

By Larry Pritchett

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If you listen to the sports writers from the Lincoln and Omaha papers, you first have to realize that they are pretty much experts about how things should operate in all sporting activities at UNL, UNO or Creighton. I thought at times they have been overly tough on some of the coaches, and really off base on how tough they thought Dr. Tom might be as AD at Nebraska.

Coaching isn't easy at any level and that will never change. It might even get more difficult at all levels. People, communities, and contributors all have high expectations as well, and there isn't anything wrong with that.

I always thought even though some years anybody with any athletic background could look at a particular squad and know it was going to be difficult to be extremely successful with them, I would always rather have high expectations than no or low expectations.

Anyway, the Nebraska baseball program under Mike Anderson had been struggling the past three years.

You must remember that Anderson was Big 12 Coach of the Year in 2003 and 2005 and they qualified for the CWS in 2007. However, the Huskers have failed to qualify for the Big 12 tournament in the last three years and with the College World Series just up the road in Omaha, expectations in recent years have risen in baseball.

The talk was that Coach Anderson could be in trouble, but I had the feeling in visiting with people way closer to the baseball program in Lincoln than I am that Anderson, who had one more year left on his contract, would get a shot at competing in the Big 10 conference.

The Big 10, by the way, is not nearly as good as the Big 12 or the Missouri Valley as far as baseball is concerned. There are lots of reasons for that, but the biggest is, who wants to play baseball in the spring in Minnesota, Michigan, etc? It is cold there.

It would appear that Nebraska will have far and away the best facilities in the league and they will probably be considered the "warm weather" school in the Big 10. Whatever the situation is, Mike Anderson will not be Nebraska's coach in the Big 10.

Dr. Tom pulled the plug over the weekend and shot down the sportswriter's claim that Osborne just doesn't fire coaches. It would appear that even though it is apparent that Osborne just like most AD's does not enjoy that part of the job, he certainly can and will do it if needed.

Those who don't think Tom Osborne can do the hard part of the AD job only has to look at this baseball situation and then go back to the Callahan departure in football and the hiring of Bo Pelini. Osborne did what he thought was right for the Nebraska football program. Part of that was to hire Bo Pelini instead of Turner Gill, who Osborne has said is one of his favorite people plus maybe his favorite player. But he thought that Nebraska needed a harder defensive edge to the team and he went with BP.

Don't you think that probably was one of the hardest decisions Osborne has ever had to make? I would bet it ranks right up there. For now the baseball team will have a new leader going into the Big 10. I would bet that Dr. Osborne makes a good pick in regards to the new coach.

Summer Important to Athletes

This is the end for this school year, but it is the beginning for the 2011-12 high school athletic seasons. This is when the most improvement should take place.

The time you have to go out on your own and shoot the 200, 300 shots a day that it takes to become a better scorer in basketball, or serve a 100 times a day in volleyball, or throw passes to a buddy in football.

It is a time to take in some camps either as an individual or as a team. It is the time to work with your left hand if you are a right hander and your right hand if you are a left hander.

Make the things you can't do well, better. Make the things you can do well even better. My Mother always told me "The way to Hell is paved with good intentions," and I am pretty sure she wasn't trying to get me to work on my jump shot. I certainly have had in my tenure in coaching a lot of players who told me they intended to do whatever during the summer, and then they would come back not much better than when they left.

Those were the days when we couldn't do much in the summers with the players. I know that there was a time when I decided we were doing too many team camp things and not enough individual improvement things.

Team camps are great, but you have a tendency to just do what you already do well because even if the games are never going to count for anything, you want to win them. And then when you come home, you still can't go to your left, or shoot with that "off" hand. Improvement only comes to those who are willing to work for it. It isn't easy and my old movie line from "A League of Their Own" goes "Hard! Hard is what makes it good! If it were easy, everyone would do it!" Working on the hard things over the summer is what makes champions during the school year. Have a great summer.