

Sports

OU ready to fight for Orange Bowl

By Jim Ballard
Senior Reporter

It's the same old story. For the 39th time in the last 41 years, the winner of the Nebraska-Oklahoma game will have won or shared the Big Eight Championship.

Oklahoma comes into Saturday's game at 9-1, and ranked No. 3 in the nation. A Sooner victory would ensure them of an outright Big Eight title and a trip to the Orange Bowl. If Oklahoma wins this weekend, a rematch with Miami for the national title is unlikely. Oklahoma coach Barry Switzer said that shouldn't matter when his troops invade Memorial Stadium.

Just because we don't attain it (national championship), it doesn't mean our season's been a failure," Switzer said. "The players don't think 'well, it's over with and I'm not going to play hard.'"

"When the ball's snapped, (linebacker Brian) Bosworth's going to knock somebody's head off. Greg Johnson, Steve Bryan and the rest of those guys too."

Bosworth, a two-year All-American and winner of last year's Butkus Award — awarded annually to the best college linebacker — leads the defense.

Since its early season loss to Miami, the Sooner defense has given up an average of three points a game and has not allowed a rushing touchdown all season. Other than Miami, no other team has scored on Oklahoma with the exception of Kansas State. Their touchdown came on an interception return.

However, Switzer admitted his defense would have its hands full with Nebraska's attack.

"I have to agree with Tom Osborne's assessment that he felt, going into the season, that Nebraska had more speed and quickness than some teams in the past," Switzer said. "(Steve) Taylor is probably faster than Turner Gill and (Keith) Jones is the fastest back they've

ever had."

The Huskers will have their hands full, though, as the Sooners, ranked No. 1 in the nation against the run, are allowing only an average of 56 yards a game. Their pass defense is No. 2 in the country; Oklahoma ranks first in total defense, giving up a mere 163 yards per game.

On offense, Oklahoma possesses an offensive line which Switzer says "is probably the best I've ever had."

Led by all-Big Eight performer Anthony Phillips at middle guard and 295-pound Johnson beside him, the Oklahoma line averages 422 yards a game on the ground and puts an average of 44 points per game on the scoreboard. Both of those statistics top the national charts. The Sooners are also ranked No. 1 in total offense.

The backs are led by sophomore quarterback Jamelle Holieway. Holieway has rushed for 736 yards this year, an average of 6 1/2 yards per carry. The remaining starters, in the backfield, half-backs Spencer Tillman and Patrick Collins, and fullback Lydell Carr, all average more than 5 yards per carry.

Saturday's game also will match two of the top quarterbacks in the Big Eight.

Holieway, who was an all-Big Eight selection last season, has passed for 394 yards this year. Nebraska's Taylor has thrown for 677 yards, while generating almost 500 yards rushing, an average of 5 yards per carry.

"Taylor's talents fit their style of offense better than Jamelle's would fit it," Switzer said. "I think Jamelle's fits our style of offense better than he would fit theirs."

Oklahoma will also be shooting for its 600th career victory on Saturday. Only seven other teams have accomplished that, including Nebraska, who reached that plateau last season.

Kick-off is scheduled for 2:30 p.m. to accommodate a national television broadcast by ABC.



Daily Nebraskan File Photo

Oklahoma quarterback Jamelle Holieway attempts to spin out of a tackle by Husker defensive end Brad Smith during last season's 27-7 Sooner win. Holieway will try to light up the scoreboard again in Saturday's game in Memorial Stadium.

NU swimmers head to Colorado

By Jeff Apel
First Down Editor

A pair of programs in two different stages will be awaiting the Nebraska women's swimming team when the Cornhuskers travel to Colorado State and Wyoming this weekend.

Nebraska women's swimming coach Ray Huppert said the 2-1 Huskers are entering their Friday night meet against Colorado State with caution because of how Nebraska has treated the Rams in the past.

Nebraska has won the last four meetings between the two schools, including an 80-42

victory last year in Lincoln.

"If you lose four times to a team, there's a little extra incentive to turn things around," Huppert said. "We will be ready to confront a very, very good team (in Colorado State)."

Huppert said the Colorado State women's swimming program has made great strides since

the Huskers began their winning streak over the Rams in 1981.

Not only has Colorado State coach John Mattos managed to recruit top athletes to the Rockies, but Huppert said the Rams also carved a notch into their swimming history when Val Lang gave them their first-ever points at the NCAA meet last year.

"They're to the point where they have to think beyond their conference and think of themselves as a top-20 team," Huppert said. "They're swimming really well."

Mattos said despite the praise by Huppert for the 2-0 Rams he isn't ready to concede a victory over Nebraska.

Nebraska possesses too much depth and too much overall talent to be taken lightly, Mattos said.

"It's true, Ray lost some of his big guns," Mattos said, "but it's still going to be extremely tough to beat them."

Mattos said the Rams never have been more confident that they could defeat the Huskers than they are this year.

Four years ago when the rebuilding process was in its infant stages at Colorado State, Mattos said his squad approached its meet with Nebraska with the idea it could learn by facing a good team.

Now, Mattos said, his squad approached the matchup with the idea it is capable of swimming against anyone.

"We've had some good races. I can't deny that," Mattos said. "It has taken us awhile to get our feet off the doormat, but everything we have is still on paper. I can't say we're capable of finishing in the top 10 in the NCAA meet."

Both Mattos and Huppert will get a taste of just how far their respective squads may go in this year's NCAA meet when the Huskers and Rams compete in the Wyoming relays on Saturday.

Because the field includes Wyoming, Colorado State, Air Force and Nebraska, Huppert said, it won't be easy for the Huskers to claim their fourth Wyoming Relays title.

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Oklahoma and Nebraska butt heads again

This is it. It's that time of year again. It's time for Nebraska football fans everywhere to lose sleep for a week, watch every TV station's sports report twice a day and think about nothing else but Saturday's game.

Chuck Green



Lock your doors, bolt your windows and get the children off the streets. This year's version of World War III is on the way.

It's Oklahoma time

Cornhusker fans who grew up in Nebraska know what I'm talking about. People from other places can acquire some of the mass hysteria that accompanies this final week of the season, but they don't always understand that the Nebraska-Oklahoma game has meant more to college football in the last 16 years than any other rivalry.

Army-Navy, Ohio State-Michigan, Florida-Georgia and Texas-Oklahoma are all annually exciting, glamorous, tradition-laden events that are often household subjects of conversation, but none of these have had the impact in terms of national

rankings and individual prestige as the Nebraska-Oklahoma shootouts since 1970.

Since that year, Nebraska-Oklahoma games have produced five national champions. They've produced Heisman Trophy winners Johnny Rodgers, Billy Sims and Mike Rozier. Nebraska teams have produced five Outland Trophy winners while the Sooners have produced one, but Oklahoma leads the race in Lombardi Awards, 3-2. Never since 1970 has at least one of the teams not finished in the top five in the Associate Press final poll.

That's how much this rivalry means to the college football world.

To Husker fans, it has meant even more. Each year, the season is made or broken by the outcome of the game. Since becoming coach in 1973, Tom Osborne has been criticized more about losing to Oklahoma than he's deserved and has had few pats on the back for the times he's managed to beat the Sooners. In 1978, Osborne beat what may have been the best Oklahoma team of all time, only to be rematched with the Sooners again in the Orange Bowl six weeks later. It's been that kind of a series for Osborne. He even considered leaving Nebraska to take the coaching job at Colorado when the fan pressure reached an all-time high level of intensity after the Orange Bowl game.

For Nebraska fans, it hasn't been quite as traumatic, but it has been equally frus-

trating, especially during the six-game stretch from 1972 through 1977. For at least a week before those six games, Nebraska fans were treated to the unattractive taunting, Cheshire-cat smiles of Oklahoma players like Thomas Lott, Elvis Peacock, Le Roy Selmon, Billy Sims and Joe Washington on television, telling the nation how they planned to shut Nebraska's offense down while they did everything they wanted to against the Husker defense. The worst part about those six terrible years was that the Sooners always backed up every word they said.

Of course, bad memories aren't the only recollections Husker fans have had of the series. Though the heartbreaks are remembered longer, Nebraskans have had their share of happy moments throughout the series. The 1971 Nebraska 35-31 win in the "Game of the Century" tops off most lists. The 37-14 pounding of Oklahoma in 1981 will be remembered for a long time, as will the 28-21 win in 1982 and the game-saving effort by Neil Harris in 1983 that salvaged Nebraska's perfect regular season.

For Husker fans and Sooner fans alike, the last 16 games have brought countless cheers and heartbreaks, smiles and frowns, and the ever-present "wait til next year" comments. Saturday won't change a thing. Green is a junior news-editorial and criminal-justice major from Lincoln and is the Daily Nebraskan sports editor.