

Wishbone T formation is no turkey bone

by JIM JOHNSTON
Associate Sports Editor

What's the wishbone T? Well, it's no turkey bone. That's for sure.

As a matter of fact, the wishbone T is the offensive formation for Oklahoma's backfield. And the Sooners run it with authority.

Question one: What is the basic offensive play run from the wishbone T? Answer: the triple option.

Question two: What running play has hurt Nebraska most this season? Answer: the triple option.

Both answers equal the same problem for the Huskers. And Nebraska head coach Bob Devaney and defensive line coach Monte Kiffen are the first to admit it.

"It's giving us some problems in defending all right," offered Devaney. "We've never played against this formation before."

The thing that makes the wishbone so effective is that there are three offensive backs. The fullback lines up directly behind the quarterback while the two halfbacks form the corners of a triangle by standing behind the fullback.

"Any time a team has three running backs they're bound to

have a better running game," explained Kiffen. "And the thing that makes the triple option so effective from the formation is that there is an extra blocker."

The extra blocker, the halfback who isn't carrying the ball, is most noticeable on the third portion of the triple option—the pitch.

If the pitch is to the right, the halfback on the right side (Greg Pruitt) serves as the lead blocker for the ball carrier, who is the left halfback (Joe Wylie).

And the Nebraska Black Shirts don't need reminding how Colorado ran the pitch from the triple option for long gainers just three weeks ago . . .

without an extra blocker.

"We're going to need good support from our defensive backs," explained Kiffen. "Certain members of our team will have certain people to watch. And they can't afford to make any mistakes in their assignments."

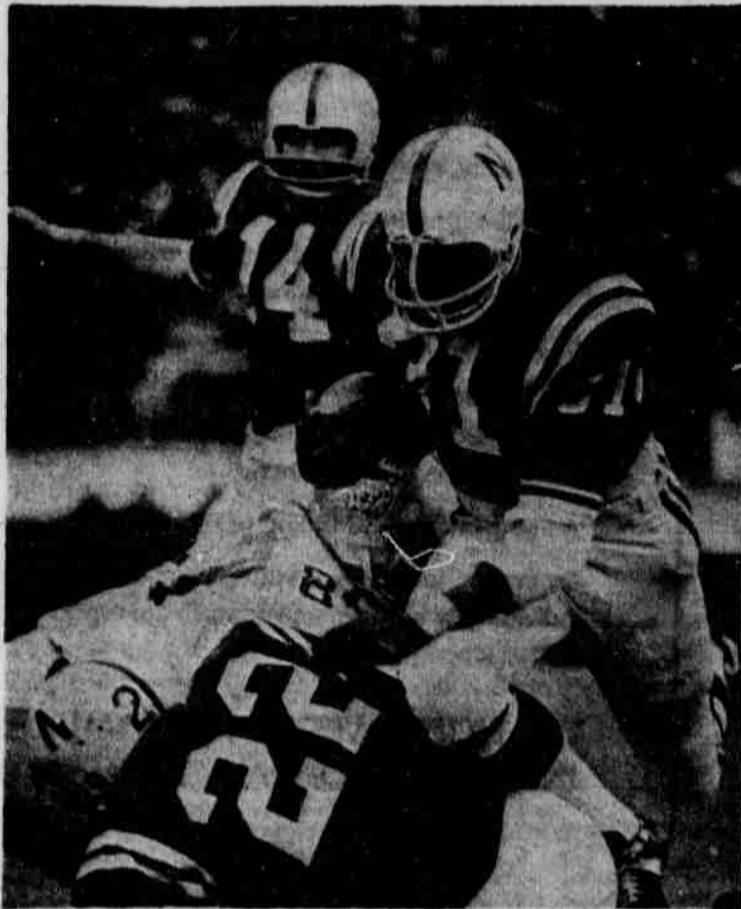
Kiffen feels that the Black Shirts learned from experience on the triple option. "They know what to expect from the opposition a little better," he offered.

Last week the defensive burden was placed on the Nebraska defensive secondary. They responded by intercepting seven of Lynn Dickey's passes.

This week the pressure is on the defensive line.



Fe, fi, foe . . .



Typical Husker gain . . . Nebraska I-back Joe Orduna (31) scored four touchdowns against Kansas State Saturday and leads the Cornhuskers in scoring with 80 points. Dan Schneiss (22) clears the way while quarterback Jerry Tagge (14) watches after the handoff.

Writers tab Murtaugh Lineman

Jerry Murtaugh, the pride of the Nebraska defensive corps, has been named Big Eight Lineman of the Week for the second time this season.

The senior linebacker's selection by a panel of sportswriters was unanimous.

Murtaugh, who intercepted Lynn Dickey's first pass Saturday afternoon, had four unassisted tackles and five assists on the 22 running plays originated by Kansas State.

Earlier in the season, Murtaugh was selected for the honor for his play in Nebraska's 21-21 tie with Southern California. Murtaugh leads all Nebraska defenders with 116 total tackles and 62 solo stops, a Husker record.

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