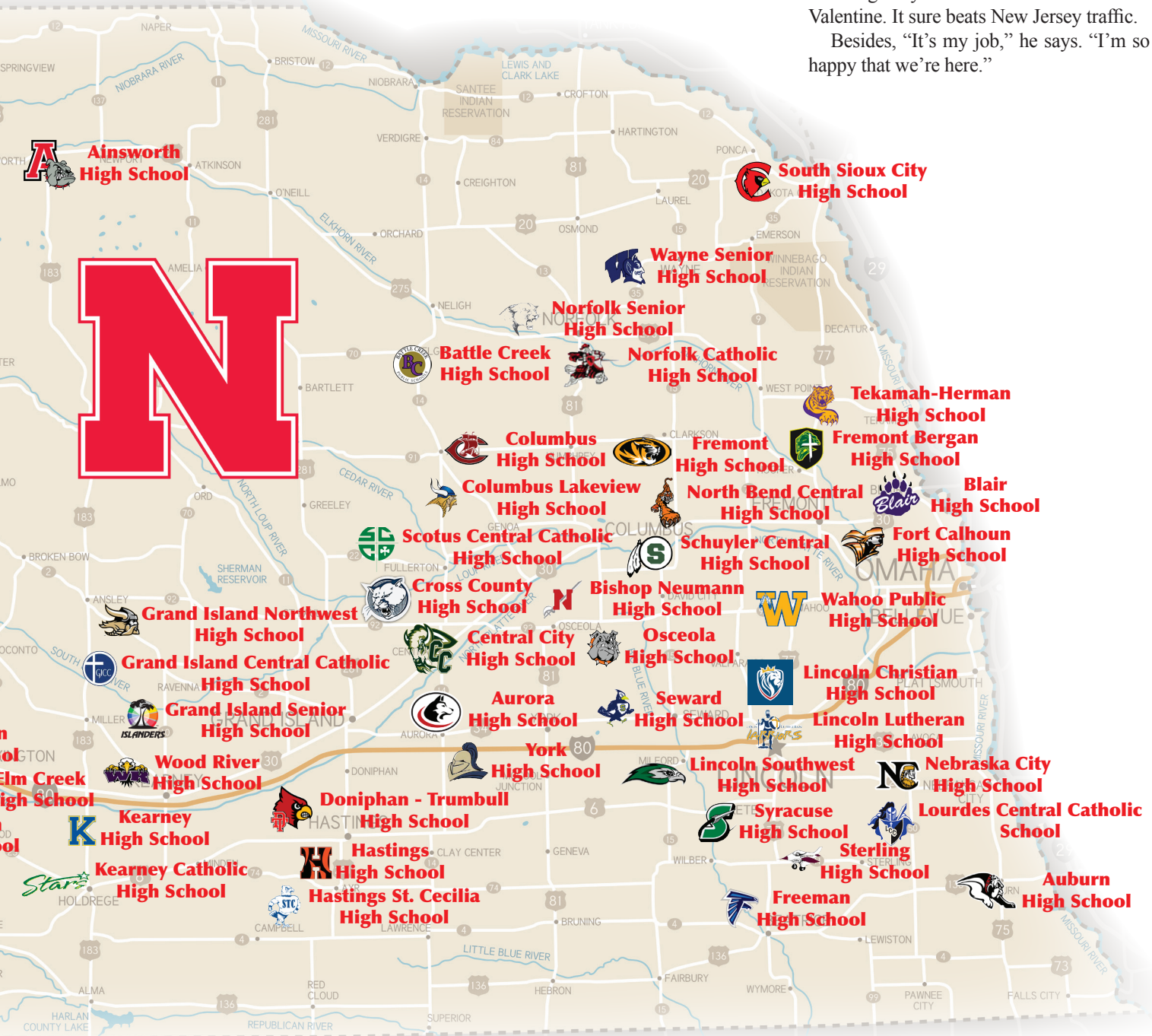
If you see him, here are some icebreakers: Anything Philly sports. Eagles. Sixers. Phillies. But avoid the New York Yankees. Hates 'em. The Mets? Loves 'em.

But really, your interaction will be easy. Foley loves coming to see you. It's a whole new world for him out there in Nebraska. Contrary to past jobs, he finds *everyone* is pulling for the same team in Nebraska.

"This state has an amazing passion," he says. "The reception has been amazing just going from town to town ... It says a lot about what's going on here."

Fans, don't worry about the wear and tear on Foley as he's driving, well, let's say U.S. Highway 83 between North Platte and Valentine. It sure beats New Jersey traffic.

Besides, "It's my job," he says. "I'm so happy that we're here."





NU COMMUNICATIONS

Outfielder Abbie Squier is one of several seasoned veterans the Huskers will rely on in 2023. Squier was first-team all-Big Ten as a sophomore in 2022 and made the league's all-defensive team.

Elevated Expectations

Veteran Team, Veteran Coaches Have Softball Team Thinking Big

By Steve Beideck

An already-veteran coaching staff will be even more experienced heading into Nebraska's 2023 softball season.

Following the retirement of Michigan coach Carol Hutchins, who led the Wolverines for 38 seasons, Nebraska's coaches now have the most combined tenure of any Division I school.

Head coach Rhonda Revelle (31 years) and assistants Lori Sippel (34) and Diane Miller (15) bring a combined 80 years of experience while guiding the defending Big Ten tournament champions this season.

There will also be an additional veteran presence in the Huskers dugout this season. Former Lincoln Southwest head coach Mark Watt has joined the Nebraska staff as a volunteer coach.

Watt retired following the 2021 season

as the winningest coach in state history and led the Silver Hawks to four Class A state championships. Last month Watt also was named the 2021-22 National Softball Coach of the Year by the National Federation of State High School Association's coaches association.

"Husker softball has been really special and I've learned a lot from the coaching staff over the years," Watt said. "I'm learning more and more every day, and I'm just trying to contribute what I can overall."

Revelle said Watt hasn't lost his passion for the sport since leaving Southwest.

"I'd have to go back and look when was the last time he didn't work a camp," Revelle said. "During the academy we have right after high school state tournament, he would be there taking notes, being a student of the game. It was the Tuesday after the

state finals. He came from state, didn't even take a week off."

Two of Watt's former charges are now playing for the Huskers – junior outfielder Abbie Squier and freshman infielder Ashley Smetter.

"It's really special to be able to coach kids you coached in high school and I'm glad to get a chance to coach them again," Watt said. "Abbie is one of the captains, and she was a great leader the whole time she was at Southwest. Her work ethic has always been exceptional. She takes the younger kids under her wing."

Squier, along with seniors Courtney Wallace and Mya Felder, will serve this season as Nebraska's captains.

With a veteran team returning, it may be difficult for Smetter to get much playing time this season. But Watt said that hasn't

kept Smetter from doing the work that could pay off down the road.

“She’s coming along and is really developing by improving both her defense and offense,” Watt said. “On a veteran team it’s hard to break into the lineup. You just have to find your way at the beginning and prove as much as you can. She’s having fun and doing a great job.”

Nebraska opened the season by posting a 4-1 record at the Houston Invitational. Nebraska defeated Virginia, Houston, and Lamar twice while dropping a 1-0 decision to South Dakota State. The Huskers were ranked No. 21 in the preseason Top 25 announced by Extra Inning Softball.

The elevated expectations come from the Huskers having a breakout campaign in 2022. After not having advanced to the

NCAA tournament since 2016, the Huskers returned to the postseason after winning the Big 10 tournament title. Nebraska finished the season 41-16, including a 17-5 record in conference games.

“They’ll know what to expect more this season, to have a target on our back,” Revelle said. “There’s more belief now in what they can do, and the preparation has been appropriate and more diligent since the beginning of practice.”

Revelle said most players have their biggest growth in competitive maturity from their sophomore to junior seasons. Nebraska has a lineup loaded with experienced juniors, including shortstop Billie Andrews, Squier, third baseman Sydney Gray, Brooke Andrews, Caitlynn Neal and Kaylin Kinney.

Billie Andrews has received several preseason accolades after being named Nebraska’s female athlete of the year for all sports in 2022. Among those honors, Andrews is No. 45 on Softball America’s Top 100 preseason players to watch list, No. 8 on D1Softball’s Top 10 preseason shortstops and a third-team preseason All-American at-large selection by Softball America.

None of this recognition has caused Andrews to slow down in preparation for her third season as a Husker.

“I don’t think she has any of that in her DNA,” Revelle said. “If anything, she puts more pressure on herself. She needs to focus on being Billie. The kid is a perfectionist. It’s the reason she gets the grades she does. We have a handful of kids like that.”



AMARILLO MULLEN/HUSKERS ILLUSTRATED

Billie Andrews was second-team all-Big Ten in 2022 and set the sophomore school record for homers in a season with 20.



Fifth-year pitcher Shay Schanaman appeared in 15 games in 2022, making 13 starts on the mound for the Huskers. He totaled 76 strikeouts in 77 innings.

Forgetting 2022

Bolt Will Lean on Large Group of Veterans to Get Back on Track

By Steve Beideck • Photos by Amarillo Mullen

Players with myriad levels of experience are hoping to get Nebraska baseball back into postseason play after struggling through the 2022 season.

From fifth-year seniors to freshmen hoping to make an immediate impact, the Huskers are working toward making the 2023 campaign look more like the 2021 season when the Huskers won the Big Ten regular season title and pushed No. 1 Arkansas to the limit in an NCAA regional.

Nebraska coach Will Bolt said having a lot of returning veterans should help NU improve on last season when NU finished a disappointing 23-30 and didn't even make the conference tournament that took place in Omaha just 60 miles from their Haymarket Park home.

"It's a big deal," Bolt said of having some older guys to lean on. "To have those

guys around you can't really overstate their value to the team. They've had so many experiences. Having that experience means everything to the coaching staff."

Two of those fifth-year players are pitchers Shay Schanaman and Kyle Perry. Both were in the weekend rotation last year but could prove more valuable coming out of the bullpen in 2023.

"Shay has done it in the past," Bolt said. "He's been a closer, he's been a reliever. I think he's a position player at heart, too. He's just a guy who likes to be involved every day."

Perry fits that mold as well, Bolt said.

"They were Friday and Saturday starters for us last year, and they earned that on a really good pitching staff," Bolt said. "Shay and Perry were both two-time captains. It's a great feeling as a coach to know you

have some selfless guys like that (who) are unbelievable examples for the team."

Both players were elected captains again for this season. Teammates also elected Efray Cervantes, Griffin Everitt and Brice Matthews as captains. Matthews is the only one who isn't a fifth-year player.

Drew Christo and CJ Hood likely will play bigger roles on the mound this season.

Hood made 18 relief appearances last season as a freshman, going 2-0 with a 4.26 ERA and one save with 12 strikeouts in 12.2 innings.

Christo finished the fall season with a flurry after making just five appearances in 2022.

"You can see when the light bulb starts to come on and their natural ability starts to come on," Bolt said. "Drew was able to do that toward the end of the fall. We saw



Infielder Brice Matthews hit .261 with eight doubles and seven home runs in 2022. He had 10 multi-hit games and a team-high 12 stolen bases.

him take that into the off-season. He's been fantastic in the live outings."

Christo has his velocity back up, and his breaking ball looks sharp, Bolt said.

"You can just tell he has the confidence back on the mound," Bolt said. "It's never been a lack of ability or character, makeup or work habits. Drew is going to factor. He's going to be a guy we count on to get some big outs for us."

When it comes to getting the bats back on track, Bolt said the coaching staff will tinker with lineups in early season games. The players have earned a chance to show what they can do in live game settings, he said.

"I think offensively we have different pieces of the puzzle we can use depending on the pitching matchup," Bolt said. "You need to have some quality depth, not only

on your bench but in your lineup. You have to be tough one through nine."

Much has naturally fallen into place in the offseason, Bolt said. The between-the-lines baseball part still has a ways to go.

"From a team and character standpoint, these guys have been models for what it's supposed to look like to be a team," Bolt said. "From the baseball side of things, we're still a work in progress. We have to continue like we're the worst team in the country, because, if you don't, you get complacent and take things for granted."

The early part of the schedule will be challenging.

After opening the season with four road games against defending West Coast Conference tournament champion San Diego, the Huskers will play three games against South Alabama in Mobile the final

weekend of February.

Then comes a March 3-5 trip to U.S. Bank Stadium in Minnesota where the Huskers will play Vanderbilt, Hawaii and defending College World Series champion Mississippi. Nebraska then is scheduled to play 14 of its next 15 games in Lincoln, including the Big Ten-opening series March 24-26 against Illinois.

No matter the opponent, Bolt said Nebraska's goals remain the same as last year.

"We continue to get better every day, and by the end of the year we're hosting a regional," Bolt said. "That is our goal every single year. Everything we've been doing for the last six months is not just for the first game, but what we're going to look like in May and June."

Starting Fast

Indiana Transfer Provides Spark for Huskers

By Nick Rubek



Starting fast in the lighter weights has been key for the Huskers in dual competition, and that starts with Liam Cronin at 125. “I think that helps the guys throughout the lineup,” Cronin said. “They see how I’m wrestling and they want to continue that good energy.”

Mark Manning’s lineup blueprint isn’t complicated.

Start fast and finish strong and you’ll usually be just fine, the Nebraska wrestling coach says.

Liam Cronin has checked the first box this season for the Huskers.

The 125-pounder has given NU a lift right out of the gate most nights, climbing to No. 3 in the national rankings in early February.

“When you build a team, you love to have a great lightweight guy and you love to have a great heavyweight,” Manning said. “The start and the end can put an exclamation point on things. I really like where Liam is.”

For Cronin, it’s more about where he *isn’t* that has the Orange, California, native most excited. After missing last season with a medical redshirt, Nebraska’s spark plug is off the sidelines and back at the head of the lineup.

Only unbeaten teammates Peyton Robb and Mikey Labriola had more dual points than Cronin through January.

That doesn’t come as a surprise to his coach.

“In our mind, he’s one of the best 125s

in the country,” Manning said. “And we’ve known that. We knew he was at this level.”

It was part of the reason, Manning said, that the decision was made for Cronin to sit out a year ago. A nagging back injury and issues with both his foot and hand didn’t allow Cronin to ever get his season going.

But he’s hardly new to the scene. Cronin qualified for the NCAA tournament in 2021, going 1-2 there after a ninth-place finish in the Big Ten Championships.

It was a different red and white that he wore prior to that.

The Indiana transfer racked up 41 wins in three seasons for the Hoosiers, a run that included a fifth-place showing in the 2020 conference tournament.

That kind of background and big-match resume puts Cronin in a position to lead by experience.

“He’s a very disciplined person,” Manning said. “And that’s where it starts. He loves the sport, and those principles, that’s what comes out when he wrestles.”

Added Cronin: “I love the lifestyle that comes with being a wrestler. I fall in love with the hard work and learning aspect of it, the growing. Not just the winning.”

But there’s been plenty of that this

season, too.

In a stretch of just more than two weeks in late January, Cronin went 3-1 in four consecutive matches against All-Americans and fellow wrestlers in the national rankings.

Included were decisions over Michael DeAugustino of Northwestern and Minnesota’s Patrick McKee, who were ranked No. 3 and No. 4 in the country, respectively, at the time of their matches.

“It shows he’s on track,” Manning said. “Liam Cronin is right there.”

The lone loss in the month of January came to Spencer Lee of Iowa, a two-time Hodge Trophy winner going for his fourth national championship this season.

Both Manning and Cronin see the first-period pin to Lee as a positive moving forward.

“He’s an elite wrestler,” Cronin said of Lee. “I learned a lot, mostly about myself, and things I can do differently next time. It wasn’t a match where I came off the mat completely discouraged. I was upset because I lost, but I learned a lot.”

Lessons from losses are still lessons, Manning said.

“He just didn’t move his feet, didn’t wrestle with that looseness,” he added. “He’s going to wrestle a little calmer and with less anxiety next time.”

Cronin hopes there are two more meetings with Lee – at the Big Ten Championships in early March and at the NCAA tournament in Tulsa, Oklahoma, two weekends later.

Until then he’ll focus on giving Nebraska the kind of spark and energy off which the team feeds, Manning said.

“I take that as a great responsibility,” Cronin said of his leadoff position. “I think that helps the guys throughout the lineup. They see how I’m wrestling and they want to continue that good energy.”

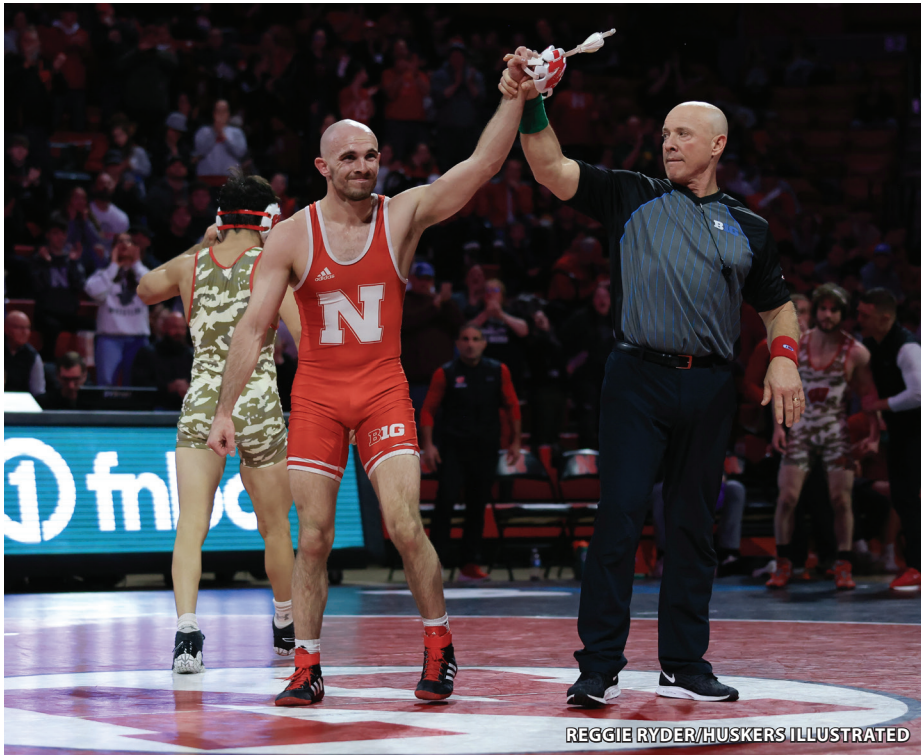
While he may not be looking ahead, Cronin said there is a postseason target the Huskers have in their sights.

“This year, it’s our goal to leave Tulsa with a trophy,” he said.

Knocking Off the Rust

After a Long Layoff, Brock Hardy is Back to Business on the Mat

By Nick Rubek



After going almost three years away from competition, Brock Hardy has gone from unranked to No. 4 at 141-pounds and was the first Husker this season to reach 20 wins.

Brock Hardy isn't new to the wrestling scene.

He just took a hiatus.

The redshirt sophomore signed with Nebraska all the way back in 2018 – before a two-year mission in Brazil for the Church of Latter Day Saints. Before COVID-19. Before a comeback that has seen him rise to No. 4 at 141-pounds in the national rankings in early February.

"I've been ranked that high the entire season in my own mind," Hardy said. "I remember when the preseason rankings came out and I was nowhere to be seen. Now that I'm there, I guess others believe in it, too."

It can't exactly be called bursting onto the scene when you're as decorated as Hardy was coming out of high school.

Four state titles in Utah to go along with five championships at USA Folkstyle Nationals were part of the reason he was among the top recruits in the country in 2018.

Nebraska was one of only a few programs, Hardy said, that were on the same page with his time away from the sport coming out of Box Elder High School in Brigham City, Utah.

Although his mission in Brazil was cut short due to the pandemic, Hardy would still spend nearly two full years away from wrestling training and just shy of three years without competition.

"The act of wrestling was foreign to me," he said.

The physical part came back first, even quicker than Hardy had anticipated. His body, he said, was ready to compete again less than a year after returning.

The mind, though, took longer.

"The hardest thing was probably learning how to be a competitor in wrestling again," Hardy said. "It's not something you think about. To win a match is a lot more than being able to do it physically. And (the mental) part was very hard. I felt like I battled until really this season."

He saw limited action each of the last two years – one a redshirt campaign, another that he'll get back due to COVID-19 – going a combined 10-3.

But Nebraska coach Mark Manning and his staff had confidence in what they had in Hardy.

"We knew we were going to get a good wrestler," Manning said. "He hadn't gotten on the mat in two years. That's a different sort of deal."

Now, the rust has officially been knocked off.

Hardy was the first Husker to reach 20 wins. His rise from unranked in the preseason to title contender at 141-pounds started with a season-opening loss. Since then his only setbacks have come to fellow Top 5 wrestlers – Iowa's Real Woods and Ryan Jack of N.C. State – each by two points.

"I think Brock Hardy has as good a chance as anyone at that weight class to win a national title," Manning said. "Just gotta go claim it that weekend."

That is in lock step with Hardy's goals. Just don't ask him for a list.

"I didn't need to write them down because I always know what they are," he said. "I came to Nebraska because I want to be a national champion, and that's all."



Hardy has gained much respect since the start of the season from those who may have forgotten about him since signing as a Husker back in 2018.

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2022-23 NEBRASKA BASKETBALL SCHEDULES



Men's Basketball Schedule

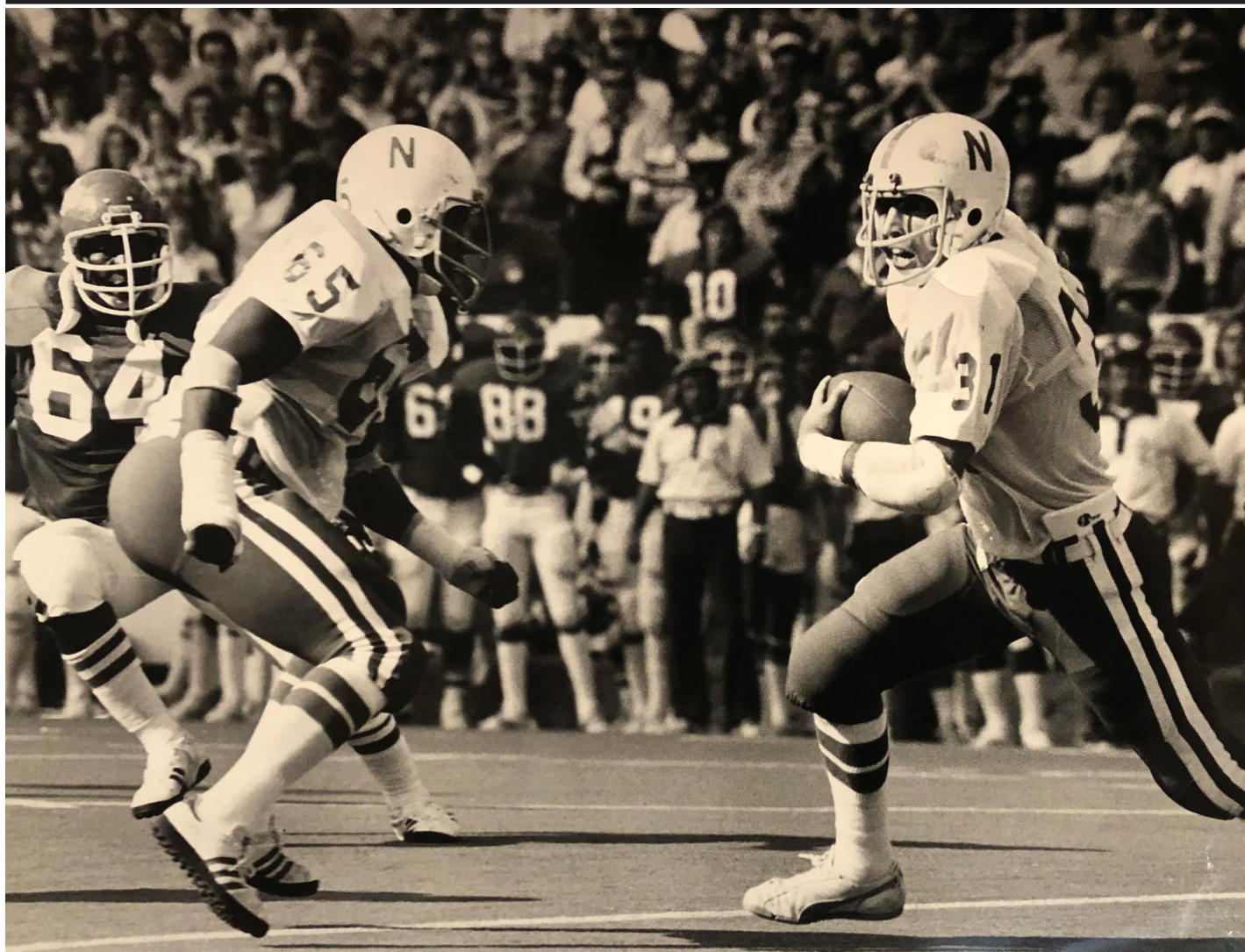
<u>DATE</u>	<u>OPPONENT</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
MON, NOV 7	MAINE	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
THU, NOV 10	OMAHA	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
THU, NOV 17	ST. JOHN'S	QUEENS, N.Y.
SUN, NOV 20	ARKANSAS-PINE BLUFF	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
THU, NOV 24	OKLAHOMA	ORLANDO, FLA.
FRI, NOV 25	MEMPHIS	ORLANDO, FLA.
SUN, NOV 27	FLORIDA STATE	ORLANDO, FLA.
WED, NOV 30	BOSTON COLLEGE	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
SUN, DEC 4	CREIGHTON	OMAHA, NEB.
WED, DEC 7	INDIANA *	BLOOMINGTON, IND.
SAT, DEC 10	PURDUE *	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
SAT, DEC 17	KANSAS STATE	KANSAS CITY, MO.
TUE, DEC 20	QUEENS (N.C.)	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
THU, DEC 29	IOWA *	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
TUE, JAN 3	MICHIGAN STATE *	EAST LANSING, MICH.
SAT, JAN 7	MINNESOTA *	MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.
TUE, JAN 10	ILLINOIS *	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
FRI, JAN 13	PURDUE *	WEST LAFAYETTE, IND.
WED, JAN 18	OHIO STATE *	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
SAT, JAN 21	PENN STATE *	UNIVERSITY PARK, PA.
TUE, JAN 24	NORTHWESTERN *	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
SAT, JAN 28	MARYLAND *	COLLEGE PARK, MD.
TUE, JAN 31	ILLINOIS *	URBANA-CHAMPAIGN, ILL.
SUN, FEB 5	PENN STATE *	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
WED, FEB 8	MICHIGAN *	ANN ARBOR, MICH.
SAT, FEB 11	WISCONSIN *	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
TUE, FEB 14	RUTGERS *	PISCATAWAY, N.J.
SUN, FEB 19	MARYLAND *	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
SAT, FEB 25	MINNESOTA *	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
TUE, FEB 28	MICHIGAN STATE *	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
SUN, MAR 5	IOWA *	IOWA CITY, IOWA.

* BIG TEN CONFERENCE GAMES

Women's Basketball Schedule

<u>DATE</u>	<u>OPPONENT</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
MON, NOV 7	OMAHA	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
FRI, NOV 11	HOUSTON CHRISTIAN	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
TUE, NOV 15	CREIGHTON	OMAHA, NEB.
SAT, NOV 19	DRAKE	DES MOINES, IOWA
TUE, NOV 22	TARLETON	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
FRI, NOV 25	TEXAS A&M - CORPUS CHRISTI	SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO
SAT, NOV 26	MISSISSIPPI STATE	SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO
THU, DEC 1	VIRGINIA TECH	BLACKSBURG, VA.
SUN, DEC 4	MARYLAND *	COLLEGE PARK, MD.
WED, DEC 7	WISCONSIN *	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
SAT, DEC 10	SAMFORD	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
SUN, DEC 18	WYOMING	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
WED, DEC 21	KANSAS	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
WED, DEC 28	MICHIGAN *	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
SUN, JAN 1	INDIANA *	BLOOMINGTON, IND.
SAT, JAN 7	RUTGERS *	PISCATAWAY, N.J.
WED, JAN 11	PENN STATE *	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
SAT, JAN 14	OHIO STATE *	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
WED, JAN 18	PURDUE *	WEST LAFAYETTE, IND.
SUN, JAN 22	MARYLAND *	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
SAT, JAN 28	IOWA *	IOWA CITY, IOWA
THU, FEB 2	MICHIGAN STATE *	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
MON, FEB 6	NORTHWESTERN *	EVANSTON, ILL.
THU, FEB 9	ILLINOIS *	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
SUN, FEB 12	MICHIGAN *	ANN ARBOR, MICH.
WED, FEB 15	MINNESOTA *	MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.
SAT, FEB 18	IOWA *	PINNACLE BANK ARENA
WED, FEB 22	ILLINOIS *	URBANA-CHAMPAIGN, ILL.
SUN, FEB 26	NORTHWESTERN *	PINNACLE BANK ARENA

* BIG TEN CONFERENCE GAMES



Ted Harvey returns an interception at Kansas in 1976, his junior year. The Huskers would go 9-3-1 that season, the worst record of the three seasons Harvey played.

Loving Lexington

Ted Harvey Continues to Give Back to His Hometown

By Shane G. Gilster

A three-sport athlete, Ted Harvey grew up in Lexington, Nebraska, graduating in 1974 from Lexington High School. He led the Minutemen as a quarterback and running back to two back-to-back state football championships in 1972 and 1973. As the starting point guard in basketball, his team lost by one point in the state championship game and he ran on two gold-medal relay teams as Lexington won the Class B team title.

Harvey, at 5-foot-9 and 140-pounds,

wasn't big, but he was fast and agile. His speed was one of the main reasons Nebraska and coach Tom Osborne recruited him to Lincoln.

"I was a sprinter in high school, so it was up to me as to what position I would play in college," Harvey said. "Coach Osborne liked me as a wingback or cornerback. Back then recruiting wasn't a big deal. I heard that there were coaches in the stands during my high school games and then Coach Osborne visited my home after the season. That was

pretty much it."

Harvey visited Colorado and Air Force and heard from some Midwestern schools like Iowa State, but he knew all along he wasn't going anywhere but Nebraska.

After arriving on NU's campus, Harvey began practice at wingback but that didn't last long after a conversation with Osborne about moving to the defensive backfield.

"I liked the safety position better," Harvey said. "They could read the eyes of the quarterback and break on the ball.

Cornerbacks have to cover the fastest receivers and turn and run with them with their back to the ball and also everyone sees every mistake you make at cornerback. But the coaches thought I was a better corner because I had 4.4 speed (in the 40-yard dash)."

Like most freshmen in his class, Harvey played on the freshman team. The exception was Monte Anthony who went directly to varsity. Anthony's 651 yards rushing and seven touchdowns led NU in 1974.

"I think he was the first true freshman at Nebraska to play varsity," Harvey said. "He was a grown man as a freshman and they needed help at running back."

Both Harvey and Anthony, who was from Bellevue, were Nebraska kids – an important part of what made the Huskers into a national football power.

"For the Nebraska kids on the team, it is more than football, it is home and you always fight for your home. That attitude helps your team culture," Harvey said.

Harvey became a contributor in 1975 for the varsity. He was a back-up cornerback and played on special teams. The Huskers were national title contenders all season and

rose to No. 2. A loss to Oklahoma in the last game of the year shattered their dreams of going to the Orange Bowl and playing for a championship. Losing to the Sooners became a frustrating theme for Harvey during his time at NU.

"Our nemesis was always Oklahoma and the winner of our game went to the Orange Bowl. I feel we tried too hard against Oklahoma, our coaches overcoached and we didn't play loose," Harvey said. "(OU's) quarterback was Thomas Lott who wore the bandana. We all wanted to get that bandana but couldn't catch the guy, he was slippery and fast. They had a ton of good players."

The best chance Harvey and the Huskers had to beat the Sooners was his junior year in 1976. But it was the game where "Sooner Magic" was born.

With NU leading 17-13 with 3:30 left in the game, Lott handed off to his tailback who surprisingly pulled up and threw a 47-yard bomb to split end Steve Rhodes. It was the first pass of the day for the Sooners.

Then came the infamous flea flicker. On third and 19, quarterback Dean Blevins passed to Rhodes who lateraled to Elvis Peacock coming around the left side.

Peacock ran all the way to the 2-yard line and then scored on the next play with only 38 seconds left in the game.

"Not beating Oklahoma made it tough on Coach Osborne," Harvey said. "I heard that if we didn't win our bowl game that year against Texas Tech then Osborne would have been fired. That's how close Nebraska was to firing one of the all-time great coaches in college football."

Those Osborne teams of the mid-'70s sometimes get overlooked because NU never beat Oklahoma from 1973 to 1977. But during that span, NU lost only one bowl game and always finished in the top 10.

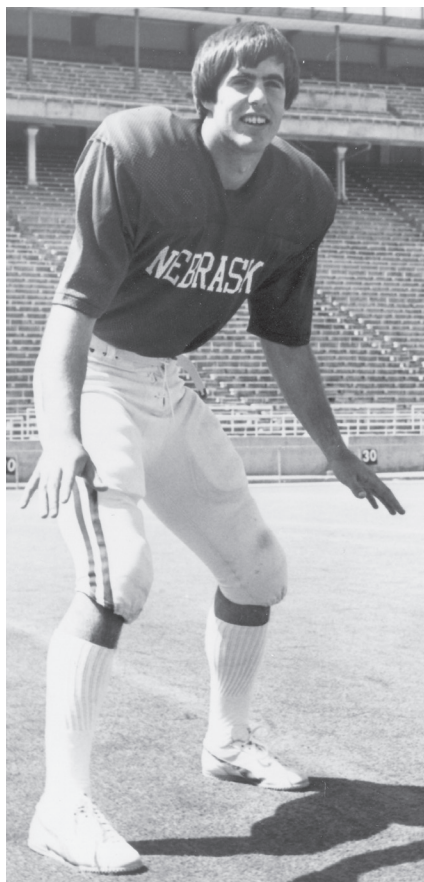
"I think after Bob Devaney stepped down after 1972, it took awhile for Coach Osborne as a head coach to get back to that level, but he finally beat Oklahoma the year after I left (in 1978) and ended up winning three national titles," Harvey said.

Osborne was chosen by Devaney to take over for him as head coach, a move some of the other NU assistant coaches were not happy about.

"My defensive backs coach Warren Powers and defensive coordinator Monte Kiffin were hoping to get the head coaching



The Blackshirts and Harvey, No. 31, were in scramble mode on the sidelines in the 1977 opener against Washington State, coached by former Husker assistant Warren Powers. The Cougars came to Lincoln and upset Nebraska 19-10. It would be one of Harvey's most disappointing games as a Husker.



Nebraska won a lot of games with Harvey at cornerback, but they never once beat Oklahoma. "They had a ton of good players," Harvey said of the Sooners of the mid- to late-'70s.

job," Harvey said. "And when they didn't they decided to move on after my junior year.

Powers became the head coach at Washington State and in his first year, brought his team to Lincoln and upset the Huskers 19-10 in 1977. It was the first game of Harvey's senior year. "They had 'The Throwin' Samoan' Jack Thompson at quarterback who later played in the NFL and Brian 'Machine Gun' Kelly at receiver who set records in the Canadian Football League."

Of all the games for Harvey, that loss to Washington State was the most disappointing. It was challenging for him and the defense facing not only a formidable passing offense but to do so with a new defensive scheme.

"I felt bad for our team because we had to start over with a whole new system my senior year after Powers and Kiffin left," Harvey said. "Lance Van Zandt took over as DC and defensive backs coach. He liked more of a man-to-man coverage scheme as opposed to the zone we had

been running. We were trying to play bump-and-run man coverage in that first game. I gave up a couple of passing touchdowns and was really upset about that."

It was a bittersweet season for Harvey in 1977. Besides the loss to Washington State and his former coach, Harvey had to leave the Oklahoma game at the end of the year because of a shoulder injury and had to have surgery. But he garnered the following accolades on and off the field which embodied a model student-athlete:

- 1977 Honorable-Mention All-American
- 1977 First-Team Academic All-American
- 1977 Second-Team All-Big Eight
- 1977 Academic All-Big Eight
- 1977 NCAA Post-Graduate Scholarship

Harvey was a biology/pre-med major at NU and after graduating had to make a decision between dentistry or optometry school. He also had NFL teams sniffing around and thought about continuing his football career professionally.

In the end, Harvey didn't feel up to pro football physically with his shoulder, so he decided to go for the sure thing and attend Ohio State's optometry school. He later received his doctorate degree in 1982.

After school, Harvey came back to his hometown of Lexington and has been an optometrist with Lexington Family Eyecare for the past 41 years.

"I wanted to come back to Lexington because I like this size of town," he said. "It is a Class B school and I wanted my kids to play multiple sports. It is a neat community

and I just love the place.

"It has changed since I grew up here," Harvey continued. "We have a lot of immigrants living here now. I enjoy talking to them when they come in as patients hearing all their neat stories where they came from and how they got here to Lexington."

Sports have also changed in the town. Football and basketball are no longer the dominant programs they were when Harvey starred on those teams in high school.

"Our football and basketball teams have not been very good because a lot of the kids did not grow up playing them," he said. "But we go to state every year in soccer and are good in individual sports like wrestling and cross country."

Besides giving back to his hometown community in the medical profession, Harvey has shared his knowledge for the past 12 years as a volunteer coach for the high school football team where his son, Jake, coaches.

After a successful professional stint as an optometrist, Harvey, 67, is set to retire in June of this year.

"I lived on a schedule for 41 years and can't even go to a funeral without rescheduling 20 patients," Harvey said. "My wife, Kelly, and I want to spend more time doing things together like visiting our daughter, Ashley, and grandkids in Kansas City."

But Harvey has no plans of leaving Lexington. He said he can't see himself living anywhere else. He's the epitome of a Hometown Husker.

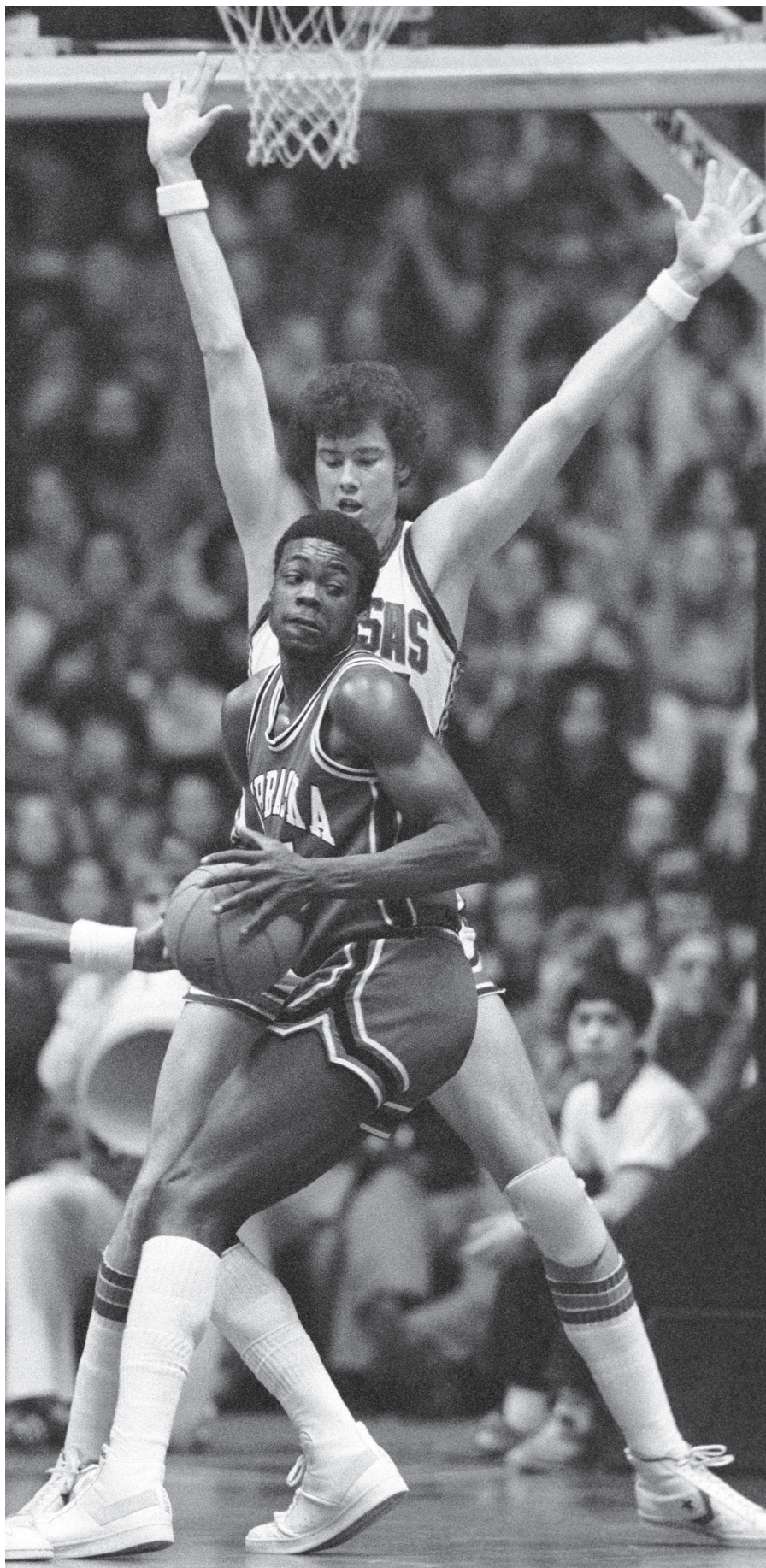


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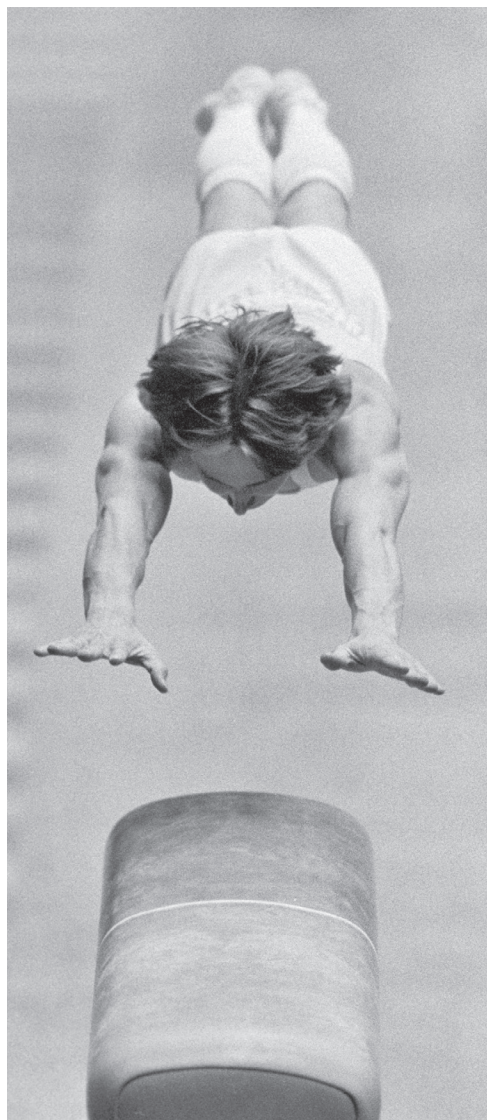
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Nebraska's Carl McPipe is defended by Kansas center Paul Mokeski at the Devaney Center on Jan. 25, 1978, when Nebraska defeated the Jayhawks 62-58.



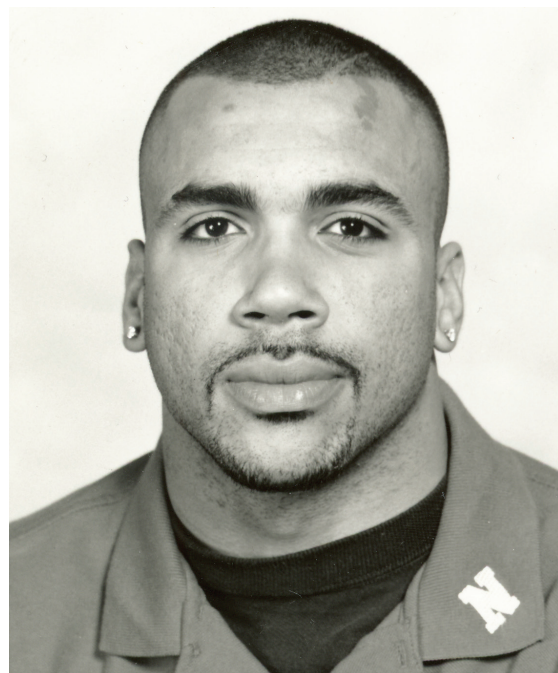
Scott Johnson competes in the vault during a meet at the Devaney Center in 1981. Johnson was a member of four national championship teams at Nebraska in addition to winning three individual NCAA titles.

TED'S TAKES

Ted Kirk is a Lincoln-based photographer who has been a photojournalist since 1970. The Sioux Falls, South Dakota, native covered Nebraska Athletics from 1973 through 2018. During that span he covered thousands of Husker Athletic competitions around the United States. His work is being donated to the University of Nebraska Library Photo Archive.



Linebacker Tony Ortiz was used to playing in the spotlight at Nebraska. The Huskers were in national title contention every year except one with Ortiz on the team.



A rare Husker from Connecticut, Ortiz – big and blazing fast – could have gone anywhere coming out of high school.

Whatever is Best for the Team

Tony Ortiz's Mindset was Typical at NU

By Shane G. Gilster

The 1995 Nebraska recruiting class was highlighted by a linebacker from Connecticut.

Ranked as the No. 1 linebacker prospect in the nation by SuperPrep, as well as a Parade, Schutt and Bluechip Illustrated All-American, Tony Ortiz was a perfect fit for an NU defense that thrived with fast, athletic linebackers.

Despite only playing two years of high school football, Ortiz was a star on both sides of the ball for Crosby High School in Waterbury, Connecticut. As a running back he amassed 3,005 rushing yards with 52 touchdowns. On defense he tallied 216 tackles, four interceptions, six fumble recoveries, 20 sacks and six pass breakups.

But what made him a hot commodity

in recruiting was his speed. He set state records in winning the 100-meter dash (10.53) and 110-meter hurdles (14.24) at the 1994 state track meet. He also won the six-state regional New England gold medals in the 100 and 110 hurdles.

Nationally ranked as a sprinter and hurdler, track and field was more his sport than football. "My favorite track athlete was Michael Johnson," Ortiz said. "When I was 17 years old, I was considered an alternate on one of his 4x100 teams."

Being from the Northeast, Penn State and Syracuse were the schools who made early contact. But after running a 4.3 40 at a camp, football offers flooded in from all over the country.

Nebraska was just coming off winning

a national championship and had recent success recruiting the Northeast, mostly in New Jersey with star defensive players like the Peter brothers (Christian and Jason). Nebraska rarely went into Connecticut to recruit a kid, the last one being Doug DuBose who starred at I-back in the mid-1980s.

For Ortiz, the name Nebraska didn't carry any more weight than other schools. "I wasn't an avid college football fan so I didn't watch it," Ortiz said. "I was a track guy. So, Nebraska, Penn State and Syracuse were all the same to me because I didn't know their history or tradition until the recruiting process started."

Ortiz's first official visit was to Clemson where he was hosted by Emory Smith, the

brother of Dallas Cowboys running back Emmitt Smith. Then it was off to Penn State where quarterback Kerry Collins was his host.

"I was being recruited as a running back so that is why I was shown around campus by offensive players," Ortiz said. "I was supposed to go to Michigan, but I didn't take it because after seeing Nebraska, it was a done deal for me."

Ortiz was part of a Husker recruiting class that included future stars like Ahman Green, Kris Brown, Terrell Farley and Scott Frost. All but Ortiz and Frost made an immediate impact on the 1995 championship team. Frost had to sit out a year per transfer rules.

"I didn't push the issue to play at running back because I wouldn't have played very much my freshman year," Ortiz said. "They were pretty set with Lawrence Phillips, Clinton Childs, Damon Benning and Ahman Green. But once I was set to play linebacker, I forgot all about the running back position."

Ortiz also had to put the idea of running track aside. He said it was mainly his choice to concentrate on football because he didn't think he could physically carry two sports.

The Huskers were loaded during Ortiz's time at NU from 1995 to 1999. Besides Farley, the linebacker position had all-conference caliber players like Jay Foreman, Jon Hesse, Eric Johnson, Julius Jackson and Jamel Williams.

"Coach (Tony) Samuel pulled me aside and told me if I wanted to be a good football player, I needed to do what Foreman did," said Ortiz, who redshirted his first year in



Ortiz and wife Stephanie have been married 21 years.

1995. "He was one year older than me, so everything he did I wanted to do. I modeled my work ethic and approach to the game with what Jay did. Terrell, Jamel and I were fairly close being the fastest linebackers on the team and when they graduated, I was probably the fastest."

The last two years Ortiz alternated with Brian Shaw at the strongside linebacker position. Those two proved to be an effective tandem as they were both 6-1 and 220 pounds but brought different skill sets.

"Our defense was better because of what Brian and I brought to the team," said Ortiz, who was a Blackshirt for three years, appearing in 44 games and starting 20. "We were different types of players; I was more of a cover/blitz guy against the pass and Brian was an in-the-box run-stopper. My thought process was whatever was best for the team, but the competitive side of me wanted all the reps."

NU was in national title contention every year except one with Ortiz on the team. That



Besides his profession working in mortgage technology, Ortiz founded Linebacker University in Frisco, Texas, where he works with youth players on up to college players.

season was 1998. It was Frank Solich's first year as head coach and Nebraska lost four games to finish No. 19 and No. 20.

"We knew it wasn't because of our caliber of play, we just had a lot of injuries and it was somewhat a rebuilding year," Ortiz said. "Guys were playing hurt every week, but all the games we lost were close."

As part of the 1999 senior class, Ortiz and his classmates wanted to make sure they didn't have another season like 1998.

"We only lost once; if there was a four-game playoff back then we would have won it," said Ortiz of the Huskers who finished Nos. 2 and 3 in the polls. "The 1999 team, for me, is the forgotten team because we had the potential to be so much more."

Ortiz had the potential to continue his playing career professionally. With his college degree in hand, he prepared for the NFL Draft. He didn't get drafted, but signed a free agent contract with the Dallas Cowboys. He bulked up to 235 pounds and felt he was at the top of his game, running a 4.4 40 at mini-camp.

Unfortunately, Ortiz got caught up in a numbers crunch and he didn't make a cut with the Cowboys. From there, he bounced around training camps of three teams – Tampa Bay, New England and Atlanta.

"In all the camps I went to I made it through all three cuts but then get released," he said. "There was something I wasn't bringing to the table and eventually you have to get over it and move on."

Ortiz went to NFL Europe and Canada

for a few years and also did some Arena and XFL-type leagues. In all, he tried his hand at professional football for a total of five years, getting credit with the NFL for one year.

Newly married and at the age of 25, Ortiz decided to enter the workforce. He got into the mortgage technology sector and currently works for Black Knight Inc. as a project and implementation manager.

week," said Ortiz, who has four kids of his own. "I train hour by hour in small groups and some one-on-one. Doing small groups have helped because I was getting exhausted and now I have a good balance between my main job and my training job."

Being a highly recruited athlete out of high school, his experience at Nebraska, and now as mentor to young players, Ortiz

looks at the current NIL and the transfer portal format in college football as something that needs to be changed.

"The NIL and the transfer portal can be great for kids, but they impact a team's depth," he said. "Players don't want to stay and develop for a few years before playing. The level of patience is no longer there."

"The NIL reminds me of that movie 'Blue Chips' where boosters are buying players to play at their school. A cap on NIL money would be best so that it doesn't get out of hand like it's starting to. When you are making more money than some professional athletes and you haven't even stepped on the field, there is something wrong with that. What is a scholarship worth at that point?"

Ortiz suggests giving a player 25% of the money from each NIL deal up

front and putting the rest in a Roth IRA that can revert to the player after earning a degree from his original university. "That way you can get the kid to stay for three to four years instead of them entering the transfer portal after one or two years," he said.

It's not a bad idea – fair to the player and best for the team.

1999 NEBRASKA

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University Division, Football

NEBRASKA	71
Notre Dame	42
Ohio State	31
Dayton	28
Texas	25

BRIAN SHAW
1998 Academic All-American
Senior • Linebacker

JOE WALKER
Junior • Rover

ERIC JOHNSON
Senior • Linebacker

TONY ORTIZ
Senior • Linebacker

In his final two years at Nebraska in 1998 and 1999, Ortiz, bottom right, split time with Brian Shaw of Deweese, Nebraska, top left, at strongside linebacker. Their different skill sets made for an effective combination.

But the 46-year-old Ortiz is still around the game of football. He created a business in 2015 called Linebacker University in Frisco, Texas, where he works year-round with kids from 5 years old to college age who want to improve their offensive and defensive skills.

"I typically train around 100 kids per

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Searching for Answers

Second-half Woes Hindering Husker Women

By Shawn Ekwall • Photos by Amarillo Mullen

Amy Williams knows her basketball team needs a strong push towards the finish line to qualify for a second straight NCAA tournament.

The Nebraska women – 14-10 overall and 6-7 in the Big Ten through the first half of February – find themselves squarely on the tournament bubble after some February highs and lows.

The lows were due to inconsistent second-half play. Nebraska built big, double-digit leads over Michigan State and Northwestern, but had to hold off late rallies to claim wins.

The second-half luck ran out against Illinois on Feb. 9. The Illini went on a 20-0 second-half run to erase a 10-point deficit

in a 72-64 win over the Huskers in Lincoln.

The loss will stain NU's tournament resume.

"I feel a little bit like we let one slip away," Williams said after the disappointing defeat.

Williams is searching for answers to the late meltdowns.

"Each game it's something different," Williams said. "Either turnovers haunt us, or missed layups. It's been a combination of things that we could point to."

"It's not the same thing you're trying to solve every time. We've got to figure out a way to close out quarters, close out halves and close out games."

Even in wins over the Spartans at home and Wildcats on the road, the Huskers

seemed to play tight late. Opponents are ratcheting up the pressure in the full court, causing Husker miscues and turnovers.

A 22-point lead entering the fourth quarter in Evanston, Illinois, seemed like a comfortable cushion until Northwestern put on a furious rally with 32 points in the final eight minutes. But NU held on.

In the win over Michigan State, Nebraska led by 18 at the half only to see the Spartans rally to almost pull the upset. Husker center Alexis Markowski said turnovers hurt, but was glad to get the win.

"Any win in the Big Ten is huge. It's a resume win and I'm proud that we battled to the end," she said. "I know I had a few turnovers in the second half. We need to work on cutting down on those."



Despite a knee injury, senior guard Sam Haiby reached double figures in six of seven games from mid-January to mid-February while also turning her attention to defense. "We just have to keep our foot on the gas on defense and hopefully that will propel our offense," she said.



Junior Isabelle Bourne has become a handful for opponents down low, averaging 11.5 points per game through mid-February. “Credit to our guards for their passes,” Bourne said. “They’re doing a great job getting me the ball in positions down low where I can finish.”

Markowski has teamed with junior Isabelle Bourne to give the Huskers a potent one-two punch in the paint. Bourne’s 11-point outing vs. the Fighting Illini was her fourth consecutive game reaching double figures.

Through the middle of the month, Bourne is averaging 11.5 points per game and 6.4 boards.

She is quick to credit her teammates.

“Credit to our guards for their passes,” Bourne said following the Michigan State win. “They’re doing a great job getting me the ball in positions down low where I can finish.”

Guard Sam Haiby, still working on getting her injured knee back to 100%, has heated up in February.

Haiby reached double figures in six of her past seven games dating back to a mid-January game against Ohio State. The senior is averaging 10.5 points per game

and has taken her defensive tenacity to a new level.

“All year long our defense has been pretty good for the most part,” Haiby said. “We’re trying to hold teams under 70. We just have to keep our foot on the gas on defense and hopefully that will propel our offense.”

Several Nebraska players reached milestones or received accolades during February.

Jaz Shelley surpassed the 1,000-point career scoring mark with her 12-point effort against Northwestern.

Markowski was named one of the 10 contenders for the Lisa Leslie Award, given to the nation’s top center.

Markowski’s play is certainly doing the talking. The sophomore is averaging 12.2 points and 9.7 rebounds per game.

Despite the individual accolades, Williams and her team would prefer a

strong finish to give them a chance to reach the tournament. Nebraska finishes with three of its final five games on the road, including a trip to Ann Arbor to face No. 12 Michigan and a rematch with Illinois.

Nebraska has won five straight just once this year. Quality wins are needed. The Huskers have their fair share (Maryland and Kansas) but will need more.

Five Big Ten teams currently are ranked in the top 15. Illinois is closing in on 20 wins. Nothing comes easy. Williams expects her team to get off the mat and battle.

“I expect them to compete,” Williams said following the Illinois loss. “That’s what we’re here for and what we do. This is a team that knows everything is not always easy and adversity will come. But we embrace hard things in our program. It’s something that defines character. And we’ll bring that toughness, grit and fight with us.”

Next Man Up

Tominaga, Youngsters Show Flashes in Expanded Roles



BIGELOW ON BASKETBALL

Opinion • By Jacob Bigelow

Photos By Reggie Ryder

Before its Jan. 10 home game against Illinois, Fred Hoiberg's Husker basketball team sat at 9-7 on the season. They had just won a gritty road game at Minnesota and the sweet aftertaste of victories over Creighton and

Iowa still lingered.

Things were looking up for Hoiberg's crew just past the midpoint of his fourth season in Lincoln. However, two games changed the trajectory of the season, and it was more than just the final score against Illinois and Penn State that did the damage.

The Huskers lost starting forward Juwan Gary to a shoulder injury in a home loss to Illinois. Then, starting guard Emmanuel Bandoumel was lost for the season to a knee injury suffered in a loss at Penn State.

To that point, Nebraska had won six of 10 games with a starting five that included Gary, Bandoumel, Sam Griesel and Derrick Walker. With those four veterans the team's toughness was evident. Nebraska was developing a defense-first, gritty team culture. It was succeeding against quality competition. Opposing coaches were taking notice.

While Griesel and Walker were the team's best all-around players, Bandoumel and Gary were becoming its heart and soul.



As two starters fell to injury, junior Keisei Tominaga raised his game to help the Huskers stay competitive. He's reached double figures a team high 15 times this season. "It's just fun to have a guy play with that much passion and energy," coach Fred Hoiberg said.



Walk-on Sam Hoiberg, the son of the head coach, was called into action after Emmanuel Bandoumel's season ending knee injury at Penn State on Jan. 21. "The thing I've been most pleased with Sam is just his poise in how he's gone out, and the moment hasn't been too big for him," coach Fred Hoiberg said.

They embodied the identity Hoiberg and his staff wanted to establish this season. The two were even awarded Blackshirts – the famed jerseys of the Husker football defenders – by Athletic Director Trev Alberts, a former Blackshirt himself, following the Creighton win in December.

Suddenly, they were gone for the season. It was time to embrace a new mentality: Next man up.

Enter Keisei Tominaga. The 6-foot-2 junior has made the most of his expanded role. He notched a career-high 30 points in Nebraska's win over Penn State later in February to register the third-highest-scoring output by a Husker in a Big Ten game. His five 3-pointers were the most a Husker has made in a game this season.

With opposing defenses lining up to stop Griesel and Walker, Hoiberg has done well to find offense elsewhere. Tominaga has seized his opportunity.

"Most of our plays are for Keisei, to get him going," said freshman guard Jamarques Lawrence, who has also started to shine in the vacuum left by Bandoumel and Gary. "When he's going, you see how that goes."

Tominaga, known to this point as a spot-up shooter, has shown he can do more. Crafty finishes at the rim have given the opposition headaches, and his cuts away from the ball have stood out – perhaps a credit to his background in the three-on-three game in which he was an Olympian for his home country of Japan.

"People label Keisei as a shooter, but his cutting off of Derrick, off of Griesel, is really impressive," Hoiberg said after the Penn State win.

He went on: "The passion that kid has. I'm never going to try and do anything to take that kid's passion away. He's so much fun to root for and coach just because of how much fun he has playing the game."

There is no doubt Tominaga is a fan favorite. Every made Tominaga shot, some of which come from absurd range, elicits a rousing reaction from the Pinnacle Bank Arena crowd.

And the raucous home crowd got no better than on Feb. 11 when Tominaga scored 22 points in an improbable come-from-behind win over Wisconsin when Nebraska erased a 17-point second half deficit and won 73-63 in overtime.

In his first two seasons at NU, Tominaga sometimes received criticism for showing too much emotion. That is no longer the case.

"It is infectious," Hoiberg said. "You see that when he hits those shots, when he gets to the end of the lane and hits those circus shots, you see the bench go crazy for him, you see his teammates out on the floor. It's just fun to have a guy play with that much passion and energy."

Tominaga is not the only emerging story.

On the flight back from NU's first game with Penn State, where Bandoumel was lost for the year, Hoiberg pulled his son, Sam, a walk-on guard, aside.

"You're the ninth guy now," Hoiberg told him. "We're gonna need you."

The younger Hoiberg did not expect to see the court during his redshirt freshman season in Lincoln. "I didn't know when I came here if I'd really ever have this opportunity to play," said the player who stands 6-feet and played his final two years of high school basketball at Lincoln Pius X.

"My goal was to be playing by my third year ... but since the injuries happened, it came earlier," he said. "Just being able to take advantage of it, it's really satisfying to see that come to fruition."

Hoiberg saw his first extended action in a January home loss to Northwestern. He finished with six points on 3-of-5 shooting, six rebounds (a team high) and an assist. Then, at Maryland, he went for 15 points on 6-of-8 shooting (3-of-3 from 3) in 26 minutes off the bench. Nebraska lost, but Hoiberg's performance was eye-opening and he was inserted into the starting lineup

against Illinois (another loss) and then saw action in crunch time in the home win over Penn State making crucial free throws down the stretch.

"I'm proud of him for the way he went out there," the elder Hoiberg said following the Northwestern game. "Any time you get your first significant minutes, there are generally a lot of nerves."

The coach even harkened back to his NBA playing days: "I remember my first minutes in the playoff series against the Bulls I threw the ball right to Scottie Pippen. The thing about Sam is he works. He's always in here, getting extra shots. He's a confident kid — they get that from their mother — and he just went out there and played and played hard and did a lot of really good things for us, including rebounding."

Other youngsters, too, are helping fill the void left by the lost veterans. They include true freshmen Denim Dawson and Lawrence. Both have shown flashes of what the coaching staff hopes they soon will become.

Lawrence, a 6-3 guard from New Jersey, was brought in to make shots, and the biggest of his young career came at the end of the Penn State win in Lincoln when he hit a 3-point dagger with 45 seconds to play.

Lawrence was the only Husker other than Tominaga to finish that game in double figures with 11 points. He also had nine rebounds. The head coach took notice.

"He makes the big shot at the end to kind of put it away and then makes the free throws," Hoiberg said. "I'm just so happy for that kid. How he approaches it every day, when he was out of the rotation early, he kept coming in and getting work, and he just made huge play after huge play."

So far, scoring is a bonus for Dawson. The 6-6 redshirt freshman guard from California probably is the closest player Nebraska has to the defensive-minded Gary in terms of body build, athleticism and tenacity. Dawson has given coaches – and fans – some highlight-reel plays on both ends.

So, as the Huskers, 12-14 and 5-10 in the Big Ten as of Feb. 13, head down the home stretch of a season that was to be a rebirth, it is now Tominaga, Hoiberg, Lawrence and Dawson who are mainstays in a rebirth of the rebirth.

It's a tough task no doubt for the elder Hoiberg and his staff who are left to wonder, along with fans, what could have been with a fully healthy roster.

HUSKER TRIVIA

Presented by



1. How many first-team All-American running backs has NU had in its history?
2. What were the only two years when a Bob Devaney-coached team didn't go to a bowl game?
3. What NU player has the longest run from scrimmage?
4. Who has the record for most passing attempts in a game without an interception?
5. Which Husker has the most punts in a game and how many?
6. Who was the longest acting athletic director in NU history?
7. What number is the only football jersey number to be retired twice?
8. Nebraska has played in 53 bowl games. After the Orange Bowl (17 appearances), which bowl has NU gone to the most?
9. What is the most safeties NU has recorded in a season?
10. What was the quickest score in a game by a Husker football team?



Who am I?

I was an All-American
linebacker and two-time
all-conference player.

- ANSWERS
- 1) Four (Mike Rozier, Bobby Reynolds, Jarvis Redwine, Jeff Kinney)
 - 2) 1967 & 1968
 - 3) 95 yards (Eric Crouch 2001)
 - 4) Zac Taylor (55 vs. Iowa State, 2005)
 - 5) Paul Dobson (1918, 18 Punts)
 - 6) Bob Devaney (1967-1992)
 - 7) No. 75
 - 8) Fiesta (6)
 - 9) 3 (1989 & 1999)
 - 10) 7 seconds (Fumble return by Terrell Farley vs. Texas Tech, 1996)
- WHO AM I?
Carlos Polk (2000)



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