

Sports



Paul "Bear" Bryant
1913-1983

'Bear' Bryant, 69, dies of heart attack

By Tim Woods

Paul "Bear" Bryant's reputation as the greatest coach in the history of college football was well deserved, Nebraska Sports Information Director Don Bryant said Wednesday.

Bryant, the winningest coach in collegiate football history, died Wednesday in Tuscaloosa, Ala., after suffering a massive heart attack. He was 69.

Bryant's friendship with the Bear dated back to 1955, when the latter's Texas A&M team played the Huskers in Lincoln.

Bryant, then sports editor of The Lincoln Star, said the Bear showed true grace and class in his first visit to Nebraska.

"He had had a reputation for being a real slave driver, an ogre," Bryant said. "But even after a long plane ride to Lincoln, he still had me visit him at his hotel for an interview."

"He was gracious before the game (a 27-0 victory for A&M), and after it, too," Bryant said. "He was anything but the ogre others had said."

That same grace, Bryant said, came through in future years when the Huskers met the Bear's powerhouse teams at Alabama.

The two teams met in three bowl games and in two

regular season contests during the 1960s and 1970s.

When the Crimson Tide played Nebraska in Lincoln during the 1977 season, the Bear was likely the feature attraction of the entire weekend, Bryant said.

"I'll always remember after the game ended," Bryant said. "Our players raced across the field, just hoping to shake his hand."

Bryant said the Bear was also moved by the tremendous applause from the Nebraska fans as he and the Tide left the field following the Huskers' 31-24 victory.

"To receive such applause from an opponent's fans might be the greatest testimony to his stature," Bryant said.

The Bear later wrote Bryant, Coach Tom Osborne and Athletic Director Bob Devaney, praising Nebraska's hospitality and fans.

The Bear, who also coached at Maryland and Kentucky, won 323 games and six national championships before retiring Dec. 29.

Ironically, the Bear once told Sports Illustrated's John Underwood that should he quit coaching, "I'd croak in a week."

Considering the precision that he demanded of his teams on the field, the Bear would probably pull his famous houndstooth hat further over his eyes, and growl at himself for having missed his prophecy by three weeks.

Huskers' hot shooting defeats KSU

By Bob Asmussen and Tim Woods

Wednesday night's Big Eight conference game between Nebraska and Kansas State was a tale of two streaks for the Huskers at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

One streak ended, and a second continued. Both meant a 59-43 victory for the Cornhuskers.

Nebraska's freshman center Dave Hoppen stretched his streak of 20-point Big Eight games to three, and the Huskers ended a three-game losing streak to Coach Jack Hartman's Wildcats. Hoppen scored a career-high 27 points, including 9 of 10 field goal attempts and 9 of 12 free throw attempts.

"He's playing with a lot of confidence right now," Nebraska Coach Moe Iba said. "Nothing seems to faze him."

Iba noted, however, that Hoppen's increased scoring reflects the team's ability to get him the ball.

"Without the players' unselfishness, Dave wouldn't be getting all those points," Iba said.

Junior forward Stan Cloudy, for example, had eight assists — including several to Hoppen — and ten rebounds.

"Stan played an excellent ball game," Iba said. "He is a very unselfish player, all of our players are. That's the only way we can win it."

The first four minutes of the game were a battle between Hoppen and Wildcat Center Les Craft. Hoppen

scored Nebraska's first five points, while Craft notched K-State's first six.

Cloudy's basket from the left corner gave the Huskers a 11-6 lead with 14:30 to play in the first half.

The Wildcats fought back to take a 16-15 lead on a driving layup by Jim Roder with 9:15 to play in the half.

Hoppen, however, scored on a layup 22 seconds later to put Nebraska on top to stay.

The Huskers outscored K-State 16-6 in the final nine minutes of the half, to take a 33-22 lead at intermission.

The Huskers shot a scorching 73 percent in the first half, while K-State hit just 47 percent of their field goal attempts.

Nebraska protected its lead well in the second half. K-State was only able to get as close as eight points on an Ed Galvao basket with 16:25 left to go in the game.

Hoppen's fourth three-point play of the game with 9:06 left to play gave the Huskers a 12-point lead.

"They get the ball into me and if they are open in the corner, I kick it out to them," Hoppen said.

Forward Claude Renfro scored 11 points, while guard Greg Downing added 10 for Nebraska, which is 2-1 in Big Eight play. No K-State player scored in double figures.

The Huskers travel to Columbia, Mo., to face the 13th-rated Tigers Saturday night.

"Right now, if we play up to our potential we can give every body in the Big Eight a run," Hoppen said.



Staff photo by Craig Andresen

Nebraska's Claude Renfro tips in basket against Kansas State's Tyrone Jackson in the first half of Wednesday night's 59-43 home victory.

Desire for big bucks leads to winter golf practice

Last Sunday Keith Fergus forced Rex Caldwell into a playoff and went on to win the 90-hole Bob Hope Desert Classic.

Big deal. Golf is so boring I can't believe they would televise it nationally. It's easy to play, too. What other sport can you play all afternoon and not even sweat?

I probably would have forgotten the whole thing except I heard veteran announcer Vin Scully say that



Bill Allen

Fergus received \$67,500 for the victory. So I decided to practice a little and make some of that big money myself. I called up an old friend who plays golf all the time.

"Hey Arnie, let's go play some golf."

"Bill," Arnie said, "do you know what time of year it is? There's snow on the ground."

"So, we'll use orange balls. No, I'm just kidding, I know it's winter, but I figured we could play indoors. Think you could rent us a court somewhere?"

"A golf court, huh?"

"Yeah."

"Bill," he said patiently, "golf is played outdoors. We'll just have to use the orange balls."

Arnie loves golf. He drove me to a local sports shop and helped me pick out some nice clubs, then we headed for the country club.

"Arnie, why were you in such a hurry to leave that sports shop? The woman behind the counter was interested in me."

"Bill, she said you were a good case for legalizing abortion. That's not interest."

"Oh yeah? Well I asked her for her phone number and she told me it was in the book."

"Did you ask her name?"

"She said that was in the book, too."

We arrived at the clubhouse, which stays open all year because it has a bar. It took some convincing (about \$10 worth), but we finally got the manager to let us out on the snow-covered links.

"By the way," I asked him, "do you have any golf carts for rent?"

"No," he said. "But you can use my old tractor. It still runs but you might have to put in a quart of Penzoil."

As we approached the first tee, Arnie said, "You know, Bill, my wife told me if I walked out of the house with my golf clubs, she would leave me."

"Really? She made you choose between golf and her?"

"Yep. I'm sure going to miss her, too."

I'd never really played before, but I had seen "Caddyshack" four times, so I knew the rules.

I teed off. My ball sailed a 100 yards towards the par 3 green. So did my club.

Arnie made a hole-in-one.

"Good shot, Arn."

"Thanks, Bill."

We played and played. All afternoon I battled the elements, chasing that orange golf ball around the course. Finally I let out a sigh of satisfaction as I sank the last putt.

"Good job, Bill," Arnie said. "Are you ready to move on to the second hole now?"

"Sure, just give me a moment to bow to the gallery."

The crowd, of course, was all the men that had been in the clubhouse bar. I guess not too many people play golf in the snow, or something.

On the second hole, Arnie teed off first. The ball bounced well short of the green and slowly rolled toward the hole, hanging on the edge of the cup before finally dropping in.

"Damn," Arnie said, "I almost missed that one."

The crowd was going wild as I approached the tee. Arnie tried to quiet them down, but he must have made them mad. They picked him up on their shoulders and carried him toward the clubhouse. I got in the tractor and followed.

Inside they were sitting around doing a light beer commercial. I went home. This makes 19 columns. Only 4,981 to go for the \$67,500.