

How sweet it is

The time is upon us. It has started and for this loyal fan, it's the time of year I can't get enough of.

It's football season! That's right, this past Sunday was the official start of the football season. The annual NFL Hall of Fame game was played in Canton, Ohio Sunday, Aug. 8 and the Dallas Cowboys beat the Cincinnati Bengals 16-7.

I know what you're thinking. "It's only a preseason game and the big-name players didn't play that much." This I understand. Heck, I'm not even that big of an NFL fan. I'll catch a Broncos game every now and then on Sunday afternoon but don't follow the league nearly as much as I do college football.

I know I write about football in the majority of my columns, but it is something I can't wait for each year and when it does arrive, it never lasts long enough.

Saturdays during the fall are devoted solely to college football for this guy. I wake up early to catch the pregame shows and get whatever snack I want to share with friends ready in time for the opening kick of the first game.

Games on television aren't the only ones I have to catch throughout the fall. I still have to listen my beloved Northwest Missouri State University Bearcats on the radio each week as well. This consists of listening to internet radio while watching other games on the television on mute.

Throughout my four years at Northwest, the Bearcats made the Division II national championship each year. However, they lost every one of them in heartbreaking fashion. It wasn't until a 30-23 win over playoff rival Grand Valley State in last year's championship could the Bearcats again call themselves national champs. They won back-to-back titles in 1998-99.

I know this “fever” is true for every sports nut whether it is baseball, basketball, hockey or even soccer. There is just something about football season.

As little kids, my brother and I would team up with friends in the neighborhood and play football in our neighbor’s back yard. I remember when we got our first set of football gear. It was of course Nebraska Cornhusker stuff. The pants, helmet and jersey—all Big Red apparel.

They also came with a really cheap pair of shoulder pads. Now, we didn’t really know they were cheap until our neighbor Brett showed up all decked out in the real deal. He had the actual Riddell helmet and a set of “big boy” shoulder pads. Needless to say, our awesome new gear was already outdated.

A short time later, one of the Chase County Longhorn high school football coaches, a good friend of our family, stopped by the house one night with two sets of used shoulder pads. Yes, they were used and fairly worn out but we didn’t care. We had the same thing as Brett which meant no more cheap pads.

We still had to use our less than stellar helmets but we didn’t care. A few years down the road we did get new real helmets.

We grew out of the backyard games and began watching football with the grown ups. It seemed like each weekend a different family would host a watch party for the Husker games.

Of course we all know what happened around 2004 when a guy by the name of Bill Callahan took over as the NU head coach after Frank Solich was let go. I don’t like to talk about it.

Now, our fearless leader, Bo Pelini, is preparing his team for its last season of Big 12 play. Like Colorado, Nebraska has separated from the conference en route for a more promising conference.

Colorado of course broke ties with the Big 12 and is headed for the PAC 10 while the Big Red will begin Big 10 play in 2011.

One of the Enterprise's sister papers, the Wauneta, Neb. Breeze recently hired a new editor who hails from Missouri. He of course is a big Mizzou Tiger fan. Since I went to college in Missouri, I know what he is going through. I moved to a rival state and now I am in another rival state. I still catch grief about being a "green tagger."

These rival games may be no more after this season. The Missouri-Nebraska and Colorado-Nebraska games are ones we look forward to each year.

Now, unless the schools keep each other on the non conference schedule, after this year, there will be no more Friday of Thanksgiving showdown between the Cornhuskers and Buffaloes. It's sad to think of. But I guess, it is something that has gone on throughout time with other teams.

Whether it is Friday night under the lights in Holyoke, Saturday in Boulder or Lincoln, Neb. or Sunday in Denver, get pumped for what this exciting time of year has to offer.