

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Faculty Publications, College of Journalism & Mass Communications Journalism and Mass Communications, College of Mass Communications

2012

College World Series in Omaha: In a League of Its Own

Albert Chen
Sports Illustrated

Bruce Thorson
University of Nebraska at Lincoln, bthorson2@unl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/journalismfacpub>



Part of the [Journalism Studies Commons](#)

Chen, Albert and Thorson, Bruce, "College World Series in Omaha: In a League of Its Own" (2012). *Faculty Publications, College of Journalism & Mass Communications*. 67.
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/journalismfacpub/67>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journalism and Mass Communications, College of at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications, College of Journalism & Mass Communications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

Sports

Illustrated

P R E S E N T S

The GREAT COLLEGE ROAD TRIP

Things to Do, See, Cheer, Hear, Eat, Fling, Sip, Jump and Never Forget
A COAST-TO-COAST ROMP THROUGH CAMPUS SPORTS CULTURE

112



ROSE PARADE

COMPLIMENTS OF FINISH LINE

21



THE BIG TICKET: College World Series in Omaha

IN A LEAGUE OF ITS OWN

Intimate, lively and full of sudden heroes, the NCAA's June Classic is a baseball event like no other

THE GREATEST SHOW on Dirt—as the College World Series is known these days—pitches its tent in Omaha every June, and it is indeed a show unlike any other: Baseball-crazed fans arriving in droves from college towns everywhere; the smell of barbecue wafting through the sticky early-summer air; organ music, like a gentle breeze, filling an intimate ballpark.

The eight-team, 11-day tournament has called Omaha home for 61 years, though it migrated (if you can call it that) last summer from its longtime venue, Rosenblatt Stadium, to the city's new, gleaming \$131 million jewel, TD Ameritrade Park, the largest non-major-league ballpark in the country. Even Rosenblatt loyalists admit that despite the loss of a little coziness, the new digs—situated closer to downtown bars and restaurants—are first-rate, meshing state-of-the-art amenities and a feeling of small-town intimacy. Capacity is 24,000, and there's not a bad seat in the house.

Beyond the tournament—where over the past 11 years eight teams, spanning the entirety of the continental U.S., Miami to Oregon State, have been

PITCHER PERFECT

This 2011 Cal-Virginia hurlers' duel produced the longest CWS scoreless stretch in 24 years: 6½ innings.



crowned champions—it is Omahans' hospitality and epicurean enthusiasm that help make the CWS unique. The tailgating is legendary; some fans come for the barbecue alone. Massive pots of Cajun gumbo, courtesy of the LSU faithful that have made Omaha a second home (the Tigers are CWS regulars), are as much a part of the ritual as are juicy Omaha steaks. Stroll through the parking lots and it's likely that you'll be so generously fed that you won't have room for the steak burgers, pulled pork, hot dogs and brats offered *inside* the stadium. Postgame, cross the ballpark's confines for local staples like the double fudge milk shake at Zesto's, where lines can stretch around the block, and the 20-ounce T-bone at Omaha Prime. So integral a role does food play that Series-goers have a term,

So integral a role does food play that Series-goers have a term, 'two and a barbecue,' to describe a team that's eliminated after a pair of losses.

"two and barbecue," to describe a team that's eliminated after a pair of losses.

Inside the stadium, the thrills of the double-elimination tournament can reach March Madness levels. USC's improbable comeback in 1973—they trailed Dave Winfield's Minnesota 7-0 in the bottom of the ninth before scoring eight runs and

taking the title—stands as one of the greatest victories in sports history. In 2002 current Padres closer Huston Street had the crowds buzzing and secured his late-game bona fides with a record four saves as a Texas freshman.

For other players, of course, this tournament is the pinnacle of a career. There are worse fates in college sports. —Albert Chen

BRUCE THORSON/US PRESSWIRE

MIDWEST

General admission: \$11

MIDWEST

Texas, 34

Most CWS appearances:

MIDWEST

CWS signed to stay in Omaha through 2035

MIDWEST

16

MIDWEST

Tickets for the CWS go on sale in April

MIDWEST

Six of last eight winners were not seeded in Top 8

MIDWEST

Nice leg room at Ameritrade: 36 inches