

Miller Set to Push NU Toward National Title

By Jess Schwager, Nebraska Media Relations

Since the premiere of "The Flintstones" in 1960, Fred Flintstone has always made bowling look simple.

He would just twinkle his bare feet and roll a round rock into 10 pins with ease. After every strike, he'd jump in the air and celebrate with a boastful "Yabba Dabba Do!"

If only bowling was that easy.

Nebraska bowler Adrienne Miller knows the sport is anything but what is portrayed in the hit cartoon.

"Many people don't know much about bowling. Some people think that bowling is just some recreational sport for Fred Flintstone," Miller said. "But it's a tough sport because we have to analyze every shot. We each take five different balls to every competition and each of those balls does different things."

Adrienne Miller, a senior psychology major, knows a thing or two about bowling. She was exposed to the sport early in life.

"I just come from a bowling family," Miller said. "My dad and aunt are professional bowlers. We own bowling centers and it was always something that I was naturally talented at."

Even though the sport runs in the family, her top priority was not always on bowling. Miller bowled league on Saturday mornings and competed in a few tournaments, but her main focus was on volleyball, basketball and softball in high school.

Despite her other interests, Miller followed her family tradition and accepted a bowling scholarship to the University of Nebraska at Lincoln.

"I think that Nebraska is such a legendary school," Miller said. "I'm just glad I get to be a part of it. Nebraska bowling is where I wanted to be when I was a little kid and it will be Nebraska bowling when I leave."

Miller's bowling talents certainly showed through as she maintained a 203.86 average in just her first season with the Huskers. She also placed in the top 10 in all but one tournament that year and helped the Huskers to their first-ever NCAA title.

"Winning the national title my freshman year was definitely my most memorable experience," Miller said. "It was like we had to work to get it and it wasn't just handed to us. The whole team put in the time and the hours to get there and the fact that it was the first time it ever happened was a big deal."

Miller maintained a high level of competition in her sophomore year as the Huskers marched on to another national championship. Individually she claimed two tournament titles and held a 201.712 average over 52 games to earn second-team All-America honors.

Then her junior year took a drastic detour as personal and time management problems interrupted her bowling career.

Not only was Miller an athlete, but she was also taking 15 credit hours and working a job three nights a week. When bowling practice would end at 5 p.m., she would sprint over to her job and work until 9, hardly leaving her any time for homework and a good night's rest.

"I had a rough year all around. I don't think I was very motivated to be here," Miller said. "Not anything against the team. I really wanted the team to win and when I'd go to tournaments I'd want to help us win, but I just hadn't put in the time with practicing and it was too little too late."

By the time spring rolled around, Miller explained that she hadn't practiced enough. Instead of thinking of ways to make the shot go well, she would think of all the ways she could make mistakes.

Despite her discrepancies, Miller was still held a 197.1 average on the year and earned a spot on the NCAA all-tournament team.

In her final season at Nebraska, Adrienne has matured in her bowling and



Senior Adrienne Miller looks to help the Huskers to an eighth national championship this season.

time management skills and is now completely focused on ending her last season with another national championship. She has already shown her commitment to her team.

"This year I spend a lot of time reflecting on my bowling," Miller said. "This year, my week is just devoted to school and bowling. Being a student-athlete is a job in itself all the time. We're here practicing so many hours a week and that's paying for my school, so I really can't afford to neglect it. Last year I did, so this year I'm just trying to make sure I don't let that happen again."

The ways bowling practices are conducted this season are also a new motivation for Miller. Nebraska Head Coach Bill Straub separated practices in the beginning so that all 10 athletes were not using the lanes at the same times. The new practice regimen allowed the coaches to devote more time to the players individually. The Huskers still participate in team building activities and they bowl league together on Saturday mornings at Sun Valley Lanes in Lincoln.

"I just think having good team chemistry is a big part of leadership to me," Miller said. "Team chemistry is so important and I think this year we already built it up to be a pretty big thing."

Although the senior bowler is trying to be more focused this season, she still finds time to throw in her signature silliness.

"I think I'm probably the least serious person on the team," Miller said. "I like to joke around and have fun, but I think I'm enough of a solid person that people do respect me and if I have something to say, they will listen. I'm a realist. I'm going to be honest with you and try not to hurt your feelings, but at the same time I do like to have fun and joke around. I don't want to be serious all the time."

Her fun side is certainly evident to her teammates.

"Morning practices are a good show-case for her humor," redshirt freshmen Sarah Koch said. "No one wants to be doing anything at 7 a.m. other than sleeping, but she manages to joke around and keep things on good spirits. I'm excited this year to have the opportunity to travel with her and I know that next year she will be missed."

Miller is on pace to graduate in December 2007 with a psychology degree and will then continue on to graduate school. Although this is her final season with the Huskers, she does not plan on ending her bowling career. If a women's tour is reinstated, she wants to give it a try.

Miller and the rest of the bowling team begin competing on Nov. 10-12 in the Wisconsin-Whitewater Tournament at Whitewater, Wis.