

THE ORIGINAL MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO NEBRASKA ATHLETICS

# HUSKERS

ILLUSTRATED

APRIL 2023

VOLUME 42 | NO. 1 | \$6.95

## WINNING TIME

**Matt Rhule Is Raising the Bar for  
the Huskers This Spring**

# N

# CONTENTS

APRIL 2023 \* VOLUME 42 \* NO. 11

## 05

### MIC DROP

BY THAD LIVINGSTON

One of the highlights so far of spring football under coach Matt Rhule are the press conferences, where coaches and players actually provide good information and seem happy to do it..

## 20

### BACK TO HER ROOTS

BY STEVE BEIDECK

Coming out of high school in 2020, Kalynn Meyer was one of the top volleyball players in the country. Like her father, she was also a top track and field athlete. After giving volleyball a try, she's now focused on throwing the shot and discus.

## 32

### ONE TOUGH HOMBRE

BY SHANE G. GILSTER

There haven't been many Husker scholarship football players from Garden County in western Nebraska, but Randall Jobman is one, and this cowboy was as tough as they come.

## 16

### FAST LEARNER

BY RICHARD WALKER

Bryce McGowens came to Nebraska as a skinny kid from South Carolina. He left a year later, 25 pounds heavier and just completed his first season in the NBA.

## 26

### FUN IN THE SAND

BY LINCOLN ARNEAL

Winning championships in beach volleyball is not the main priority for Husker volleyball players, but playing in the sand and doing well has its benefits for the indoor season.

## 38

### FULLBACK PROTOTYPE

BY SHANE G. GILSTER

Lance Lewis came to Nebraska from Scott City, Kansas, and almost immediately received one of the best compliments from strength and conditioning coach Boyd Epley a Husker could receive.



### ON THE COVER

NU Football coach Matt Rhule is working to build the Huskers' confidence.

*The next Huskers Illustrated edition will mail in late May.*

## More Than a Magazine

To subscribe go to [huskersillustrated.com/subscribe](https://huskersillustrated.com/subscribe) or call 800-524-9527

Huskers Illustrated is published by:

**SK Publishing LLC**, 111 S. 108th Ave., Omaha, NE 68154.

Periodicals postage paid at Omaha, NE, and additional mailing offices.

Publisher: **JEFF BUNDY** | [jbundy@huskersillustrated.com](mailto:jbundy@huskersillustrated.com)

Lead Designer: **HANNAH LODE**

Copy Editor/Proofreader: **MARILEE MAGIERA**

Photographer: **JEFFREY Z. CARNEY**

Photographer: **HAYDEN ROONEY**

Photographer: **REGGIE RYDER**

Contributing Writer: **LINCOLN ARNEAL**

Contributing Writer: **STEVE BEIDECK**

Contributing Writer: **SHAWN EKWALL**

Contributing Writer: **SHANE G. GILSTER**

Contributing Writer: **THAD LIVINGSTON**

Contributing Writer: **RICHARD WALKER**

ADVERTISING: **Solo Tree Media** | [Shane G. Gilster at 402-742-0125 or shaneg@huskersillustrated.com](mailto:Shane G. Gilster at 402-742-0125 or shaneg@huskersillustrated.com)



### PRINT | Huskers Illustrated Magazine

Huskers Illustrated Magazine, the original publication dedicated to Nebraska Athletics, is in its 42nd year of publication with the best Husker coverage.

### INTERNET | [HuskersIllustrated.com](https://HuskersIllustrated.com)

Follow Nebraska 24 hours a day at [huskersillustrated.com](https://huskersillustrated.com)

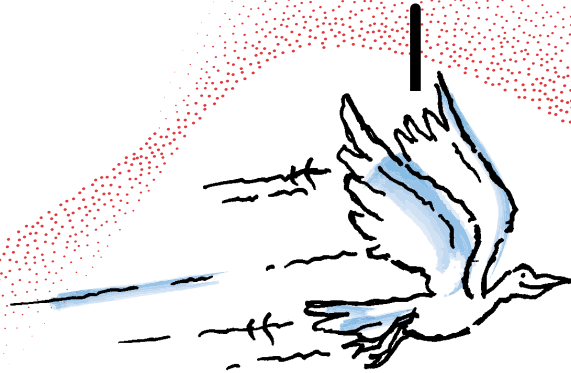
### SOCIAL MEDIA | Facebook, Twitter & YouTube

Join the thousands of other Husker fans who follow Huskers Illustrated online. Follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/huskersillustratedfan](https://facebook.com/huskersillustratedfan) or on Twitter at [twitter.com/hillustrated](https://twitter.com/hillustrated).

[facebook](https://facebook.com/huskersillustratedfan) [twitter](https://twitter.com/hillustrated) [YouTube](https://youtube.com/huskersillustrated)

*Huskers Illustrated (USPS 658-450 ISSN 0279-3474) is published monthly January, February, March, April, May, August, September, October, November and December and bi-monthly June/July by SK Publishing LLC, 111 S. 108th Ave., Omaha, NE 68154. Subscriptions: \$64.95 per year. Postmaster: Send address changes to Huskers Illustrated, SK Publishing LLC, 111 S. 108th Ave., Omaha, NE 68154.*

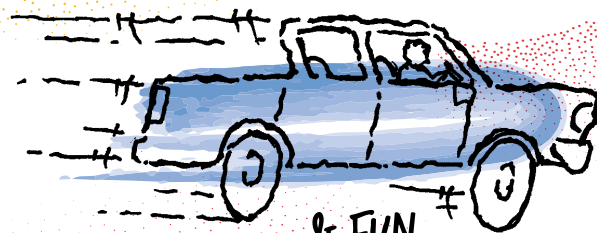
# 1993



FUNDING



FORTUNE



& FUN

# 2023



[nelottery.com](http://nelottery.com)

Must be 19.  
Free problem gambling help for Nebraskans  
at [problemgambling.nebraska.gov](http://problemgambling.nebraska.gov).



## Rhule Showing Up Everywhere and Pushing All the Right Buttons

I recently attended the Jet Award Gala in Omaha where TCU's Derius Davis picked up his trophy for being named the best return specialist in college football in 2023.

The event, at Baxter Arena, was attended by Nebraska football royalty: Johnny Rodgers, of course, joined by fellow Heisman winners Mike Rozier and Eric Crouch, Outland and Lombardi awards-winner Rich Glover; and Johnny Unitas award-winner Tommie Frazier. Other Husker greats I could pick out among the large crowd were Tony Veland, Jerry Murtaugh, Damon Benning and Ricky Simmons. I'm sure I missed many others.

Rodgers was presented the Legacy Award, recognizing him for winning the 38th Heisman Trophy 50 years ago. Glover received a special Legacy Award, honoring him for all of his accomplishments at Nebraska and placing third in the Heisman ballot as a middle guard the same year Rodgers won it.

Glover was gracious in accepting his award, and shared a touching memory of attending the Heisman ceremony in 1972 and then taking Rodgers back to his mother's home in New Jersey where they had supper with the Glover family.

Modern-day Huskers attended too, namely new coach Matt Rhule – yes, he's everywhere, and continues to say and do all the right things. He's at banquets – the Outland, the Rimington and now the Jet. He's on social media, sometimes even supporting Lincoln restaurants. He even attended the announcement of added flights out of the Lincoln airport to Texas cities – all the better to recruit the state.

Rhule and his players also were front and center – thanks to an old contact from his days in Philadelphia at Temple – at a packed WWE "Friday Night SmackDown" professional wrestling event at Pinnacle Bank Arena.

There's nothing like seeing the head coach chanting "Go Big Red" and throwing the bones from ringside on national television. Great stuff – particularly if you are a potential recruit watching at

home. What young man wouldn't want to play for this guy?

After a practice, Rhule spoke about the importance of Frank Solich attending the spring game on April 22.

"Coach Solich coming to the first spring game hopefully is a tremendous unifying event for everybody," he told the crowd.

Rhule commented on Tom Osborne addressing the attendees at NU's annual coaches clinic: "It was gold. It was absolute gold."

Rhule also showed that he knows the importance of connecting with high school coaches.

"I tell every high school coach you can come to practice any time you want," Rhule said. "We want to be a place that people come to. We want to be a destination."

Rhule will open practices to any high school coach who wants to attend.

If the number of coaches who attended the coaches clinic is any indication – nearly 400 from points across the country – Husker

practices in the fall might have crowded sidelines.

You can read more on Rhule's new ... well ... rules, at least as they relate to providing information to fans, in Thad Livingston's excellent column in this edition that begins on Page 5.

\*\*\*

Also in this edition you are updated

on the 1974 volleyball team's efforts to have some members recognized as letter-winners. Writer Lincoln Arneal presented the case for the team in the February issue. Now he has NU's response, beginning on Page 12.

\*\*\*

We have an update (Page 16) on former Husker hoops star Bryce McGowens, who spent all of one year as a Husker before moving onto the NBA. The fast track paid off, literally, for McGowens, who is still only 20 years old. Let's just say McGowens is bigger, stronger – and much richer – than when he arrived as a freshman at NU just two seasons ago.

\*\*\*

Speaking of basketball, the NU women received a double dose of good news this month and will have two players from Down Under on next season's roster. The announced return for a fifth year by star guard Jaz Shelley was much welcomed by coach Amy Williams, who then announced the pending arrival of Australian National Program member Jessica Petrie, a 6-foot-2 power forward, who looks to have lots of tools to help the Huskers next season. Read about all the good news from Australia starting on Page 42.



THERE WERE LOTS OF HUSKER HEISMANS IN THE HOUSE AT THE JET AWARD GALA IN OMAHA ON APRIL 13 AT BAXTER ARENA. FROM LEFT, JOHNNY RODGERS (1972), MIKE ROZIER (1983) AND ERIC CROUCH (2001).



RICKY SIMMONS, A SPLIT END FROM THE GREAT HUSKER TEAMS OF 1982 AND 1983, AND THE LEGENDARY RICH GLOVER, NU'S OUTLAND TROPHY-WINNING MIDDLE GUARD IN 1972, POSE AT THE JET AWARD GALA.



SPECIAL TEAMS COACH ED FOLEY WORKS WITH VICTOR JONES, NO. 88, KOBY BRETZ, NO. 26, AND LONG-SNAPPER MARCO ORTIZ, NO. 45.

# Talking Heads

Suddenly, Following Husker Football Is Fun Again – Just Watch a Press Conference

*Opinion by Thad Livingston  
Photos by Jeffrey Z. Carney*

The football coach press conference is rife with potential friction. In theory, they exist so coaches can distribute information to the media all at once and then get on with their day. Eventually they can become a painful exercise when a perhaps stunted coach, feeling the squeeze of public pressure, is forced out of his comfort zone by reporters chasing their own narratives. What could go wrong?

In the worst scenarios the media and fans seemingly care more about the latest happenings than the head coaches do, leaving storylines to take on lives of their own. Picture Bo Pelini or Scott Frost, who viewed participation in the news cycle as an occasional favor rather than part of the job description. They painted the media, which (like it or not) represents the fan base, as the enemy.

My how things have changed.

Matt Rhule and his assistant coaches have brought a fresh perspective to Husker press conferences. They actually use the

microphone to communicate with the fans! What's more, they appear to enjoy the opportunity. It's still the honeymoon, but so far these guys all seem happy to quench fans' healthy thirst for information.

Perhaps that's just Rhule's pedigree. He was not born with a silver spoon. Coaching at Temple makes you appreciate coaching at Baylor, to say nothing of coaching at Nebraska.

Rhule and Co. have been at enough tough places to develop a fans-as-stockholders perspective. Rhule understands that 90,000 butts in seats at every home game provides him and the university with a lot of power, money and a coveted seat at a posh Big Ten table. Fans are a pain in the fanny sometimes, but they are not the enemy.

They are the engine that enabled the old NU to run on a bored-out eight cylinders – recruit nationwide, develop players' bodies and minds and build NU into a national brand. It's not the fans' fault that recent coaches have been driving the program as if it

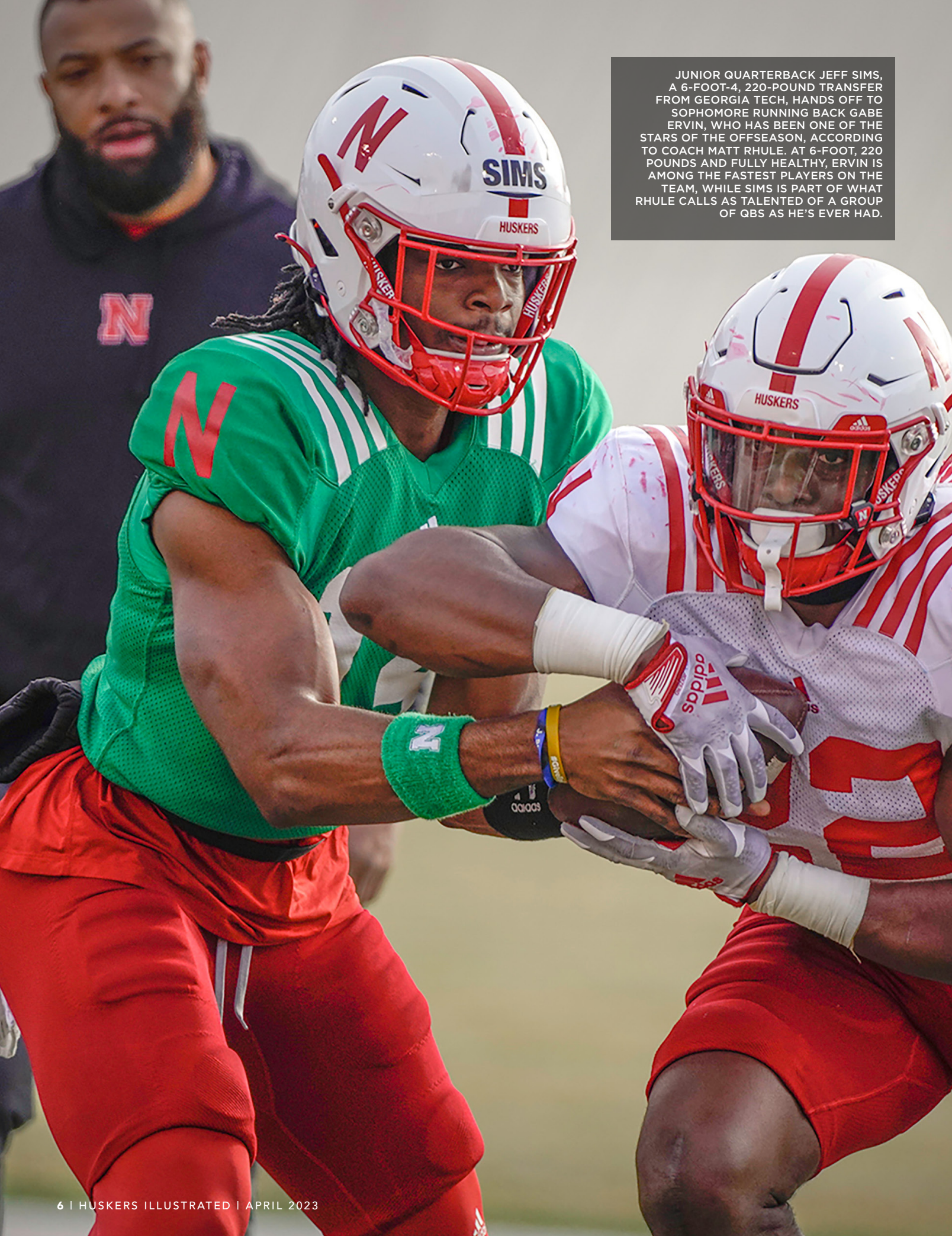
were a Ford Fiesta. Scared to rev the Husker engine? Try coaching at Northwestern. Futility in the Big Ten West is an indictment of recent Huskers coaches' reluctance to maximize all of their advantages.

Reluctance seems to have ended with Rhule. He is putting the pedal to the metal by using all of NU's resources to attract players and train them to win.

Buckle your seatbelts.

Part of keeping the tank full is allowing shareholders to keep up with all the features. Hence, Rhule actually prepares for press conferences and even seemingly encourages his charges to take the mic, sending to the podium a parade of enlightening players like the unusually mature Brian Buschini, the loquacious Chief Borders and thoughtful MJ Sherman – the latter two of whom have played nary a down in Husker red.

Rhule's policy of glasnost has been a hit. NU even produced a roundtable conversation with Rhule, Tom Osborne and Trev Alberts, an absorbing 48 minutes



JUNIOR QUARTERBACK JEFF SIMS, A 6-FOOT-4, 220-POUND TRANSFER FROM GEORGIA TECH, HANDS OFF TO SOPHOMORE RUNNING BACK GABE ERVIN, WHO HAS BEEN ONE OF THE STARS OF THE OFFSEASON, ACCORDING TO COACH MATT RHULE. AT 6-FOOT, 220 POUNDS AND FULLY HEALTHY, ERVIN IS AMONG THE FASTEST PLAYERS ON THE TEAM, WHILE SIMS IS PART OF WHAT RHULE CALLS AS TALENTED OF A GROUP OF QBs AS HE'S EVER HAD.

that allowed longtime followers to realize some parallels between the Osborne and Rhule philosophies. The powers-that-be clearly believe they have someone in the house worthy of at least sharing the porch with Osborne.

One big difference between the two men is wins at Nebraska. Osborne racked up 255. If Rhule lays an egg like his predecessor, who initially also brought a bag full of positives to Lincoln, the warm and fuzzy press conferences could turn as dicey as a Carolina ice storm.

Until then, we know for sure Nebraska will win the Red-White Spring Game on April 22 – expect them to tackle this time, a smart coaching move! NU fans should get a glimpse of a program, for the first time in years, moving forward instead of backward.

So while the good vibes are flowing and everyone is more than happy to talk, here are some spring press conference highlights – excuse us if we read between the lines a bit – in advance of the spring game.

## BETTER THAN EXPECTED?

As much as the media took aim at Frost's operation, and as much as fans – this magazine included – have reveled in Rhule's roster rebuild, dare we say the current coaches seem rather impressed with

the players left from the Frost fiasco. Cynics might say pumping player egos is just a confidence-building maneuver, but there is an unmistakable air of surprise in the new coaches' words, almost as if they looked at NU's recent win-loss records and expected to inherit a bunch of frail NAIA-level guys in droopy practice pants.

For instance, what should we make of this quote? "There are a lot of things that I have to go back and watch but that is as talented of a quarterback room as I have ever been a part of, so it was good to see those guys out there." That's a Rhule quote on his group of quarterbacks, five of whom have started games, and only one of whom is new to the program, after the first spring practice.

Or this: "One of the things I noticed right when I first got here, you got a lot of guys who are big, long, fast, athletic." That's a quote from defensive coordinator Tony White.

Another example: "I'm not coming out of three days thinking, 'Oh crap this isn't what I thought it was going to be.' It's even higher than I thought it would possibly be, from just what we have a chance to do here." That's offensive coordinator Marcus Satterfield after the team's third practice.

And then there is this: "I've never had this many big human beings before. And especially this many tight ends and fullback-types." That's Satterfield again. Remember, Satterfield is fresh from a stint at an SEC program.



PART OF A STRONG TIGHT END CORPS, THOMAS FIDONE, A 6-FOOT-6, 235-POUND SOPHOMORE, IS STILL BEING LIMITED IN WORKOUTS AFTER BATTLING BACK FROM TWO KNEE INJURIES. "HE'S MAD," SAID RHULE ABOUT NOT BEING TURNED LOOSE. "THAT'S WHAT I LIKE ABOUT HIM."



# A SPRING IN THEIR STEP

The Nebraska football team gets a morning practice started in the Hawks Championship Center. After a winter of conditioning, the team got spring drills underway on March 20 and will cap spring workouts with the Red-White Spring game on April 22 at Memorial Stadium.

BE BEAT WON'T BE BEAT.

40

ATHLETIC MEDICINE

He went on: “We have the body-types. It’s what I’ve always wanted to have in an offense. I’ve never had this many tight ends, but we want to be in ‘13 personnel’ at times, where you have a tight end who’s maybe a bigger guy that puts his hand down and is blocking ... and you have another tight end who might be a little bit shorter that’s playing more the fullback type. And then you have another tight end who might be just a little bit undersized, and he’s playing in the slot, but they’re all tight ends and they’re all having to be counted as tight ends. So, as many as we can get out there at once is awesome for me.”

Who might those players be in such a package?

Here is a guess: Georgia transfer Arik Gilbert, at 6-foot-6 and somewhere between 270-280 pounds, blocking; Thomas Fidone (6-6, 235) at fullback; and Janiran Bonner (listed at 6-3, 200) in the slot. For the record, that’s the top tight end in the nation in the 2020 recruiting class (Gilbert), the top tight end in the nation in the 2021 recruiting class (Fidone) and a consensus four-star receiver (Bonner) who is growing into a tight end while keeping his speed.

“He’s just super athletic,” Satterfield said of Bonner, who is pushing 217 pounds now and has a target weight of 222. “He will be a really good piece for us. With his

explosiveness and continuing to shape his body the right way to get to where he can play that position, I think he will be a really good piece.”

Imagine being an opposing linebacker when those three line up. Maybe that linebacker is pretty smart and thinks the big guy (Gilbert) is just gonna block. Good luck. Gilbert might just run past him. The big dude runs like a receiver.

“A freak man,” Satterfield said under query by the media. “He’s super gifted ... it’s mind-boggling to be that big and be able to move his body like he does.”

With speed still?

Satterfield chuckled and then answered as if a bit bewildered: “Pretty co ... it’s ... it’s good.”

Rhule even had a hint of incredulity in his voice when talking about the stable of running backs. He said he didn’t know what other Big Ten teams had at the position, but ...

But what? He didn’t finish the sentence. Let’s be conservative and guess he was going to end it with, “I bet our group is right up with the best,” or maybe, “I’d be surprised if there are many better than ours.”

We don’t have to speculate to know what Rhule thinks. He’s been effusive in his praise of the RB stable – all of whom he inherited. Frost guys.

“Gabe Ervin’s probably been one of the stars of the offseason,” Rhule said. “He’s one of the fastest guys on the team at 221 pounds, 222 pounds. He can hopefully be that battering ram to put games away.”

The group also has, in no particular order, Ajay Allen, Rahmir Johnson, Emmett Johnson and last season’s leading rusher with just fewer than 1,000 yards, Anthony Grant. All have been singled out for good work this spring.

This is sounding pretty good, right?

## BIG GUYS

What about the big guys, the offensive and defensive lines?

This is where things get real. Coaches know it. Fans know it. And Rhule knows a press conference can be used to send players a message and even change a narrative.

How is this for a quote?:

“That offensive line is as talented (of a line) as I’ve ever been around in college football, in terms of as a head coach, but are they going to believe it? Are they going to put it together?”

He singled out Bryce Benhart, the 6-9, 315-pound junior tackle and target of fans’ ire parts of the last two seasons. He called Benhart an NFL player. “There is no doubt to me about that.

“I think those guys ... probably a lot of them have been beat down. The narrative has been, ‘The O-line’s terrible, the O-line’s terrible.’ They hear that a lot, so I think Bryce, like all those guys on the offensive line, just has to play with great confidence.”

Rhule’s right. The offensive line has been beat down. There is nothing wrong with reaching for every tool in the tool box to fix it. After all, on paper, the offensive line does look good. Take Benhart. He was one of the top O-linemen in the country and a decorated wrestler coming out of high school.

A disjointed offensive scheme and suspect situational play-calling have an unseen effect – at least to fans – on players’ psyches. The malaise brought on by a slumping culture



YOUNGSTERS ON THE OFFENSIVE LINE HAVE MADE NOTABLE PROGRESS. REDSHIRT FRESHMAN JUSTIN EVANS-JENKINS, LEFT, AT 6-FOOT-1 AND 290 POUNDS, SPENT THE SPRING WORKING AT CENTER AND DREW STRONG REVIEWS. HERE HE DRILLS WITH KEEGAN MENNING, A 6-3, 325-POUND SOPHOMORE.

adds more weight. Rhule has engineered culture flips before, and he's adept at putting his players in position to succeed.

That's what he meant by this vague mention: "I think with what we're doing, the way we're playing, it's going to turn Bryce loose."

Adding some proven players is also a good antidote. Arizona State transfer Ben Scott is said to have taken over the center position as if he were already a Nebraska veteran. There are only 12 linemen available this spring – not good – but they include Nouredin Nouili, suspended all of last year, and the massive Teddy Prochazka, who missed most of last season with a knee injury. Youngster Justin Evans-Jenkins, who at 6-1 and 290 pounds, is getting good work behind Scott, who has had minor injury issues. Also among the group is rookie Gunnar Gottula, already enrolled and impressive for a kid not even measured yet for his high school prom tux.

As of this writing, Rhule, a professed line-play connoisseur, has saved his most effusive praise – save for Benhart – for some walk-ons: Dylan Parott a 6-5, 340-pound redshirt freshman from North Scott High in Iowa; Joey Mancino, a 6-3, 280-pound sophomore from Holmdel, New Jersey; Keegan Menning, a 6-5, 325-pound sophomore from Fremont High; and Ezra Miller, a 6-6, 310-pound junior out of Iowa's Ridge View High.

"I think we have three to four great walk-on offensive linemen," Rhule said. Any and all, at some point, could play, he said.

Rhule loves this because the thriving walk-on scenario is exactly what he is preaching. Everybody gets work. Everybody gets a chance to get better. The fact they were all in the program before he and his crew got to NU is not a black mark. They are gifts left by Frost. Here is what Rhule said about one of them:

"My guy from Jersey, Mancino, is fantastic, is a great dude and can play!"

Here's betting that was the first time Mancino has had his name mentioned in a press conference. Not a bad debut.

The defensive front has some dudes, but does it have enough?

No. Not right now.

And if Nebraska had 12 future NFL guys on the defensive front, one gets the feeling defensive line coach Terrance Knighton would still want more.

"Depth is always good for D-linemen," Knighton said. "We like to rotate a lot." All teams want to go at least two-deep up front on defense.

But finding that many quality D-linemen is difficult. There are only so many young men on earth who fit the profile, and many of the best ones play in the SEC – one of the main reasons that conference dominates college football.

We "want dynamic guys who can get off the ball and threaten offensive lineman right away," Knighton said.

The best news here is that Knighton – a former NFL defensive lineman himself – knows what he wants. And NU is not bereft of this caliber of player.

A slimmed-down and more mobile Nash Hutmacher (6-4, 330) is leading the way this spring along with Stephon Wynn (6-3, 305), the former Alabama transfer. Ru'Quan Buckley (6-6, 290) is getting a fresh start under Knighton, and Texas A&M transfer Elijah Jeudy (6-3, 300), while still young, has "a great skill set" and "can line up anywhere," according to Knighton.

The most veteran of the bunch is junior Ty Robinson (6-6, 310) who is sidelined this spring, as is the promising but injury-plagued Blaise Gunnerson (6-6, 250) who is growing into a hands-down lineman.

There are freshmen coming in, but counting on freshmen at this position is a fool's errand. Knighton has dipped into the

offensive ranks this spring to find players – namely sophomore AJ Rollins (6-6, 220), a tight end who Knighton believes has innate ability to play defense.

"Naturally he does it well," Knighton said. "He's a smart guy, so he'll pick up on it quick."

What does Rhule think? "I personally think he has a real future there (on the defensive line)."

Spring is way too early for any position-by-position breakdowns. Receivers, linebackers and defensive backs – there are 27 DBs on the roster! – will have all received the press conference treatment by the time this is read, and new names will surface, or already have – DBs Malcolm Hartzog and Omar Brown; linebackers Jimari Butler and John Bullock; and Virginia transfer receiver Billy Kemp, to name a few.

It will all start again in the fall. Some players now on the roster will be gone by then. Some new players will certainly arrive through the portal this summer. It will be fun to learn more about the new faces – as always. Savvy watchers will look for signs of progress Rhule has made in flipping the culture and getting his players in position to perform and build confidence.

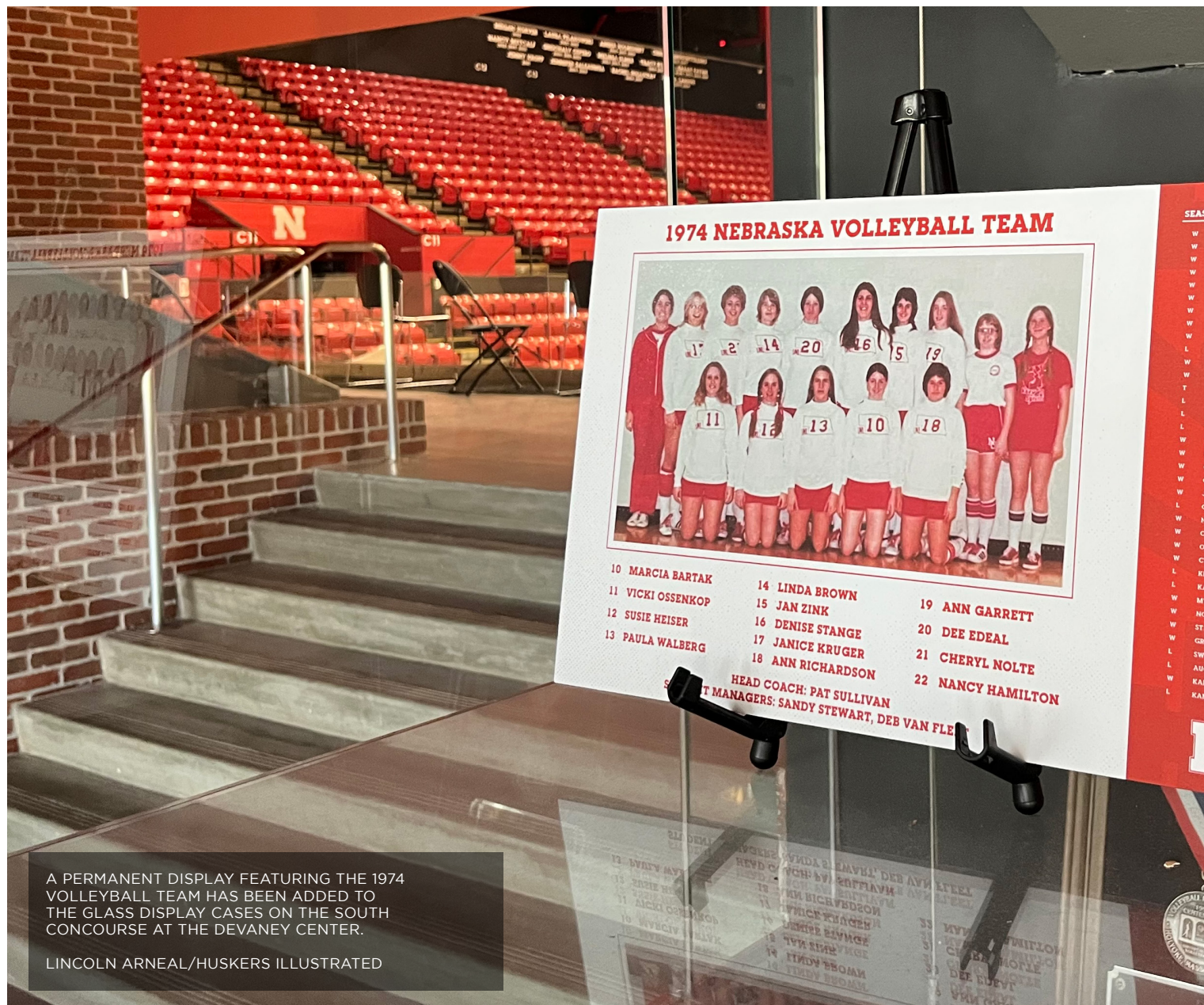
By late August, winning will be the only measure of success.

Rhule is aware.

"We're not here to try hard," he said in front of the newspaper writers, bloggers and TV cameras – all thriving on his openness. "We're not here to lose but thank the fans. We're here to win."



RHULE GETS DOWN IN THE TRENCHES AT PRACTICE WITH NOUREDIN NOUILI, NO. 63, AND DYLAN PARROTT, NO. 61.



A PERMANENT DISPLAY FEATURING THE 1974 VOLLEYBALL TEAM HAS BEEN ADDED TO THE GLASS DISPLAY CASES ON THE SOUTH CONCOURSE AT THE DEVANEY CENTER.

LINCOLN ARNEAL/HUSKERS ILLUSTRATED

# When Letter-Winners Aren't Letter-Winners

Athletic Department Will Honor  
1974 Volleyball Team's Impact

*By Lincoln Arneal*

# SEASON RECORD: 25-10-1

PERU STATE  
JFK COLLEGE  
CIRIGHTON  
CONCORDIA  
MIDLAND  
JFK COLLEGE  
NEBRASKA WESLEYAN  
WAYNE STATE  
OMAHA  
CHADRON STATE  
NE NEBRASKA TECH  
MISSOURI  
DRAKE  
SW MISSOURI STATE  
KANSAS  
OMAHA  
MIDLAND  
KEARNEY STATE  
CONCORDIA  
CIRIGHTON  
JFK COLLEGE  
OMAHA  
NE NEBRASKA TECH  
CHADRON STATE  
OMAHA  
CHADRON STATE  
KEARNEY STATE  
KANSAS  
MARTY  
NORTH DAKOTA STATE  
CATHERINE  
ACELAND  
MISSOURI STATE  
OSBEURG  
KANSAS STATE  
KANSAS

N

When the Casper, Wyoming, recreational league volleyball season started for Ann (Garrett) Zespy last season, she received some bad news.

Her intramural team was being relegated down a section. That didn't, however, deter the team of sexagenarians from playing mostly younger teams.

"Last year, we got moved down one more section because we're all older," Zespy said. "I said, 'Well, if I'm upright, yeah, I'd like to still play if you still want me.' It's a lot of fun."

Zespy's volleyball career began at Lewiston Consolidated High School in Wyoming before she played at Nebraska for three years. She was a junior outside hitter on the 1974 Nebraska volleyball team, the first team to play as part of the NU Athletic Department and receive scholarships.

Her Husker career ended after her junior season when she left Nebraska to attend a radiology program in Omaha. She said a chemistry class stood between her and a job as a medical technician, but she decided to wrap up her playing days and enter the real world.

"I knew I wasn't going to do any more actual college, and I just needed to find a career," Zespy said.

After finishing the hospital-based program in Omaha, Zespy eventually settled in Casper to build her career and family.

Because her career ended in 1974, Zespy and three seniors on that team – Cheryl (Nolte) Henry, Vicki (Ossenkop) Highstreet and Denise Stange – weren't recognized as an official part of the Nebraska volleyball program.

The 1974 team was the first volleyball team to be supervised by the athletic department after Title IX moved women's athletics from

the physical education department. It also awarded scholarships for the first time to six players: Highstreet, Henry, Stange, juniors Laury (Harmon) Riley and Linda (Brown) Dutton and sophomore Susie Heiser.

Previously the athletic department recognized the 1975-76 academic year as the first year of the modern history of women's athletics at Nebraska. The only difference between the two years was an increased budget (\$60,000 to \$132,000) and the hiring of Aleen Swofford as assistant athletic director to directly oversee women's athletics and Jay Davis, a sports information director, who helped keep official records of the results of every match.

Zespy said she is honored to be part of the illustrious history of Nebraska volleyball. Even though she's lived more than half her life in Wyoming, she will always consider herself a Husker.

"History has to begin somewhere, and 1974 was the real beginning of what volleyball is today in Nebraska," she said. "I'm very proud to say that I was a part of the team that got it started. It would mean the world to me to be noted as a part of the official history of the Nebraska volleyball program."

Huskies Illustrated provided the NU Athletic Department in late January with the complete schedule and newspaper clippings from the 1974 season, along with other contemporary articles stating volleyball was supervised by then-Athletic Director Bob Devaney.

On March 22, the three seniors and Zespy received an email from Marquita Armstead, NU's executive associate athletic director and senior woman administrator. She wrote that they would not be recognized as letter-winners since the athletic department does not plan to change its records



SANDY STEWART, CHERYL (NOLTE) HENRY, VICKI (OSSENKOP) HIGHSTREET AND MARSHA RUPERT, MEMBERS OF BOTH THE 1974 AND 1975 NU VOLLEYBALL TEAMS, WERE AMONG THOSE HONORED AT THE DEVANEY CENTER DURING THE NEBRASKA-MARYLAND MATCH IN OCTOBER.

NU COMMUNICATIONS

retroactively despite the new information about the 1974 team.

“After much internal discussion and consideration of the historical records of women’s athletics at the University of Nebraska, as well as the historical records of letter-winners at the University of Nebraska dating back to 1890, we remain firm in our stance of the 1975-76 academic year being the first year that letters were issued to student-athletes participating in women’s intercollegiate athletics at the University of Nebraska,” Armstead wrote.

Despite the lack of official recognition, Armstead said the athletic department wanted to honor their impact on the beginning of NU volleyball by offering the former student-athletes the benefits of the N Club, Nebraska Athletics’ letter-winner alumni group. They will be allowed into a club area for football games, admission into Olympic sporting events, the ability to purchase a letter-winners plaque and receive invites to other N Club events.

In addition, Nebraska will add a permanent display of the 1974 team photo with roster and results to the public glass display cases on the south concourse at the Devaney Center, which also houses Olympic jerseys from former players and memorabilia from the Huskers’ foreign trips.

The athletic department didn’t contact any of the seniors on the 1974 team before issuing the email. Armstead declined an interview request to explain the decision, and an NU spokesperson said “the athletic department and volleyball program do not wish to do any interviews on this subject moving forward.”

Members of the 1974 team followed up seeking the rationale for the decision to give them the benefits of a letter-winner, but without official recognition.

Armstead responded on April 11, writing the topic has been discussed several times internally over the years and that they would not be changing the current status of recognizing letter-winners for

women’s athletics in 1975. She added that the late Barb Hibner, the long-time senior woman administrator who joined the athletic department in 1978, said the 1974 participants were not awarded letter awards.

The athletic department’s explanation left some members of the 1974 team perplexed by the decision, even with complete results, historical records showing the oversight of the athletic department of women’s sports and proof of awarding of scholarships.

Despite not receiving official recognition, Highstreet is ready for someone else to carry the torch, saying the fight has worn her out. For many years, she worked at the university and led the charge to include that first team in the annals. Highstreet talked to university and athletic department employees behind the scenes trying to gain recognition for the 1974 team.

“It’s a legacy thing for us,” she said. “We’re pretty proud of the fact that we were the first letter-winner class, but nowhere does it say that besides in our heads.”

# N

# 1974 Nebraska Volleyball SCHEDULE

Date .....	Opponent.....	Location .....	Result .....	Score .....	Record .....
9/25 .....	Peru State .....	Mabel Lee .....	W .....	15-3, 15-7 .....	1-0
9/28 .....	JFK College A.....	Mabel Lee .....	W .....	15-9, 10-15, 15-9.....	2-0
10/2/74 .....	Creighton.....	Mabel Lee .....	W .....	15-8, 15-6.....	3-0
10/2/74 .....	Concordia.....	Mabel Lee .....	W .....	15-0, 15-5.....	4-0
10/5/74 .....	Midland.....	Mabel Lee .....	W .....	15-5, 15-8.....	5-0
10/5/74 .....	JFK College .....	Mabel Lee .....	W .....	15-8, 17-15.....	6-0
10/9/74 .....	Nebraska Wesleyan .....	Mabel Lee .....	W .....	15-2, 15-8.....	7-0
10/9/74 .....	Wayne State College .....	Mabel Lee .....	W .....	15-0, 15-7 .....	8-0
10/16/74 .....	Omaha .....	Mabel Lee .....	W .....	15-5, 15-0.....	9-0
10/19/74 .....	Chadron State .....	Mabel Lee .....	L.....	11-15, 12-15 .....	9-1
10/22/74.....	NE Nebraska Tech CC.....	Norfolk, NE .....	W .....	15-4, 15-6.....	10-1
10/26/74 .....	Missouri .....	Lawrence, KS .....	W .....	15-11, 15-9.....	11-1
.....	Drake.....	Lawrence, KS .....	T.....	10-15, 15-9 .....	11-1-1
.....	#8 SW Missouri State .....	Lawrence, KS .....	L.....	10-15, 2-15 .....	11-2-1
.....	Kansas .....	Lawrence, KS .....	L.....	8-15, 5-15 .....	11-3-1
10/29/74 .....	Omaha .....	Fremont, NE .....	L.....	12-15, 15-12, 11-14 .....	11-4-1
.....	Midland.....	Fremont, NE .....	W .....	15-9, 15-9.....	12-4-1
11/1/74 .....	Kearney State .....	Mabel Lee .....	W .....	12-15, 15-11, 15-10 .....	13-4-1
11/4/74 .....	Concordia.....	Seward, NE .....	W .....	11-15, 15-9, 15-9 .....	14-4-1
11/8/74 .....	Creighton.....	Wayne, NE.....	W .....	15-3, 12-15, 15-2 .....	15-4-1
.....	JFK College .....	Wayne, NE.....	W .....	15-12, 15-13 .....	16-4-1
11/9/74 .....	Omaha .....	Wayne, NE.....	L.....	7-15, 15-7, 10-12 .....	16-5-1
.....	NE Nebraska Tech CC.....	Wayne, NE.....	W .....	15-10, 15-5 .....	17-5-1
.....	Chadron State .....	Wayne, NE.....	W .....	15-9, 15-2 .....	18-5-1
11/10/74 .....	Omaha .....	Wayne, NE.....	W .....	15-5, 15-9.....	19-5-1
.....	Chadron State .....	Wayne, NE.....	W .....	15-5, 15-6.....	20-5-1
.....	Kearney State .....	Wayne, NE.....	L.....	4-15, 9-15.....	20-6-1
11/21/74.....	Kansas .....	Mabel Lee .....	L.....	13-10, 8-15, 11-15.....	20-7-1
.....	Mt. Marty (SD).....	Mabel Lee .....	W .....	15-5, 15-2 .....	21-7-1
.....	North Dakota State .....	Mabel Lee .....	W .....	15-5, 15-5.....	22-7-1
11/22/74.....	St. Catherine (MN).....	Mabel Lee .....	W .....	15-13, 15-6 .....	23-7-1
.....	Graceland (IA).....	Mabel Lee .....	W .....	15-13, 15-9 .....	24-7-1
.....	SW Missouri State .....	Mabel Lee .....	L.....	10-15, 15-13, 9-15 .....	24-8-1
11/23/74.....	Augsburg (MN).....	Mabel Lee .....	L.....	12-15, 5-15.....	24-9-1
.....	Kansas State.....	Mabel Lee .....	W .....	15-1, 12-15, 15-7.....	25-9-1
.....	Kansas .....	Mabel Lee .....	L.....	10-15, 11-15.....	25-10-1

IN LESS THAN TWO YEARS, MUCH HAS HAPPENED IN BRYCE MCGOWENS' LIFE. HE SHOWED UP AT NEBRASKA WEIGHING ABOUT 165 POUNDS. HE LEFT AFTER ONE YEAR FOR THE NBA AT ABOUT 190. AND LESS THAN A YEAR AFTER THAT HE SIGNED A FOUR-YEAR, \$7.4 MILLION NBA CONTRACT AFTER PLAYING IN BOTH THE G LEAGUE AND NBA.

JACOB KUPFERMAN/NBAE/  
GETTY IMAGES





# From Husker to Hornet

**A Year at Nebraska Prepared  
Bryce McGowens for NBA Rigors**

*By Richard Walker  
Special to Huskers Illustrated*

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Bryce McGowens has spent his entire life living in the Carolinas, except for one year in Nebraska – and that has made all the difference.

The one-and-done Husker basketball player has fond memories of his year in Lincoln and maintains close connections to NU's basketball and football programs.

"Being able to come out of Nebraska and make it to the NBA has been a blessing," said McGowens, who last summer became the highest-drafted Husker since 1998 when he was a second-round selection (No. 40 overall) by the Charlotte Hornets. "My coaches at Nebraska really helped my growth."

Literally. McGowens showed up at NU at about 6-foot-6 and 165 pounds. He left at 190 pounds with broader shoulders and thicker legs ready for the pounding he'd take as a pro.

He was stronger, faster and better.

And it might not have happened if not for his older brother, Trey, who left his spot as a guard with the Pitt Panthers to head west after the end of the 2019-20 season.

"He went to Nebraska ... and I went to Nebraska," McGowens said. "So that was the connection for me."

The five-star 2021 recruit out of Legacy Early College in Greenville, South Carolina, became the highest-rated player ever signed by Nebraska.

When he arrived on campus, head coach Fred Hoiberg, assistant coach Nate Loenser and strength and conditioning coach Kurt Joseph immediately went to work, instituting a weight training and dietary program.

"I feel like coach Kurt worked on my body and worked on my agility," McGowens said. "He's a big reason I'm here" in the NBA.

Hoiberg remembers those days.

"For a guy who came in skinny and whose body needed a lot of work, what he did to change that shows you his commitment level," Hoiberg said.

Loenser, who, among his many duties in the program, leads the Husker individual skill development programs, said McGowens was not afraid of hard work.

"Bryce has always had a desire to be a pro and he was always so receptive and dialed into his workouts," Loenser said, praising his diligence.



MCGOWENS AND OLDER BROTHER TREY MCGOWENS, LEFT, ALSO A FORMER HUSKER, RETURNED TO LINCOLN DURING THE NBA ALL-STAR BREAK TO CATCH THE HUSKERS BEAT MARYLAND.

REGGIE RYDER/HUSKERS ILLUSTRATED



MCGOWENS SCORED A ROOKIE-SEASON HIGH OF 22 POINTS IN A 106-95 VICTORY OVER CLEVELAND IN CHARLOTTE'S REGULAR SEASON FINALE.

DOUGLAS P. DEFELICE/NBAE/GETTY IMAGES.

In McGowens' lone season (2021-22), the Huskers went 10-22, but he averaged 16.8 points, 5.2 rebounds and 1.4 assists while earning third-team All-Big Ten and conference All-Freshman team honors.

Getting drafted didn't mean he had made it. The hard work was only beginning.

For McGowens, the road to the NBA included the hours spent driving the 95-mile distance between Charlotte and the Hornets' G League affiliate in Greensboro, North Carolina.

McGowens played in six games for the Swarm, averaging 23.2 points, 4.3 rebounds, 5.5 assists and 1.5 steals. He also spent lots of time with Swarm coaches who further developed his talents.

"At the beginning of the year, going back and forth between the G and here was a great opportunity," McGowens said. "I could play, learn and grow in the G League. And when I'm here (with the Hornets), it's just waiting for the opportunity and being ready to execute and have fun playing the game I love with a great group of guys."

Attitude is one of McGowens' strengths, Hoiberg said.

"They love him there," said Hoiberg, a former NBA player and coach. "I know the people in the front office. Buzz Peterson (Hornets assistant general manager) is a very good friend of mine. Mitch Kupchak (general manager), Steve Clifford the coach, I talk to all those guys throughout the season and they just love him as a kid and it kind of warms your heart when (young, former players) are out there doing the right things."

Late in the season, with several Hornets starters out of action due to injuries, McGowens earned seven starts and finished the season averaging 5.3 points, 2.0 rebounds and 1.2 assists in 46 total games played. He scored 20 or more points in two of the season's final three games, highlighted by a career-high 22 points in a 106-95 victory over Cleveland in the regular season finale.

"It was a great opportunity for them," Clifford said of the 2022-23 G League players, who also included JT Thor (Auburn) and Mark Williams (Duke) getting late-season starts for his team. "Each player has a chance to take advantage of their opportunity."

Hoiberg was watching from afar.

"It's not easy, especially when you bounce back and forth from G League to the NBA and you are out of the rotation and then you have to go in and play a major role," Hoiberg said. "People don't understand how hard that is to score 20 points in an NBA game."

In February, the Hornets reportedly rewarded McGowens by converting his two-way contract – playing for the Hornets and the G League Swarm – to a four-year, \$7.4 million standard deal. That means no more driving to Greensboro. It's all NBA now.

Since leaving Nebraska, it's been a whirlwind for McGowens. He's had little time to smell the roses. But one thing that does occasionally make him stop and take

stock in all that has happened is the Charlotte team owner. A man named Michael Jordan.

"Playing for a team run by Michael Jordan is amazing," McGowens said. "Just to have his presence here and knowing he's watching and paying attention to me means a lot."

But Jordan is far from the only one McGowens looks up to in Charlotte.

"I would say really everybody that's older than me has helped me learn the game, from Dennis (Smith Jr.) to Gordon (Hayward) to T-Ro (Terry Rozier) to Kelly Oubre. I've just watched them when they're on the court and off the court learn how they carry themselves. They're great people. (The injured) Cody Martin is another one who is always helping. Every timeout, he's in my ear helping – good or bad – and trying to help me play better."

The next stop for McGowens will be the Las Vegas Summer League, but not before making a pit stop in Lincoln – just as he did during the NBA All-Star break.

"I'll go (to Lincoln) for about two weeks just to see some friends and go there and get some work done," McGowens said. "Then I'll probably be here (in Charlotte) to get ready for next season."

Come fall, McGowens will also be following the Husker football team and rooting for one guy in particular.

Senior defensive lineman Stephon Wynn.

"He's one of our best friends," McGowens said of Wynn, who attended T.L. Hanna High School in South Carolina, then played football at Alabama before transferring to Nebraska. "We grew up with him and played AAU ball with him. His brother and I are best friends. And Trey and him are best friends."

"So when he entered the transfer portal from Alabama, we reached out to him. So there's some South Carolina ties in Nebraska."

Back in Charlotte, McGowens is widely considered one of the most talented pieces of the Hornets' roster, and that status has given him affirmation that he made the right decision to leave college after just one year.

"Playing at the highest level was always what I wanted to do," McGowens said. "I wanted to compete against the greatest players in the world. I've never had a second thought about it."

MCGOWENS, STILL ONLY 20 YEARS OLD, HAS LEARNED FROM MANY PEOPLE ALONG THE WAY TO THE NBA, INCLUDING OLDER TEAMMATES. HE ALSO IS AWARE THE CHARLOTTE TEAM OWNER IS ALWAYS WATCHING. "PLAYING FOR A TEAM RUN BY MICHAEL JORDAN IS AMAZING," MCGOWENS SAID. "JUST TO HAVE HIS PRESENCE HERE AND KNOWING HE'S WATCHING AND PAYING ATTENTION TO ME MEANS A LOT."

BROCK WILLIAMS-SMITH/NBAE/  
GETTY IMAGES



# Returning to Her Roots

**Kalynn Meyer Was Wooed by Volleyball for a Time, but Now She Is Back at What She Does Best**

*By Steve Beideck*

Kalynn Meyer always had an inkling that someday she would return to the rings.

But first she needed to get some other things out of her system.

So it goes for a top athlete able to excel in numerous disciplines. Meyer decided to make volleyball her initial foray into college athletics, arriving at Nebraska out of in-state Class C Superior High School as the nation's No. 21 overall prospect and No. 4-ranked middle blocker.

But after two seasons of mostly standing and cheering with other reserves during matches, Meyer decided it was time to return to another sport where she also was one of the country's preeminent prep performers.

Meyer is now scoring points for Nebraska's track and field team.

While she is still making the adjustment back to the sport and has a lot of work to do to move up the standings in the shot put, she posted a career-best throw of 53 feet, 6½ inches March 31 at the Texas Relays.

"It kind of did surprise me, but I did feel good that day," Meyer said. "The throws before that were feeling good, so I thought I was building up to something good."

That performance allowed Meyer to debut at No. 9 all-time at Nebraska in that event. The day before, at the Bobcat Invitational in San Marcos, Texas, Meyer had her then-season best of 156-2 in the discus.

"It (the discus) just hasn't kicked off yet," Meyer said. "The first two meets it didn't go that well. I'm not really changing

things, it's more the mental side. Practices have gone great, putting it into a meet is a different story. I'm still working on finding that cohesiveness in a meet."

At Superior, Meyer was a three-time, all-class state high school discus champion and two-time shot put champion. If not for the COVID-19 pandemic that erased the 2020 spring sports season, Meyer likely would have had seven total throws titles.

As a junior Meyer set the all-class state meet record in the discus (176-8) and the Class C shot put state meet record of 49-5. That discus performance was the No. 1 throw nationally in 2019. She occasionally still wonders how much further she could have gone in 2020.

"That would have probably been my best year," Meyer said. "Just building up for it and I didn't get to finish it out."

Meyer is the only athlete – male or female – to ever be honored three times as the Omaha World-Herald's athlete of the year. She always believed that no matter how volleyball worked out, she would eventually return to her throwing roots.

"Because it was something I always enjoyed doing, I knew it would probably be in the mix," Meyer said. "It was something I had been considering for a little while. Even in high school, I was considering coming back to it."

"I always wanted to, I just didn't know when."

The time arrived following the 2021

volleyball season. With the prospects for playing time dwindling, the upcoming 2022 track and field season began to look more appealing.

It also helped that a new throws coach, someone who already was familiar to the Meyer family, was hired. Justin St. Clair had established himself as one of the nation's best event coaches at North Dakota State.

Andy Meyer, Kalynn's father and throws coach throughout her high school career, still owns the Nebraska high school discus record of 203-6. He was a three-time All-American at Nebraska in the early 1990s and competed at the 1993 World University Games and 1996 U.S. Olympic Trials.

He told Kalynn the time was right to look at returning to the rings.

"Especially when there was a coaching change, he said this was a good opportunity to see if this is what you want to try to get into again," Meyer said. "He talked to the coaches, not about me, but about other things, and my two older sisters (Alex and Leah) went through the program."

"He was supportive of me when I introduced the idea. My whole family was excited for the change."

The 2022-23 season is the first for the ag engineering major to be only a track and field athlete. She had to split her time with volleyball during the 2022 indoor season.

"The transition was pretty smooth, it was just a little different for time management," Meyer said. "Especially after completing the first track season, that first summer after I could just focus on track. Once fall started I was ready to hit the ground running with just track."

As the 2023 outdoor season progresses, Meyer hopes to begin posting discus marks that can be classified the same as her Texas Relays shot put – personal bests. Her collegiate best was 170-5 early in the 2022 season.

Meyer isn't ready to think about what could lie ahead in 2024 until things begin improving this year. It's not time just yet to peek ahead to next year's Olympic Trials.

"It's kind of been on my mind," Meyer said. "I want to finish this season out before putting too much thought into next season. Let's see how much I can deal with my first official full season of track."



KALYNN MEYER IS STILL GETTING USED TO THROWING AGAIN AFTER SPENDING TWO SEASONS ON THE HUSKER VOLLEYBALL TEAM. HOWEVER, IN ONE OF HER FIRST MEETS BACK, MEYER TOSSED THE SHOT PUT 53 FEET, 6 1/2 INCHES IN LATE MARCH AT THE TEXAS RELAYS, GOOD ENOUGH FOR NO. 9 ON THE HUSKERS' ALL-TIME CHART.

NU COMMUNICATIONS(2)



# An Upward Arc

With Each Year, Things Just Keep Getting Better for Courtney Wallace

By Steve Beideck



From the first day she arrived in Lincoln to play softball at Nebraska, Courtney Wallace was determined to become a pitcher her teammates could rely on in all situations.

As the ace of the 2023 Huskers staff, the Papillion-La Vista graduate has gradually turned that goal into reality while helping lead Nebraska to a 30-13 overall record and 10-4 mark in the Big Ten through April 15.

“There have been times when it’s been rough, where I can’t believe I wanted to be a pitcher,” Wallace said. “After last year I just believed I had so much more to give from the (circle). It turns out pitching fits my personality really well.”

Wallace played third base for the Monarchs when she wasn’t pitching. But even in high school, Wallace was convinced she needed to be in the circle. She was 27-4 with a 1.49 ERA as a junior in 2016 at Papio before posting even better numbers while leading the Monarchs to the Class A state title as a senior in 2017.

Along with an 18-1 pitching record and a 0.28 ERA with 162 strikeouts, Wallace hit .504 with nine home runs, 10 doubles, four triples and 35 RBIs while also scoring 45 runs and stealing 14 bases. Her leadoff home run in the state title game kick-started an 11-run, 10-hit inning that powered Papio to a 16-4 win over Lincoln Southwest in the state title game.

After her senior season Wallace was named the honorary captain of the Omaha World-Herald’s all-Nebraska team. She also earned one of the 25 spots on the World-

Herald’s all-time 25th anniversary team that celebrated the first quarter-century of softball as a sanctioned high school sport in Nebraska.

“In high school I played a lot of different positions,” Wallace said. “In high school I didn’t have to think that much. I just showed up and did things.”

Just showing up wasn’t going to cut it at the Division I college level. And Wallace knew it.

“My freshman year (2019) I wasn’t throwing that much,” Wallace said. “I played third base, some outfield, designated player. There were some eye-opening life lessons that came with being a pitcher. Those experiences opened my eyes even more and made me want to work harder to become an even better pitcher.”

Wallace started 40 games in her freshman season, including 14 as a pitcher and 17 as NU’s designated player. After posting a 4-7 record with 63 strikeouts in 97.1 innings pitched, Wallace’s numbers began to improve as a sophomore in 2020 before the season was canceled with 25 strikeouts in 10 appearances.

The rough times have been made better by the fun Wallace has had since joining the Huskers as a graduate player after a senior season (2022) that saw her earn third-team All-America honors. The good outweighed the bad enough that Wallace will get to celebrate a second Senior Day when the Huskers finish the regular season next month.

Wallace continued to improve throughout her junior season and she was named to the

NFCA All-Midwest Region second team as a pitcher and utility player. She finished with an 11-9 record after making 29 appearances with 18 starts. Those 11 victories ranked Wallace No. 8 in the Big Ten in victories.

She led the Huskers in wins, appearances, complete games (eight), innings pitched (132.0) and ERA (2.86). Wallace had a scoreless innings streak of 21 innings while earning victories against ranked opponents.

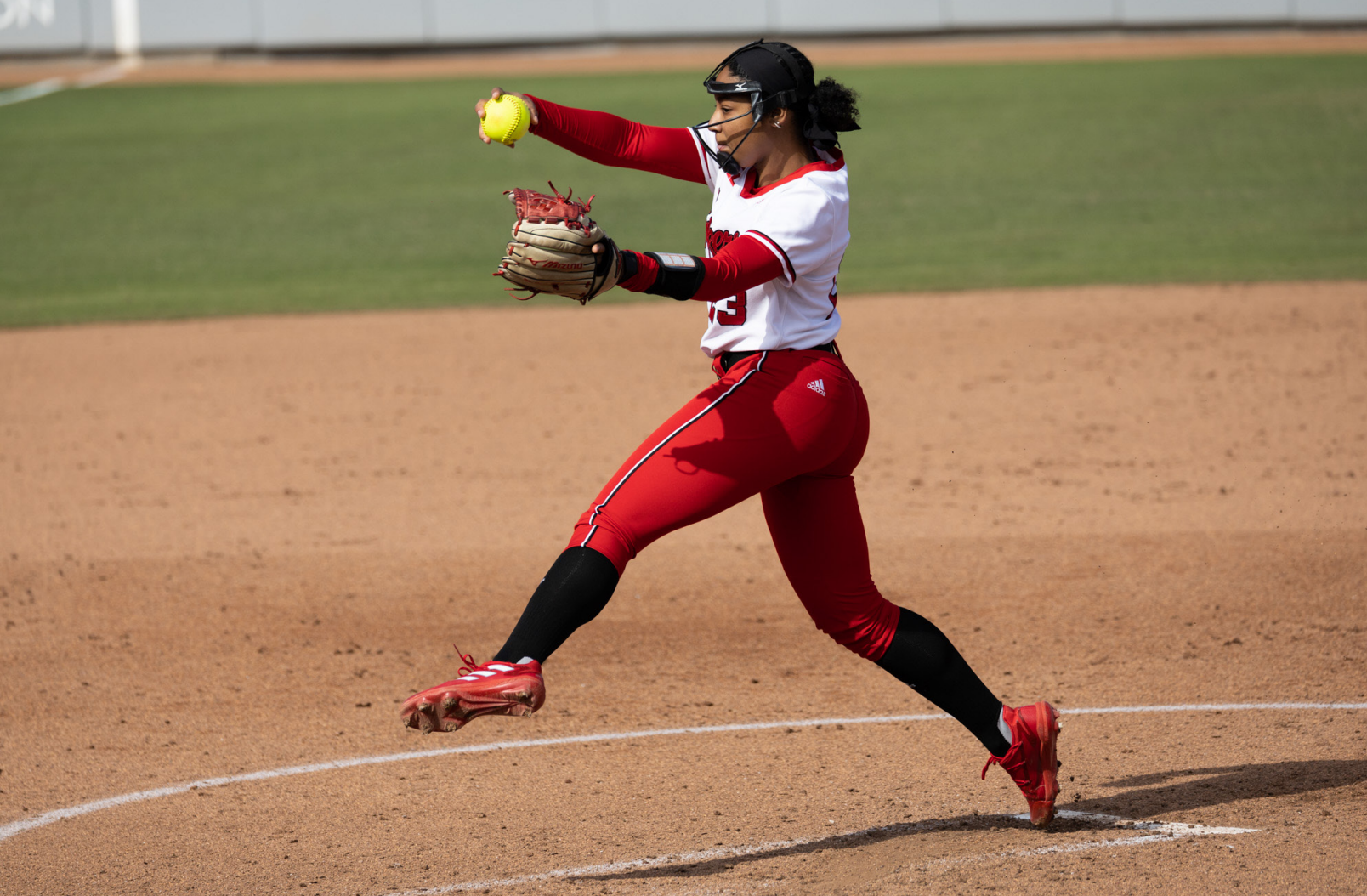
Even with all that success, Wallace at first wasn’t sure she wanted to pitch beyond her senior season in 2022. She went through Senior Day ceremonies at the end of the ’22 campaign because she hadn’t yet decided if she was going to play the extra season afforded her because of the cancellation of the 2020 COVID-19 season.

Wallace and now-graduate manager Olivia Ferrell shared the majority of the pitching duties in 2022 to help the Huskers to the Big Ten tournament title and their first appearance in the NCAA tournament since 2016.

The way the 2023 season has unfolded and with a top-four finish in the Big Ten standings still a realistic goal, Wallace is convinced she made the right decision.

“Right now, those are still the goals,” Wallace said. “Last year’s winning streak was awesome, but everyone knows streaks like that happen once every blue moon. Right now, I think we’re heading in the right direction, try to play in the Big Ten’s top four and get another NCAA bid.”

Wallace once again in 2022 posted career highs in appearances (34), wins (17), starts



PITCHING FOR A FIFTH SEASON AS A HUSKER HAS ENABLED COURTNEY WALLACE TO WORK ON HER MASTER'S DEGREE IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION. SHE EARNED HER BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN COMMUNICATIONS WITH A MINOR IN PSYCHOLOGY IN 2022.

NU COMMUNICATIONS

(26) and innings pitched (148.0). Along with another strong season at the plate, Wallace made history when she received the inaugural Rawlings Gold Glove award for pitchers presented by the NFCA.

In those 34 appearances in which she posted a 17-8 record, along with four saves, Wallace didn't commit a single error in the circle.

Wallace is again in contention for the Rawlings Gold Glove Award this season while already besting her career high in appearance with 43. She also has a new career high in wins with 19 after earning two victories April 14 and 15 against Indiana.

More work on the mental side of the game is the biggest reason Wallace said things have continued to improve.

"To throw a change-up, you don't realize how many times you have to change your change-up so hitters don't see the same

thing every time," Wallace said. "I'm learning things I didn't know about before. You realize that having to know those things is important.

"Even this year, a lot of it has been more mental than physical. Just knowing that I'm in control of every situation as the pitcher has helped me be more confident. Now I'm throwing pitches to certain spots instead of just the same pitch over and over."

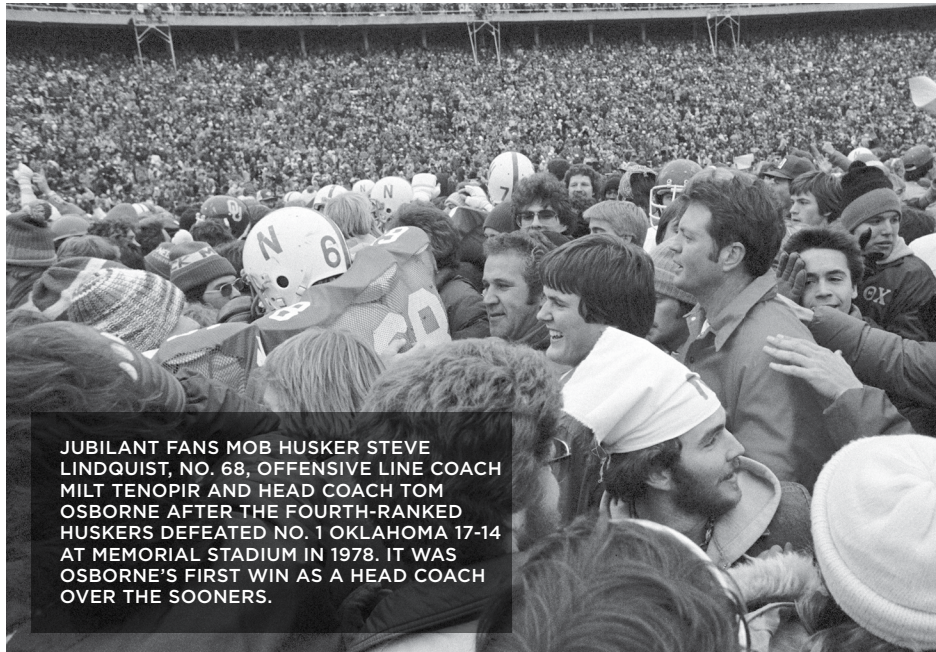
Getting ready to finish her fifth and final season as a Husker is starting to register. She hopes to be a graduate assistant and stay in athletics as an administrator.

This season Wallace has been working on her master's degree in educational administration with an eye toward that goal. She earned her bachelor's degree in communications with a minor in psychology last year.

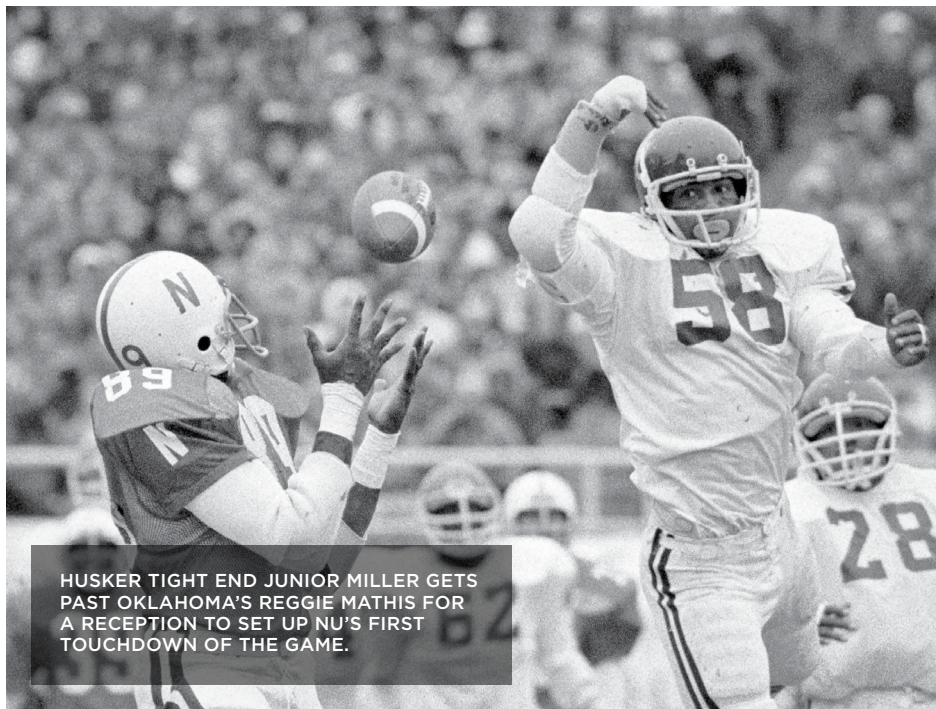
Having the fifth year also has allowed Wallace to help her younger brother get off to a good start with his own college experience.

"I definitely did not expect to be here for five seasons," Wallace said. "Now that it's winding down, I got a chance to look at my career with some of my teammates and I almost started to tear up. I'm so glad I'm still here. We've laughed a lot, we've cried a lot, but I've enjoyed every minute of it."

"I'm grateful I was able to stay close to home at Nebraska. I wouldn't have had it any other way. Just being able to be close to my parents, my niece, and my brother lives with me. We've never been at school together, so that's been a wonderful experience."



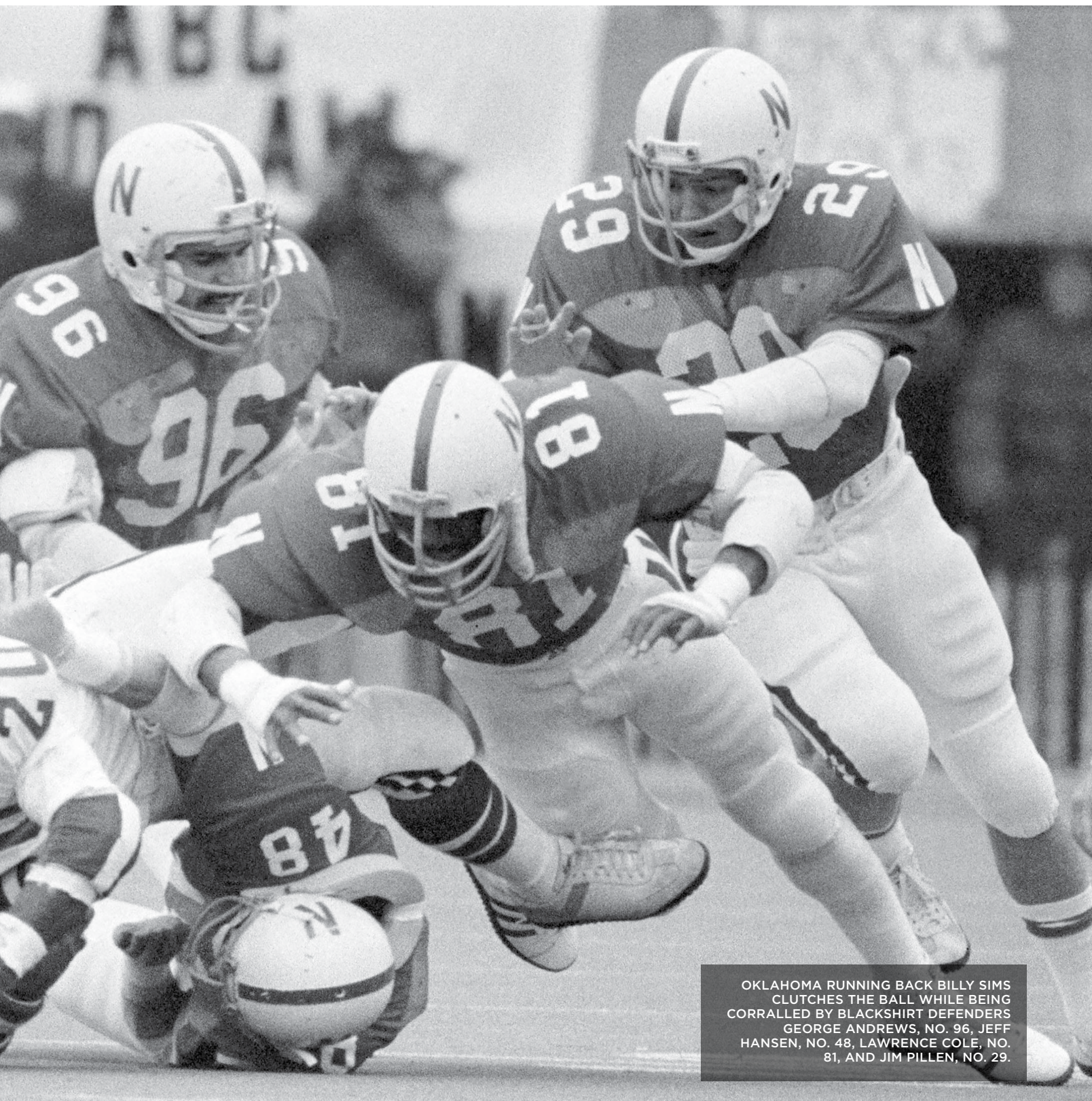
JUBILANT FANS MOB HUSKER STEVE LINDQUIST, NO. 68, OFFENSIVE LINE COACH MILT TENOPIR AND HEAD COACH TOM OSBORNE AFTER THE FOURTH-RANKED HUSKERS DEFEATED NO. 1 OKLAHOMA 17-14 AT MEMORIAL STADIUM IN 1978. IT WAS OSBORNE'S FIRST WIN AS A HEAD COACH OVER THE SOONERS.



HUSKER TIGHT END JUNIOR MILLER GETS PAST OKLAHOMA'S REGGIE MATHIS FOR A RECEPTION TO SET UP NU'S FIRST TOUCHDOWN OF THE GAME.



# TED'S TAKES



OKLAHOMA RUNNING BACK BILLY SIMS CLUTCHES THE BALL WHILE BEING CORRALLED BY BLACKSHIRT DEFENDERS GEORGE ANDREWS, NO. 96, JEFF HANSEN, NO. 48, LAWRENCE COLE, NO. 81, AND JIM PILLEN, NO. 29.

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.

# Life Is a Beach

**The Huskers Aren't Elite in the Sand, but the Beach Volleyball Season Still Serves a Purpose**

*By Lincoln Arneal*

NEBRASKA'S BERGEN REILLY BUMPS THE VOLLEY BALL DURING A BEACH VOLLEYBALL GAME, FEB. 23, 2023, AT HAWKS CHAMPIONSHIP CENTER.

HAYDEN ROONEY/HUSKERS ILLUSTRATED(3)

HUSKER FRESHMAN BERGEN REILLY TEAMED WITH ALLY BATENHORST TO GO 15-5 IN THE SAND TO TIE AN NU PROGRAM RECORD FOR WINS BY A PAIR IN A SEASON.

HAYDEN ROONEY/HUSKERS ILLUSTRATED(3)

The best beach volleyball teams in the country will gather near Gulf Shores, Alabama, for the national championships during the first week of May.

Nebraska will not be among them. When teams gather to play for a title, the Huskers' season will have been over for almost seven weeks. The Huskers wrapped up their 10th beach season on March 18 after a week of matches in Hawaii and California during spring break.

Even though its season ended earlier than most programs, NU completed its most successful campaign. The Huskers finished 15-5, a program record for wins that topped their previous best by three.

Over the 10 seasons since NU added beach volleyball, the sport has evolved. When the Huskers began playing in 2013, only two dozen schools offered the sport. Most of the players were crossover athletes participating in the fall indoor season. For 2023, 93 schools offer beach volleyball, including 67 at the Division I level, 17 at Division II and nine at Division III – all competing for the singular national championship.

Kelly Hunter played on Nebraska's second beach team in 2014 and now serves as the Huskers' assistant coach. She's enjoyed watching the sport become more popular over the past decade.

"Beach volleyball, and women's volleyball, is blowing up like crazy, which is awesome to see," Hunter said. "I think beach volleyball, specifically, is getting bigger. You can watch the national championship on TV and online. It's really cool to see that for the sport and for women's sports."

During its first two seasons, NU experienced success and finished both seasons ranked No. 7 in the AVCA coaches poll. However, more schools added the sport, and many began to dedicate more resources to programs.

NU assistant coach Jaylen Reyes, who serves as Nebraska's head beach coach, said he's not surprised beach volleyball has grown in popularity because many people's first introduction to volleyball is in the sand, either recreationally or in a bar league. Beach volleyball features matches between five two-person teams playing best two of three sets.

"It's enjoyable to play," Reyes said. "It's actually an easier sport, in my opinion, to play than indoor because there's just less factors going on."

Now at the top level of the NCAA, the sport is dominated by Western and Southern schools. UCLA and USC have won all six championships. Of the top 20 teams in the coaches poll at the start of April, more than half were from California. The interest has trickled down to the prep level, and beach-specific clubs have started to pop up in California.

In addition to more schools offering the sport, it's becoming more common for programs to field different rosters for indoor and beach seasons. Beach-only players train during the fall and build the all-around skill set necessary to play in the sand.

Of the six Division I teams Nebraska played this year, five fielded beach-only rosters. The Huskers went 1-4 against those teams, picking up a 3-2 win against Oregon. Of those teams, only Washington featured a player on both volleyball teams, but she did not play on the top five teams.

"If you're a crossover player, unless you're really an outlier player, you might play in the fours and fives or may not play at all," Reyes said.

The one exception to the Division I ranks was Texas. The Longhorns, who won the indoor national championship in December, sponsored a beach team for the first time this season and used the same players as in the fall. (Texas plans to add beach-only players in the future.)

The Huskers earned a thrilling 3-2 win over UT as part of the Queen's Cup in Hawaii. It was a historic victory. The last time the NU beach team defeated multiple schools from major conferences was in 2017.

The rest of NU's opponents featured players who also participated in the fall indoor season. The Huskers went 1-1 against Division II opponents, 2-0 against Division III teams and 5-0 against NAIA and junior college schools.

Hunter said NU's goal to begin the year was to finish above .500, which it accomplished for the third time in program history. (The 2020 COVID-19 season ended early with the Huskers at 7-3. NU didn't play a season in 2021 because the indoor season was shifted to the spring.)

Ally Batenhorst and Bergen Reilly went 15-5 to tie a program record for wins by a pair in a season set by Nicklin Hames/Lauren Stivins in 2019. The group played most of their matches at No. 3 but were slotted in at every rank except for No. 5.

"I'm actually falling in love with it," Batenhorst said. "I love it. A lot of other teams are doing indoor right now and we're doing something different and it's kind of special and unique. So I'm excited about it."

In addition, Bekka Allick/Lexi Rodriguez and Lindsay Krause/Laney Choboy each finished 14-6, which tied for the third-best showing by a Husker pair in a season.

Reyes said teams are still eager to schedule NU because even though the Huskers aren't elite in the sand, they offer a good challenge because of their athleticism.

"I think teams want to play us because we kind of bring this following," he said. "We're willing to travel and play whomever. I've talked to some coaches in the past, and they've commented on the athletes we have – we have great athletes. We're just not as fine-tuned beach players skillwise."

Other coaches recognize the talent on the NU roster and have even told Reyes to contact them if any of the NU players

want to play beach volleyball after their indoor careers.

Reyes said the Huskers are probably in the middle of the pack regarding beach skills. They don't get the number of reps in the sand as beach-only teams. Plus, the season's early start prevents NU from practicing outdoors to deal with the wind and sun.

In the indoor season, Rodriguez focuses exclusively on defense as a libero and rarely hits the ball over the net. She has two kills on 15 attacks in her first two seasons. However, for beach, she will have more attacks than that in each match.

"The defensive part is pretty much the same. I'm doing the same things," Rodriguez said. "It's just not as quick to the ball now because I'm running in sand, but definitely having the pressure to score put on me is a lot different."

Indoor players are more specialized in their skill sets – front-row players need to hit and block, setters are the only ones who set and back-row players focus on passing and serving. On the beach, every player has to do all those skills. Reyes said it is a different style of play.

"You can't hide anybody in beach," Reyes said. "It's really hard to be a great indoor attacker if you could never hit the ball hard. Versus beach, you can be great and literally never hit the ball hard. Here it's more about placement."

While they set records this year, Reyes said the match results are not the primary benefits for its beach team.

Because the team takes an extended spring break trip to Hawaii and California, the Huskers have a chance to spend time together and build relationships. This year's team included five early enrollee freshmen who spent more than a week together. The team went to dinners away from the court, tried their hand at surfing and attended Hawaii men's volleyball matches.

Rodriguez said the travel is similar to a mini foreign trip. While teams can only go abroad once every four years, NU makes a 10-day trip each spring.

"These past couple of years when we've had a lot of early enrollees, I think it's really good for our team to build relationships in a not-so-competitive environment," she said. "If they would have come in and we were in indoor, everyone's competing for spots. It's a lot harder to build those relationships right away. I think this is a really good balance of we're still all competing, but we're also getting a lot closer, traveling together

and rooting each other on so I think it's really good."

The beach season also gives the Huskers a break from jumping and diving on the hard court. Batenhorst said while her calves are sore, her body recovered from the long indoor season on the more forgiving sand.

While this year's NU beach team was more successful than previous years, it still faced challenges and competed



against more skilled teams. Rodriguez said everything from the beach season translates to indoor, including the camaraderie and mental approach.

"It makes us realize that we haven't really done anything," Rodriguez said. "Just because we're Nebraska volleyball, it doesn't mean we can just walk into a sand court or a gym and expect to win. We always had to work our hardest, show up and build our culture."

# around **CAMPUS**



# N

## MEN'S BASKETBALL

### Two Hoopers Headed for Lincoln Through Portal

The Husker men's basketball team landed two transfers out of the portal on April 12, when Bradley's Rienk Mast and Charlotte's Brice Williams announced they'd be playing for Nebraska in 2023-24.

Mast, a 6-foot-9, 240-pound forward from Groningen, Netherlands, was named first-team All-Missouri Valley Conference as a junior when he started 29 of 35 games, playing almost 29 minutes per outing. He averaged 13.8 points, eight rebounds and 2.4 assists. Mast failed to reach double figures in scoring only three times all season.

Bradley finished 25-10 overall and 16-4 in the MVC, won the regular season conference title but lost 77-51 to Drake in the title game of the conference tournament, when Mast made the all-tournament team. The Braves went on to the NIT where they lost 81-62 to Wisconsin in the opening round.

"Rienk has a skillset which I think will

flourish in our system," NU coach Fred Hoiberg said. "Offensively, he is very crafty around the basket while he is also comfortable stepping out to the 3-point line. Rienk will provide an immediate impact in the frontcourt for us next season."

Williams, a 6-7, 215-pound guard, was ranked as one of the Top 20 seniors in the state of North Carolina coming out of Hopewell High School in Huntersville in 2019.

Last season as a redshirt junior, Williams recorded 13.8 points, 5.3 rebounds and 1.2 assists per outing and was named Second Team All-Conference USA after starting 13 of the 49ers' 36 games while playing 27.1 minutes per outing. He has two seasons of eligibility remaining.

"Brice provides a lot of versatility and



can play several spots in our system," Hoiberg said. "He is a three-level scorer who moves well without the ball and a high-volume 3-point shooter who shot nearly 40% from beyond the arc last season. He provides length and experience on the perimeter."

The 49ers (22-14, 9-11 Conference USA) went on to win the postseason CBI Championship, beating Eastern Kentucky 71-68, and Williams won the CBI MVP after averaging 16.3 points, 7.8 rebounds and three assists while recording a pair of double-doubles in the 49ers march to the title.

### Knicks Sign Former Husker Roby

The New York Knicks recently signed former Husker Isaiah Roby through next season, according to reports.

The 6-foot-8, 230-pound Roby was waived by the San Antonio Spurs on March 3 after he averaged 4.1 points and 2.5 rebounds in 11.3 minutes across 42 games.

Although terms were not officially disclosed, the deal with the Knicks essentially pays Roby \$400,000 to participate with Knicks prospects in the upcoming Summer League and will have an opportunity to make the Knicks' 2023-24 roster.

Roby, 25, a native of Dixon, Illinois, played for the Huskers for three seasons, beginning in 2016-17. He declared for the NBA Draft after his junior season in 2019. Besides the Spurs, he's also played with the Oklahoma City Thunder.

### Walker Participates in Portsmouth Invitational

Derrick Walker, a senior on the Husker basketball team, participated in mid-April's Portsmouth Invitational Tournament, a four-day event in Portsmouth, Virginia, that features 64 of the top seniors in the country and is attended by scouts from the NBA and pro leagues in other parts of the world.

Walker, a 6-foot-9 forward from Kansas City, Mo., was a second-team All-Big Ten pick this past season. He is the fifth Husker to be invited to the PIT, joining Alonzo Verge (2022), James Palmer (2019), Tai Webster (2017) and Shavon Shields (2016).

Walker also played in the NABC Senior All-Star Game during Final Four weekend.



REGGIE RYDER/HUSKERS ILLUSTRATED

**N**

# TRACK AND FIELD



NU COMMUNICATIONS

## Men and Women Making Waves

In the same week in April that Nebraska sophomore Till Steinforth was named Big Ten Men's Field Athlete of the Week, both the Husker men's and women's track and field teams broke into the national rankings.

Steinforth captured the decathlon title at the Jim Click Shootout in Tucson, Arizona, posting nine personal-best marks and six event wins. Steinforth tallied 7,845 points through the 10 events, moving him up to second in the NCAA and fourth in school history.

The Husker men's team leapt into the USTFCCA Outdoor Top 25 rankings at No. 6 while the women landed at No. 15.

Both are the highest-ranked Big Ten programs.

**N**

## BASEBALL

### Huskers Sit Atop the League

The Nebraska baseball team had its ups – and a few downs – through the middle of April.

After sweeping a three-game series with Northwestern (5-25 overall, 3-6 Big Ten) at Haymarket Park April 14-16, the Huskers (21-11-1, 7-2) were atop the league having won both of its previous three-game conference series to date, taking two wins apiece from Illinois and Michigan.

However, the Huskers fell to 0-3 vs. in-state competition having lost to Creighton once and Nebraska-Omaha twice in mid-week games.

**N**

## WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

### Assistant Steps Down

Coach Tom Goehle is retiring from his position as Nebraska women's basketball assistant to pursue full-time mission work.

Goehle completed his seventh season at NU in 2022-23 and his eighth season working with head coach Amy Williams. He has been heavily involved with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.



# Ranked Best... Again!

"Highest in Customer Satisfaction Among Auto Insurers  
in the Central Region" for 4 out of 5 Years in a Row.



Jeff Bond  
Lincoln  
402-420-1992



Natalie Vampola-Kerr  
Lincoln  
402-464-9511



Matt Moorhead  
Lincoln  
402-488-2545



Rhonda Wisdom  
Beatrice  
402-228-6417



Joann Simanek  
Lincoln  
402-420-1993



Craig Kerr  
Lincoln  
402-464-9315



Paul Hoos  
Grand Island  
308-384-7599



Julie Null  
Plattsmouth  
402-296-2828



Micheal Rieves  
Omaha  
402-896-8856



Jim Mowinkel  
Gretna  
402-916-9155



Nick Voorhees  
Omaha  
402-339-3765



Sharon Lier  
Papillion  
402-733-1433



Matt Woodward  
Ord  
308-728-5597



Reed Devall  
Lincoln  
402-464-9300



Katie Bargmann  
Columbus  
402-563-2002



Megan Fales  
Cozad  
308-784-4050



Jeb Brant  
Hastings  
402-463-3003



Scott VerMaas  
La Vista  
402-597-1245



Jackie Rowan  
Lexington  
308-324-5314



Dennis Maloy  
Bellevue  
402-292-3500



Tonia Blain  
Norfolk  
402-379-0662

**Shelter Insurance<sup>®</sup>**  
is proud to support  
the Huskers.



# 2023 HUSKER FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LOCATION	RESULTS
THUR, AUG 31	MINNESOTA *	AT MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.	-
SAT, SEP 9	COLORADO	AT BOULDER, COLO.	-
SAT, SEP 16	NORTHERN ILLINOIS	MEMORIAL STADIUM	-
SAT, SEP 23	LOUISIANA TECH	MEMORIAL STADIUM	-
SAT, SEP 30	MICHIGAN *	MEMORIAL STADIUM	-
SAT, OCT 7	ILLINOIS *	AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN, ILL.	-
SAT, OCT 21	NORTHWESTERN *	MEMORIAL STADIUM	-
SAT, OCT 28	PURDUE *	MEMORIAL STADIUM	-
SAT, NOV 4	MICHIGAN STATE *	AT EAST LANSING, MICH.	-
SAT, NOV 11	MARYLAND *	MEMORIAL STADIUM	-
SAT, NOV 18	WISCONSIN *	AT MADISON, WIS.	-
FRI, NOV 24	IOWA *	MEMORIAL STADIUM	-

\*Conference Games

**SHELTER**  
INSURANCE

We're your Shield. We're your Shelter.

TEAM ROPING NEVER GOT OUT OF RANDALL JOBMAN'S BLOOD. HE AND HIS MONTANA FRIENDS STILL GET TOGETHER AND ROPE CALVES.

HANDOUT PHOTO



# Western Connection

Randall Jobman Represented Garden County Well at NU

*By Shane G. Gilster*



JOBMAN LETTERED THREE YEARS FOR THE HUSKERS IN 1987, '88 AND '89. HE WAS A TEAM CAPTAIN IN '89. HIS PERSONAL HIGHLIGHT THAT SEASON? COLLECTING 12 TACKLES AGAINST OKLAHOMA.



Nebraska football was built with players like Randall Jobman. An in-state kid who stayed loyal to the program and worked hard even though others got much of the notoriety.

So it's little wonder Jobman had this response when contacted by a reporter for an interview: "I haven't been interviewed since college. I thought the email you sent requesting an interview was spam until I saw the Huskers Illustrated and phone number in the email."

Jobman played eight-man football at Garden County High School at Oshkosh, Nebraska. As a linebacker and I-back, he was a two-time all-state player and honorable-mention prep All-American in 1983.

Hailing from Lisco in western Nebraska, Jobman didn't get much recruiting exposure. That changed after attending a summer Husker football camp in Lincoln. After that, he received scholarship offers from Nebraska, Wyoming and Indiana.

"The population in the region where I grew up was pretty sparse, but there are a lot of great athletes around," said Jobman, who could be the only player from Garden County to ever receive an NU football scholarship.

He remembers his recruiting host on his Nebraska visit was Shane Swanson from Hershey. "I looked up to the small-town Nebraska kids who went on to play at Nebraska," he said.

Being a Nebraska kid and a good football player, Jobman knew he was going to play for the Huskers one way or another, but that decision was sped up by NU assistant coach Cletus Fischer who came to Garden County High School on a visit.

"Coach Fischer came to my high school and said there were only a few scholarships left so I needed to commit today or they will give it to someone else," Jobman said. "So, I committed even though there wasn't really a question in my mind."

Everything was working out for Jobman as he prepared to start his first year at NU, but a rodeo accident over the summer in 1984 slowed things down.

While practicing for a Fourth of July rodeo, his thumb was caught between his lasso and his saddle horn while roping a calf.

His thumb was torn from his hand. Jobman – and his thumb – were rushed to the county hospital in Oshkosh where the digit was

THE JOBMAN FAMILY CALLS MONTANA HOME, LIVING JUST OUTSIDE OF BILLINGS. FROM LEFT, MICHAEL, WHO PLAYED FOOTBALL AT MONTANA STATE, CHRISTY, RENAE AND RANDALL.

HANDOUT PHOTO



preserved. The next stop was Denver, where a surgeon reattached it.

"It's something that happens to guys that do team roping a lot more than you think," Jobman said. "My thumb still does not bend right, but I really don't have issues.

"When I played football, I taped a brace on it. The circulation wasn't the best and it got cold pretty easy. And when I got an injury on it, it didn't heal really fast."

Because of the injury, Jobman had to sit out the fall semester and enrolled at NU in January of 1985.

"Coach Osborne told me I couldn't team rope again until after college," Jobman said, laughing.

With his western Nebraska roots and rodeoing background, Jobman was known as "Cowboy" by his teammates.

Once, he took teammates Jeff Jamrog of Omaha and Brad Tyrer of Kansas City, Missouri, home with him to experience branding cattle.

"They were definitely fish out of water," Jobman said.

Jobman was a defensive end on the freshman team and played four games on varsity at the position in 1985 before making the switch to inside linebacker.

"Inside linebacker fit my ability better and I think they needed another guy there," Jobman said.

After his redshirt year, Jobman spent the next two years backing up All-Big Eight performer LeRoy Etienne. He would play in 22 games over that span, starting two.

"I ran a 4.8 in the 40-yard dash, which was probably my biggest downfall playing linebacker," said Jobman, who at 6-foot-3 played at around 235 pounds. "I was more of a run-stopper and not really someone who would drop back in coverage on passing situations."

Though he lacked the speed to become an all-conference player like Etienne, Jobman was hard-nosed and a hard-hitter.

As a senior in 1989, he was a team captain and started at strongside linebacker. Another highlight was leading the team in tackles with 12 against Oklahoma, for which he was named NU defensive player of the week.

As for being voted a team captain by teammates, Jobman said he simply "got along with everyone and practiced hard." Other captains that year were Jeff Mills on defense and Doug Glaser and Gerry Gdowski on offense.

Jobman never won a national title at Nebraska even though the team was always in contention. "We had some really good teams when I played; we were always top-10, top-5 caliber," he said.

Starting for a team like Nebraska during that time almost always got noticed by NFL teams, and Jobman had an opportunity to sign a free agent contract with the New York Giants.

But his desire to continue playing had waned and with his degree in agriculture in hand, he decided to pursue a job as an agriculturalist for Western Sugar back in western Nebraska in the towns of Mitchell and Bayard.

"When I got out of college my original plan was to go back to Lisco to farm and ranch," said Jobman, now 57. "But now I have been working for Western Sugar going on 33 years now."

Good move.

He is the vice president of agriculture, North Region, for Western Sugar Cooperative based in Billings, Montana. Western Sugar is a cooperative owned by about 850 growers in four states – Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming and Montana.

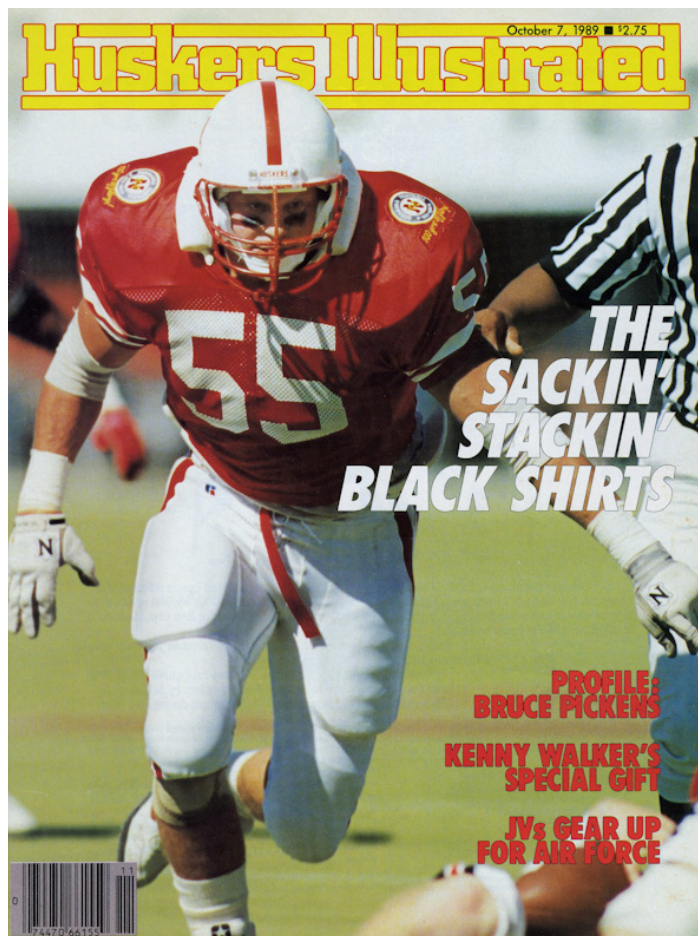
He lives outside Billings near the town of Worden and has a small farming operation with a few cows and horses.

He met his wife, Christy, at UNL. She grew up near the town of Brownlee, north of Thedford. They have a son, Michael, 26, who played linebacker at Montana State, and a daughter, Renae, 29.

Jobman isn't around the sport of football anymore but he still continues to rope. He and his friends have arenas where they get together and do team roping.

It's a lifestyle that he has always loved, and, luckily, he still has both his thumbs.

JOBMAN WAS A HUSKERS ILLUSTRATED COVERBOY IN 1989 AS A 6-FOOT-3, 235-POUND LINEBACKER, WHERE HE THRIVED ON STOPPING THE RUN FOR THE BLACKSHIRTS.



# Garden County Supports

## Wishing Well Steakhouse & Lounge



CHICKEN FRIED STEAK | MONSTER WINGS | PIZZA | COWBOY BREAKFAST BURGER | STEAK NACHOS | PRIME RIB

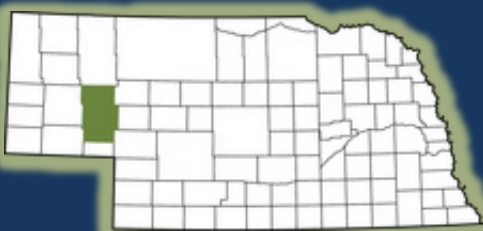


308-778-7477 • Oshkosh, Nebraska

## VISIT GARDEN COUNTY

*A place to relax, refresh and renew!*

Lewellen – Oshkosh - Lisco




Garden County boasts unbeatable history, outdoor activities, food and art. Here you'll find some of the best bird-watching sanctuaries in the United States, scenic hiking trails through pristine canyons, museums, and much more.



[visitgardencounty.com](http://visitgardencounty.com)

# Husker Football

*the*  
**CHUBBY RHINO** *tavern*



315 Main Street  
Oshkosh, Nebraska 69154  
**308-772-1011**  
[thechubbyrhinotavern.com](http://thechubbyrhinotavern.com)

**Relax** IN THE COUNTRY



Take in Western Nebraska's beauty at the Riverview Lodge & Event Center west of Oshkosh. This charming country lodge is ideal for hunting, weddings or family gatherings.




Open year-round! Call today to make a reservation!

**308-778-6023**  
[riverviewlodgelisco.com](http://riverviewlodgelisco.com)

 Find us on Facebook

Road 70 • Lisco  
2 miles southwest of Lisco  
on North Platte River Road

**RIVERVIEW LODGE AND EVENT CENTER**

**AN ALL-AMERICAN RESTAURANT**



Breakfast Lunch Dinner





**Tuesday - Saturday 11:00 am - 7:00 pm** **Sunday 9:00 am - 1:00 pm**

**VETERAN OWNED 308.772.3121**

 **PRAIRIE WINDS COLLECTIVE**

Find us on  **facebook**

**308.778.6020**

219 Main Street  
Oshkosh Nebraska




- ✓ Cowboy Boots
- ✓ Western Clothes
- ✓ Crafts
- ✓ Antiques
- ✓ Furniture
- ✓ Local Items
- ✓ Jewelry
- ✓ Outdoor Goods
- ✓ Candles & Jams

HUSKER FULLBACK LANCE LEWIS DID DAMAGE TO A LOT OF TEAMS IN THE BIG EIGHT, INCLUDING THE KANSAS STATE WILDCATS, THE TEAM FOR WHICH HIS OLDER BROTHER, RICK, PLAYED.

NU COMMUNICATIONS

Presented By:

**Sarpy County**  
**Tourism**

So Near, So FUN. • GoSarpy.com

# A Model Husker Football Player

Lance Lewis Was Ready to Play as a True Freshman

By Shane G. Gilster

It takes a certain type of individual to play fullback, especially at Nebraska in the 1980s and '90s.

It was a tough, demanding job that demanded a particular mental and physical makeup. It was a blue-collar position that epitomized what the state of Nebraska was all about and what made Husker football under head coach Tom Osborne so successful.

Lance Lewis embraced the role of NU fullback and had the traits to be one of the best.

"I tell people you are not a fullback, you are a foolback," Lewis said, laughing.

"Because you can't be all there to play that position. I wasn't afraid to hit somebody and that is what you need to have at fullback."

But Lewis wasn't just a juggernaut who could only block. At Scott City High School in Kansas, Lewis was an all-state fullback and linebacker and was named the USA Today player of the year in the state. He rushed for 1,600 yards and 24 touchdowns while leading the conference with 133 tackles, 88 of them unassisted. He also did track and field, winning the 100- and 200-meter dashes and the shot put as a senior, helping Scott City to the Class 4A championship

in 1988.

His numbers looked like this: 10.7 in the 100 meters, 21.9 in the 200 and 61-10 in the shot put.

It's little wonder track and field power Tennessee, among others, wanted him as a decathlete. But Lewis wanted to play football. He said he was lucky to have the chance to go to college because if he did not, he would have been stuck in western Kansas with few options.

"My family wasn't financially well off so I had to have a scholarship from a college," Lewis said. "My mom said either I get a

LEWIS, FRONT ROW THIRD FROM LEFT, WAS MORE THAN A FOOTBALL PLAYER AT SCOTT CITY (KANSAS) HIGH SCHOOL. IN TRACK AND FIELD HE POSTED A 10.7 IN THE 100 METERS AND A 21.9 IN THE 200 AND THREW THE SHOT 61 FEET, 10 INCHES.

HANDOUT PHOTO

scholarship or I was going to be shoveling you-know-what at a feed yard.”

With scholarship offers from Kansas State, Kansas and Colorado entering the summer before his senior season, Lewis had some decent choices. The odds-on favorite was KSU because his older brother, Rick, was the Wildcats starting fullback. But that changed when the younger Lewis attended Nebraska’s summer football camp.

“I was going to go to the Colorado summer football camp but my football coach (who was from McCook, Nebraska) basically told me and my parents that I should go to Nebraska’s instead,” he said.

Lewis excelled at NU’s camp. He was the top performer in every single event – the 10- and 40-yard dashes, shuttle run and pro-agility.

“During camp, coach Osborne sat me down in his office and when he offered me a scholarship I said, ‘Where do I sign?’ Osborne said I would have to wait until signing day in February,” Lewis said.

Physically, Lewis was ready to play in college right out of high school.

“I was a man, partly because my brother beat on me and toughened me up,” Lewis said. “When I got to campus, Boyd Epley, who was the strength and conditioning coach at Nebraska, made a comment that I looked like what a Husker football player should be.”

For an aspiring Husker, there were few higher compliments.

Lewis immediately moved up to varsity and became the third-string fullback behind Bryan Carpenter and Sam Schmidt at the start of the 1988 season. He would become the No. 2 guy after Schmidt broke an ankle early in the year and then played in all 12 games including the Orange Bowl.

It was a great opportunity for Lewis to be making an impact as a true freshman. That’s why he didn’t make a big deal of the



pain he was suffering after every hit. The pain stemmed from an injury sustained in his last game in high school.

“I got hit and my head went backwards,” said Lewis, explaining the cause of the injury. “I knew something happened but I went through track season and felt fine. But when I went to Nebraska, every time I hit someone head-to-head, I would feel a burning sensation all the way down my right arm.”

After the season, Lewis brought it up to the NU training staff and they flew him to Los Angeles to be diagnosed. It was discovered that there was a crack in a couple of spots in his neck that affected nerves. He underwent surgery in Las Vegas and took a redshirt in 1989 to recover.

“That year I put on 30 pounds to get up to 230, but kept my speed which was around a 4.6 in the 40-yard dash,” Lewis said. “But when I began practice in the fall of 1990, I started to feel the pain again after hits, so I took a week off and was going to quit football. Coach Osborne talked me into coming back, and the coaches worked with my blocking technique so that I was able to play.”

Lewis started six games, sharing time with junior Omar Soto. Lewis and Soto paved the way for the I-backs, and NU became the top rushing offense in the Big Eight.

“I was a great cut blocker,” Lewis said. “On an I-back pitch play I would get to the

second level and cut the linebacker down. Coach Osborne didn’t want any smack talking, he just said to knock the guy down and you can even help him up, just let him know it is going to be like that the rest of the day.”

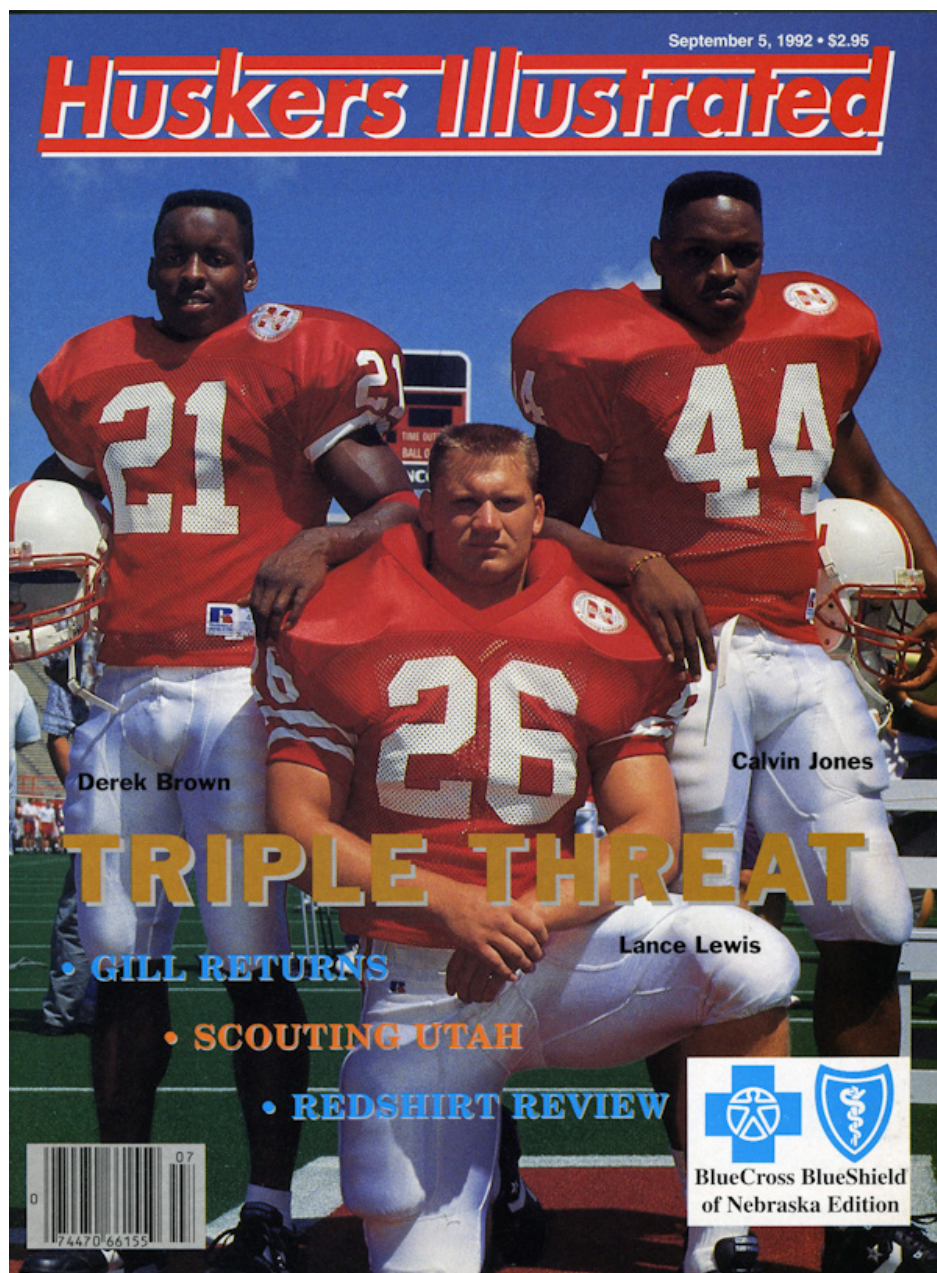
The duo of Lewis and Soto continued their pivotal role in the Husker offense the following year in 1991. NU earned the NCAA rushing crown with 353.2 yards per game, won the Big Eight title and went to the Orange Bowl.

At Nebraska, Lewis developed the mindset of a team player and it wasn’t just in football.

While walking on campus in the spring of 1991, one of the NU track coaches approached him about throwing the shot put. The Big Eight Championship was in three weeks, and NU was without its top thrower. Lewis had not thrown the shot in four years since his senior year in high school, but he said he would do whatever he could to help.

After a couple of track meets as tuneups, Lewis threw 58-3 to win the 1991 Big Eight Outdoor Championship. Lewis is still proud of having earned five letters at Nebraska – four in football and one in track.

Lewis’ best season as a Husker football player was his senior year in 1992. He was a full-time starter and the third-leading rusher with 482 yards (7.8 average) and five touchdowns. He also caught a 15-yard touchdown pass. His blocking helped produce a pair of 1,000-yard rushers, Calvin Jones and



LEWIS LED THE WAY IN 1992 FOR THE DYNAMIC I-BACK DUO OF DEREK BROWN AND CALVIN JONES. BROWN AND JONES RUSHED FOR MORE THAN 1,000 YARDS EACH THAT YEAR.

Derek Brown.

"Either Derek or Calvin could have been the starter for us that year," Lewis said. "They were so close when the coaches graded them in practices and games, that they ended up splitting playing time in games. But they were different running backs. Derek was smaller and quicker, while Calvin was bigger and faster."

Lewis' favorite game of his NU career was from his senior season. It was against Colorado on Halloween night.

"We were running the option a lot and

occasionally I would get the ball. I would get five to seven yards a carry, but at halftime coach Osborne just looked at me and said one of my carries was going to pop, just be patient," Lewis said.

Sure enough, at the start of the fourth quarter, Lewis ran 34 yards untouched for a touchdown.

Lewis finished the game with 62 yards on only seven carries in NU's 52-7 win. He was Nebraska's player of the game on offense. His senior year performance gave him an opportunity to play in the NFL. Teams were still using fullbacks in their offenses, so Lewis had a good chance of getting drafted.

"On draft day I was in Lincoln in my apartment and I get a call from the Detroit Lions," Lewis said. "They told me they



ONE OF LEWIS' FAVORITE MEMORIES WAS RUNNING FOR 62 YARDS ON SEVEN CARRIES AGAINST COLORADO ON HALLOWEEN NIGHT IN 1992, A 52-7 HUSKER WIN.

were going to draft me in the eighth round. I thought this is going to be great, I would be blocking for Barry Sanders. But then Indianapolis called me and said they were going to draft me in the seventh round, so that is where I went."

The Colts were not a good fit for Lewis and he was released from the team. To this day, he doesn't know why they drafted him after selecting another fullback in the second round. But there were teams that had interest. He tried out for the San Francisco 49ers and Kansas City Chiefs and impressed enough for them to call his agent.

"My agent couldn't get ahold of me at the time because I didn't have a cellphone so he made the decision for me and went with Kansas City," Lewis said. "I would have loved to have gone to San Francisco and learn under Tom Rathman, but I got to catch balls in practices from Joe Montana, who was in his last year at Kansas City.

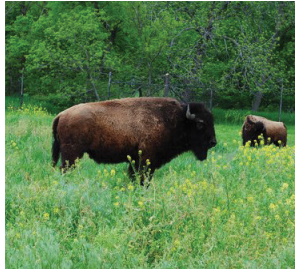
"If I would have been in the right place at the right time, I probably would have made a team. But I went back to school and got my degree from Nebraska."

Lewis met his wife, Tanya, during that time in Lincoln and they have now been living in Sidney, Nebraska, since 2000. They have three kids. Logan finished grad school at Oregon State. Cade completed three years at Dartmouth and ran track. And daughter Peyton is a sophomore at Bowdoin College in Maine.

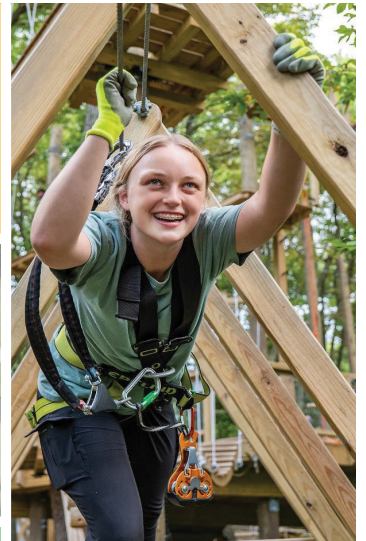
Lewis works for Air Management Supply, a La Vista, Nebraska, company, selling HVAC equipment, which consists of heating, ventilation and air conditioning equipment.

"I travel the whole state and people still remember me when I played at Nebraska, which is really nice to hear," Lewis said.

GET THE SEASON STARTED!



OUTDOOR  
ADVENTURE



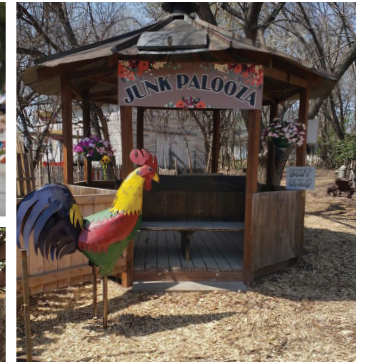
SPORTING  
EVENTS



*Sarpy County*  
 *Tourism*

So Near, So **FUN**. • [GoSarpy.com](http://GoSarpy.com)

RECREATIONAL  
FISHING




FESTS  
& FAIRES



AWARD-WINNING  
FOOD &  
DRINKS

   [GOSARPY.COM](http://GOSARPY.COM)

BELLEVUE • GRETN • LA VISTA • PAPILLION • SPRINGFIELD • OFFUTT AFB

A full-page background image of Jaz Shelley, a guard for the Nebraska Huskers, dribbling a basketball during a game. She is wearing a white jersey with red accents and the number 1. In the background, a player from Missouri State is visible in a maroon jersey with the number 3.

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL TEAM MEMBER JAZ SHELLEY BECAME NEBRASKA'S FIRST FIRST-TEAM ALL-BIG TEN SELECTION UNDER COACH AMY WILLIAMS IN 2023. THE 5-FOOT-9 GUARD FROM MOE, AUSTRALIA, LED THE HUSKERS WITH 14.5 POINTS, 6.2 ASSISTS AND 1.7 STEALS PER GAME, WHILE ADDING 4.8 REBOUNDS.

REGGIE RYDER/HUSKERS ILLUSTRATED(2)

# Getting Jazzed

Guard Jaz Shelley Decides to Return for One More Season

By Shane G. Gilster

Shortly after Nebraska fell 64-55 to Kansas in the third round of the postseason WNIT, Nebraska coach Amy Williams received some good news.

Senior guard Jaz Shelley announced she'd be returning for a fifth season of college basketball.

Shelley averaged 14.5 points a game, shot 36.1% from beyond the arc and was an All-Big Ten first-team pick as a senior in 2022-23.

"It was definitely a long process and there was a lot to weigh out, but I'm really, really happy about my decision," the former Australian National Team member said in

an interview on the "Sports Nightly" radio show.

"At the end of the day I kind of went with my gut, but also the fact that I'll never get this experience again," she said. "I'll never get a college experience. I can't leave and come back to it. And I still think there's a lot more I can provide for Nebraska. I gain so much by being here and I still want to keep playing here."

Shelley's decision to take her COVID-19 season was made more difficult when best friend and fellow Australian Izzy Bourne ended her playing days at NU a few weeks earlier.

But Bourne has been playing at Nebraska for four years, while Shelley has played just two after also playing two seasons at Oregon. Shelley feels she has more to give and more to accomplish. She said playing in front of NU fans and with "amazing" teammates influenced her decision.

"Husker Nation's been really incredible these past two years," Shelley said. "And I'm really excited to play in front of them again."

Nebraska's season fell short of preseason expectations.

The Huskers failed to reach the NCAA tournament, finishing 18-15 overall and



8-10 in a rugged Big Ten. The Huskers won their first two games in the WNIT over Missouri State (74-65) and Northern Iowa (77-57) before bowing out in Lawrence.

Injuries played a part in the struggles.

“Our team dealt with a lot of adversity this year with Allison (Weidner) going out, then Sam (Haiby) going out,” Shelley said. “Izzy had a shoulder injury she was dealing with. We had a lot of ups and downs and it was definitely a tough year for a lot of us.”

Shelley believes the struggles will harden the team for next season.

“Moving forward, everyone’s hungry,” she said. “We’re excited to work hard again and achieve those goals of the NCAA tournament.”

Shelley will be part of a solid returning cast in 2023-24, joining Alexis Markowski, a healthy Weidner, Maddie Krull, Kendall Moriarty, Maggie Mendelson, Callin Hake and others.

Weidner, a sophomore, injured her knee in a December win over Kansas and missed the remainder of the season after surgery.

She averaged 10.2 points prior to going down.

The Huskers will also welcome touted freshman newcomers Logan Nissley out of North Dakota and Natalie Potts from St. Louis.

Shelley said the returning players are confident and ready to get to work and put the disappointments of this past season in the rearview mirror.

“We know we can be a high-caliber team and compete in the NCAA tournament,” Shelley said in the radio interview. “We have that trust in each other and we want to show the fans that we appreciate their loyalty and want to give back to them.”

Shelley is looking forward to a trip home to Australia in late May. But up first? Graduation ceremonies at Pinnacle Bank Arena.

“I graduate May 20, and I’ll probably head home right after that,” she said. “That was a big reason why I came to the United States was to get my degree over here, and I’m glad it’s from Nebraska.”

SHELLEY ANNOUNCED ON SOCIAL MEDIA ON MARCH 31 THAT SHE WOULD BE RETURNING TO NEBRASKA FOR ANOTHER YEAR OF BASKETBALL. SHELLEY IS SET TO GRADUATE IN MAY.



# Another Aussie Headed for Lincoln

*Staff Report*





STILL ONLY 17, THE 6-FOOT-2 JESSICA PETRIE COMES TO THE HUSKERS FROM AUSTRALIA WITH LOADS OF EXPERIENCE. LAST SUMMER, SHE PLAYED ON AUSTRALIA'S U18, U17 AND U16 NATIONAL TEAMS.

NU COMMUNICATIONS

It turns out Nebraska will be getting even more help from Down Under next season.

Nebraska announced April 12 the signing of Jessica Petrie, a 6-foot-2 forward from Gold Coast, Queensland.

Petrie, part of the Australian National Team program, is a big get for the Huskers. She averaged 18 points, 8.8 rebounds and 3.5 assists through six games for the Basketball Centre of Excellence in Australia's semiprofessional NBL1 East Division.

Husker coach Amy Williams said Petrie

is one of the most talented and promising women's basketball players in Australia.

"We are very excited to have her joining the Huskers," Williams said. "She has already played with and against some of the best in the world. She has a tremendous work ethic, and she matches the competitive desires we have in this program."

Petrie played at three levels for the Australian National Team in the summer of 2022 and was a significant contributor for each: The Australian U18 National

Team at the FIBA Asian Championships; the Australian U17 National Team at the World Cup in Debrecen, Hungary; and the Australian U16 National Team at the FIBA Asian Championship in Amman, Jordan.

Petrie, who will turn 18 in May, comes from a basketball family. Her father played in Australia's NBL and now coaches. Her mother was a two-time WNBL champion in Australia.

# HUSKER TRIVIA



**1.** What is Nebraska's football record as of the month of August 2022?  
A. 15-1 B. 14-2 C. 13-3 D. 10-6

**2.** When was the last time Nebraska had a first-round offensive football draft pick?

**3.** Since 2000, how many times has Nebraska finished ranked in both top 25 football polls?

**4.** Name the number of the most penalties committed by the Huskers in a game.

**5.** What Husker holds the record for the most blocked kicks in a season?

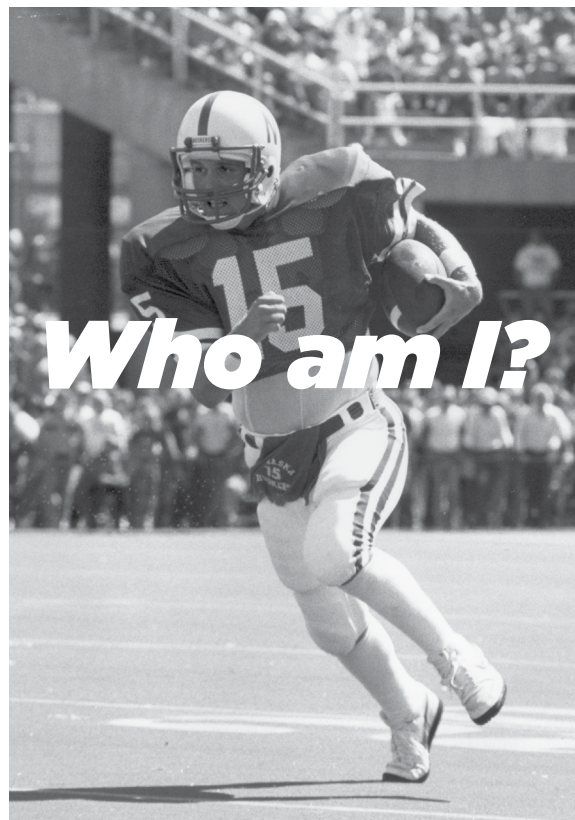
**6.** Who was the leading rusher on the 1993 Nebraska football team?

**7.** Which FCS opponent has Nebraska played the most? A. South Dakota State B. McNeese State C. South Dakota D. Idaho

**8.** Who finished runner-up to NU's Mike Rozier in the Heisman Trophy voting in 1983?

**9.** Name the number of the most sacks recorded in a game by a Husker defense.

**10.** What was Nebraska's national ranking entering the 1997 national championship season?



I was the Miller-Digby Award winner as the Most Outstanding Player of the Allstate Sugar Bowl in 1985.

**ANSWERS**  
1) B. 14-2  
2) 1996 Lawrence Phillips (6th overall)  
3) Eight  
4) 16 (vs. Texas A&M, 2010)  
5) Barron Miles (four punts, 1994)  
6) Calvin Jones (1,043 yards)  
7) C. South Dakota (17 games)  
8) Steve Young (BYU)  
9) 11 (1989 vs. Oregon State & 2005 vs. Maine)  
10) No. 6  
Who am I? Craig Sundberg



# ***Sports Gambling Leaves an Empty Feeling***

**Confidential. 24 Hours a day, 7 days a week.**



127 S. 37<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite B | Lincoln, NE 68510

**402.476.2300**

**ChoicesTreatmentCenter.com**

**Local Helpline:**

**402-476-2300**

**National/Nebraska  
Helpline:**

**800-522-4700**

**Nebraska Helpline:**

**833-238-6837**

**The Nebraska Gamblers Assistance Program (GAP) pays for confidential counseling with certified problem gambling providers to Nebraskans and their families who suffer a gambling addiction.**

**A list of all GAP-certified counselors in Nebraska is found at:**

**[problemgambling.nebraska.gov](http://problemgambling.nebraska.gov)**

# BUILDING LIFELONG RELATIONSHIPS FOR 20 YEARS!



**20<sup>th</sup>** **TD** **TOM** **Dinsdale**  
2003-2023  
ANNIVERSARY

1708 S. WEBB RD. | GRAND ISLAND, NE | DINSDALEAUTO.NET | 308.382.4662