

Sports Opinion



Mike Kluck

Raider Coach Dykes earns respect of all

College football needs Spike Dykes.

This down-to-earth, once roly-poly, Texas Tech coach is imperative in the fast-paced, ever-changing world of college football.

Dykes' coaching speaks for itself.

Since taking over the head job in Lubbock 10 years ago, Dykes has compiled a 60-49-1 record. In the last five years of the defunct Southwest Conference, Texas Tech never finished lower than second in the conference.

Currently, Texas Tech leads the South Division of the Big 12, but the Red Raiders must face Nebraska Saturday at Jones Field.

But it's not Dykes' coaching style that has made him essential among the coaching ranks. It's the Dykesisms.

What is a Dykesism?

While at the Big 12 Media Day in St. Louis last summer, Dykes said one of his Texas Tech receivers didn't have a good pair of hands.

"But he's slow," Dykes quipped, hoping one problem may overshadow the other.

The statement drew a roar of laughter from the press.

Another example: Dykes once told his starting punter, who had just muffed two kicks in an important road game, that he was the worst punter to ever play for Tech.

As soon as the team returned to Lubbock, Dykes told the punter, his scholarship was gone.

The coach then proceeded to play the backup punter, whose first kick was blocked and recovered for a touchdown. Dykes found his starting punter demoralized on the Red Raider sidelines and put his arm around the young man's shoulder.

"Son," Dykes said, "remember all those things I told you? I was just joking."

He finds good things to say about his players but will always tell the truth. Before the season, Dykes said Tech's kicking game is inexperienced this year. But that's probably a blessing, he said, since last year's kicker never seemed to kick well in important games.

And despite all of this, Dykes has earned the admiration and respect of his players.

Maybe this comes from Dykes' background. In his first job as a coach at Eastland (Texas) High School, Dykes coached, taught and drove the bus route, which required him to get up at 5:30 every morning — all for \$4,000 a year.

Now at Texas Tech he has the opportunity to make more than \$100,000 a year, but he's stayed as simple — and as likeable — as a high school bus driver.

Kluck is a graduate student in journalism and a Daily Nebraskan senior reporter.

Huskers invade Lubbock



SCOTT BRUHN/DN

SCOTT FROST, Nebraska's junior quarterback, will lead the nation's third-ranked rushing offense into action Saturday against Texas Tech.

Nebraska postpones thoughts of a third national title.



By **TREVOR PARKS**
Senior Reporter

On paper, the offenses mirror each other and the rushing defenses are both ranked in the top 10. But the Nebraska football team is still predicted to beat Texas Tech by 22 points.

But again, that's on paper. The game's played on artificial turf.

The fifth-ranked Cornhuskers (4-1 overall and 2-0 in the Big 12) and the Red Raiders (4-2 and 3-1) will see if paper holds water Saturday at 2:34 p.m. in front of a sold-out crowd at Jones Stadium in Lubbock, Texas. The game will be televised regionally by ABC.

"This is going to be a good measuring stick to see where we are at," said I-back Damon Benning, who will back up Ahman Green. "It's important for us to be ready. After this week, people will know just where Nebraska football is."

That's because there are still doubts about how good this NU team really is since its 19-0 loss to Arizona State Sept. 21. Since the debacle in the desert, the Huskers have outscored their three opponents 153-12. In conference play, Nebraska has dismantled two foes 88-3.

The Red Raiders sport the nation's leading rusher, Byron Hanspard (217.7 yards per game), the fourth-ranked rushing offense and the ninth-ranked rushing defense in the country.

"This will be a bigger test than what we've had in awhile," NU Coach Tom Osborne said. "They are a very fine team, and overall they play a somewhat familiar style than what we play."

NU has the nation's third-ranked rushing offense, and the Husker defense is not too bad either.

The Huskers rank in the top nine in passing-efficiency defense, rushing defense, scoring defense and total defense.

Please see **FOOTBALL** on 11

NU faces two ranked foes

Two victories would give Nebraska control of the Big 12.

By **SHANNON HEFFELFINGER**
Staff Reporter

Two of the Big 12 Conference's most anticipated volleyball matches this season will take place this weekend at the NU Coliseum.

Nebraska, which enters this weekend's matches on a nine-match winning streak, will battle for supremacy in the conference. NU, ranked No. 6, plays host to No. 10 Texas A&M (15-2 overall and 6-0 in the league) tonight at 7:30 and No. 8 Texas (11-3 and 5-1) Saturday night at 7:30.

The Cornhuskers (14-2 and 6-0) can claim sole possession of first place in the conference by winning both matches this weekend. Two

wins would also put Nebraska in the driver's seat for to win the first-ever Big 12 title and earn a high seed in December's NCAA Tournament.

NU Coach Terry Pettit said his team has been steadily improving all season. The Huskers, who will face three ranked Big 12 teams within the next eight days, appear to be peaking at the right time.

"I think we are a stronger team than we were a few weeks ago," Pettit said. "We're deeper and more confident."

Sophomore middle blocker Megan Korver, who leads the Huskers with 1.66 blocks per game, agreed with Pettit.

"We are a tremendously confident team," Korver said. "The team morale is very high right now. I'm not thinking about us losing. The thought has not even crossed my mind."

The Nebraska defense, which held Oklahoma to a minus-.032 hit-

Volleyball

NU Coliseum

Texas A&M, today, 7:30 p.m.

ting percentage last Sunday, will be challenged tonight by A&M. The Aggies, who have qualified for three-straight NCAA Tournaments, are loaded with offensive weapons at the net.

Junior Kristie Smedsrud leads the Aggies on the outside, hitting .304 while pounding five kills a game. Sophomore Stacy Sykora occupies the other outside hitter position, averaging four kills a game.

Please see **VOLLEY** on 10

Unbeaten NU leaves home after 10 wins

By **VINCE D'ADAMO**
Staff Reporter

The sixth-ranked Nebraska soccer team takes its act on the road this weekend, riding the momentum of a perfect 10-game homestand.

The Cornhuskers (13-0 overall and 5-0 in the Big 12) are one of only three unbeaten and untied teams in the nation. The others are 13th-ranked Harvard (9-0) and unranked Brigham Young (13-0).

Nebraska takes on Missouri today at 3 p.m. in Columbia, Mo., followed by a game against Kansas at 1 p.m. Sunday in Lawrence, Kan. Missouri, a first-year program, is 3-9 overall and 2-3 in Big 12 play under Coach Bryan

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