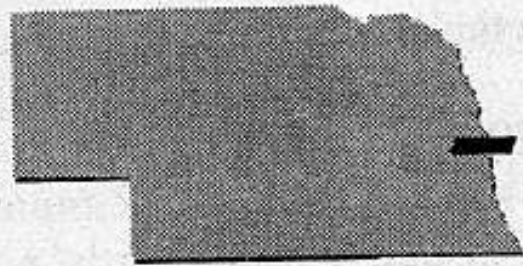


# A Fresh Look At Nebraska



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By LuAnn Schindler

Around age six, I discovered the power of red.

On Saturdays, my grandparents would venture from Wausa to Clay Center to stay with my younger sister and me while my parents trekked to Lincoln for Husker home games or an occasional road trip. We'd huddle close to the radio and listen to Lyle Bremser explain the x's and o's. Sometimes, the Cornhuskers would win; other times, the college boys fell short.

But they never lost.

Sure, there have been times when the scoreboard reflects that the Huskers have been outscored by the opponent. That's the thing with games; one team has to come out on top.

In my childhood home, my parents said there were lessons to be learned from competition that extended beyond the playing field. Football became an analogy for and a way to live life.

I was young. I listened. I believed.

I still do.

Around age 10, I attended my first Husker game. My sister and mom used the season tickets; my dad and I sat in the south stadium. It didn't matter; it was an opportunity to watch these bigger-than-life giants of athleticism play a game they loved. Nebraska hosted Oklahoma, and although the Huskers fell three points short, I was hooked.

Since that time, I've sat through the thrill of victory. The 1978 NU-OU shootout in Lincoln stands out in my memory. Billy Sims fumbled with just over three minutes left in the fourth quarter. The goal posts rocked into pieces that blustery November afternoon.

I've cheered through close contests. The 1971 "Game of the Century" awoke my cousin's newborn twins when the Huskers won. A slew of on-side kicks kept K-State close in 1983. I replay the 1997 miracle at Missouri in my sleep.

And, like many of you who support the Huskers, I've felt the punch in the gut after games filled with question marks and what ifs. Who can forget the decision to go for two in the 1984 Orange Bowl? In 2006, a win over Texas dissipated with a few minutes remaining. And this past Saturday, when Virginia Tech slipped past the Big Red by a point, the upper cut to the abdomen knocked the wind out of me. You may have experienced the hit, too.

Around age 40-something, I realize that some fans and fanatics lose the simple pleasures of the game. Victories don't always have to translate into the "W" column. Supportive fans realize that these 18- to 23-year-olds are young men who are, well, human. Errors happen. Sometimes, that's difficult to remember when we're part of a competitive society.

I've sat through 100-degree heat, a blizzard, a sleet storm and rain. I've traveled to conference contests and bowl games. I've endured humidity, watered-down soda, Division II-A teams in the non-conference schedule and cold pizza. It's about being a supportive fan.

The sun will rise on Sunday morning after a loss, or at least that's what my mom says.

She didn't say the sky may be partly cloudy.