

McDermott felt several emotions, including pride when his CU coaching successor was introduced.

Sports



Budget stalls over school choice funding; lawmaker warns of 'mutual destruction.' Midlands, Page A3

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NIKOS FRAZIER, THE WORLD-HERALD

Nebraska practices Wednesday ahead of Thursday's NCAA tournament game against well-known foe Iowa. The teams have already played twice this season, but the backdrop – the Sweet 16 – is much different from what the teams have faced before.

Sweet 16 game offers raw beauty of a rivalry matchup

Nebraska, Iowa are no strangers to each other, but stakes higher this time

HOUSTON — What are you doing here?

Nebraska and Iowa are like the two neighbors and rivals who get invited to an exclusive party and are not thrilled to see the other one.

But here they are at the Sweet 16, where they will meet Thursday night in the NCAA tournament. It has

to take an edge off Nebraska's first Sweet 16 appearance and Iowa's first since 1999.

You again? For Nebraska, instead of an

energy-fused up-tempo game with No. 1 seed Florida, which would be seeing the Husker defense for the first time, it's Slog Wars III with Iowa.

For Iowa, which benefited from Gator coach Todd Golden's arrogance in a second-round upset, it's another dance in the ring with the Huskers, who know all the Hawkeye moves.

Gone is any advantage the Hawkeyes or Huskers would have had by playing a team that would have taken them lightly or not been ready for their lunch bucket physical defense.

These two know each other better than anyone. They've already thrown every wrinkle at the other in the first two games — split on home courts. Now they have to come up with more surprises in the biggest game of the season.

This could get awkward. This could get physical. This could get emotional. It might even get a little ugly at times.

And at some point during the game, the players and fans are bound to forget that this is an NCAA tournament game with a spot in the Elite Eight on the line.

Because they're going to look up and realize that's not Florida or Houston or Arizona on the other side.

It's a guy who they really, really want to beat.

Not that you will get anyone to admit it.

"We're treating the game as any other game," said Nebraska's Pryce Sandfort, the former Hawkeye. "Same approach we've had all season and just kind of

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TOM SHATEL

Lawmakers advance business incentive bill

Opponents of the measure decry it as 'corporate welfare'

JOSH REYES
World-Herald Bureau

LINCOLN — A major incentive package meant to attract and retain major employers advanced in the Nebraska Legislature after about six-and-a-half hours of debate Tuesday.

Legislative Bill 1165, carried by Omaha-area State Sen. Brad von Gillern on behalf of Gov. Jim Pillen, ended up winning first-round approval comfortably, 38-3, with eight lawmakers not voting. The bill would provide tax cuts and other incentives for companies with more than 3,000 employees

that over several years meet certain metrics for business growth and create high-paying jobs with specific benefits. The bill would not start providing tax credits until 2031, though funds for worksite renovations and other work could be accessed earlier.

Lawmakers opposed to the bill called it "corporate welfare" and said Nebraska needs to stop providing tax breaks amid ongoing budget challenges. They also said the bill was narrowly targeted to benefit Freight Pacific to help ensure the freight rail giant keeps its headquarters in Omaha.

Von Gillern said the bill was not about a single company. He asked lawmakers to think of all

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CHRIS MACHIAN, THE WORLD-HERALD

Omaha-area State Sen. Brad von Gillern speaks about Legislative Bill 1165 during a press conference at the Durham Museum on Jan. 23. The incentive package is meant to attract major employers to Nebraska and retain them.

Iranians dismiss ceasefire proposal

US plan to pause war includes reopening Strait of Hormuz

JON GAMBRELL, DAVID RISING, MUNIR AHMED AND AAMER MADHANI
Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Iran dismissed an American plan to pause the war in the Middle East on Wednesday and launched more attacks on Israel and Gulf Arab countries, including an assault that sparked a huge fire at Kuwait International Airport.

Iran's defiance came as Israel launched airstrikes on Tehran and as the United States deployed paratroopers and more Marines to the region.

In an interview with Iranian state TV, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said his government hasn't engaged in talks to end the war, "and we do not plan on any negotiations."

Earlier, two officials from Pakistan described the 15-point U.S. proposal broadly, saying it addressed sanctions relief, a roll-back of Iran's nuclear program, limits on missiles and reopening the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's oil is shipped.

An Egyptian official involved in the mediation efforts said the proposal also includes restrictions on Iran's support for armed groups. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss details not yet released.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt claimed the U.S. and Iran are in ongoing talks even as Iranian officials deny it.

"Talks continue. They are productive, as the president said Monday, and they continue to be," Leavitt said at a White House briefing Wednesday.

Some of those points were nonstarters in negotiations before the war: Iran insisted it won't discuss its ballistic missile program or its support of regional militias, which it views as key to its security. Its ability to control passage through the Strait of Hormuz represents one of its biggest strategic advantages.

Iran's attacks on regional energy infrastructure along with its restrictions on the strait sent oil prices skyrocketing and sparked fears of a global energy crisis, in turn, putting pressure on the U.S. to find a way to end the chokehold and calm markets.

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Tribute to Tietjens

Bellevue police will lead the Saturday funeral procession for Master Sgt. Noah Tietjens.
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Trading or gambling?

How a new way to wager on sports is evading Nebraska's online betting ban.
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Weather

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