



Devaney speaks ... people listen

Saturday, Nov. 14: "I've never said this before, but I think we have as much right to be number one as anyone."

Results: Huskers jump fourth to third in UPI, AP and Football News polls. Sports Illustrated puts Nebraska ahead of Notre Dame and Ohio State and says, "It is becoming apparent even outside Nebraska that they just might be the No. 1 team in the land."

Who could forget?

'64: Sooners 17, Huskers 7

'66: Sooners 10, Huskers 9

by JIM JOHNSTON
Associate Sports Editor

The ingredients are there. And Nebraska's coaching staff doesn't need reminding.

The Cornhuskers are shooting for an undefeated season. Oklahoma stands in the way.

Twice since Bob Devaney's arrival at Nebraska, Cornhusker hopes of an undefeated season have been dashed by Oklahoma in the regular season's finale.

It was 1964. Unbeaten Nebraska had the Big Eight title wrapped up and a Cotton Bowl date with Arkansas. The Huskers flew to Norman, Okla., to play the Sooners.

The results: Nebraska dropped a 17-7 decision and then suffered a 10-7 loss to Arkansas in the Cotton Bowl.

It was 1966. The Huskers had whipped their first nine foes and clinched the Big Eight title. A New Year's date with Alabama in the Sugar Bowl had been accepted.

Nebraska again flew to Norman to play the Sooners.

The results: Oklahoma pulled out a 10-9 victory and Alabama took a smashing 34-7 win in the Sugar Bowl.

It's now 1970. Nebraska has dumped nine of its first 10 opponents and tied with Southern California. An Orange Bowl trip to Miami has already been planned.

And Oklahoma is the last team on the Huskers regular season schedule. Enough said.

But this time the Huskers meet the Sooners on the



friendly surroundings of the AstroTurf at Memorial Stadium ... the place where Nebraska hasn't lost a conference game since 1968.

But this year Oklahoma may have a little more going for it in the "incentive" department. Unlike 1964 or 1966, the Sooners have a chance to earn a share of the Big Eight title.

A win over Nebraska Saturday and Oklahoma State the following week would give the Sooners an identical 6-1 league mark.

A win or a tie for the Huskers Saturday would assure sole possession of the conference crown.

So it's showdown time ... a showdown that features one of the top running teams in the league against a team that can do it all.

Oklahoma runs from a powerful wishbone-T offense that chops the field yard by yard until the goal line is in site. Nebraska, behind an offensive backfield that's deeper than the Marianas Trench, can score through the air or on the ground.

Oklahoma cannot take away Nebraska's Orange Bowl trip.

But the Sooners can spoil a spotless season.

And if there was ever a time and place for a spoiler, Oklahoma fills the bill.

Harper is doubtful

Nebraska defensive end Willie Harper, injured during the Kansas State game, was listed as a doubtful starter Thursday by Husker coach Bob Devaney.

Harper will be replaced at right end by Doug Johnson, who saw considerable action against the Wildcats last week.

"We may miss Harper's speed in containment against a team like Oklahoma," admitted Devaney, "but Doug Johnson is a tough kid and he's not a bad football player, either."

Harper still was not working with his unit Thursday, but I-back Jeff Kinney showed improvement from his shoulder injury suffered in the Kansas State game.

"We're not sure if Jeff will be at 100 per cent," offered Devaney, "but he should be available for action."

Injuries may also cause a change in the Husker kickoff team as a precautionary measure. Bob Greatfell, an offensive guard, suffered an ankle sprain.

jock shots

by Jim Johnston

Ten down, two to go

Nebraska is within two games of doing something that hasn't been done since 1960 — a Big Eight team going through the entire season undefeated.

Missouri performed the task 10 years ago with an 11-0 mark. That included a 21-14 win over Navy in the Orange Bowl.

Although the Huskers drew 21-21 with Southern California, they can still boast an 11-0-1 season mark. And Nebraska is also in strong contention for two conference records Saturday.

Nebraska, with 261 points in Big Eight play, is only one touchdown shy of Missouri's seven-game record established last year. The Huskers need 32 more points to crack Oklahoma's league record of 292 points scored in only six league games in 1956.

That's when the Big Eight was the Big Seven.

Last week of predictions

NEBRASKA 38, Oklahoma 13 ... The Cornhuskers may be breaking Thanksgiving wishbones "Sooner" than you think.

KANSAS 24, Missouri 21 ... One notch lower for Dan Devine's defending co-champions.

OKLAHOMA STATE 42, Iowa State 21 ... That information about the Cyclones pass defense was proved false by Nebraska. The Cowboys will pass even more.

KANSAS STATE 35, Florida State 24 ... Mike Montgomery will get in a little more game time this week than he did against Nebraska.

AIR FORCE 23, Colorado 21 ... What are Falcons made of? Sugar and spice and victories.

Blind date at Miami

Nebraska will either be as far out of the picture as a snowmobile during a Miami winter or as fashionable as a bikini after this weekend's bowl picture is completed.

Who knows the answer to the Huskers plight in the sun-splashed Orange Bowl? Oh, Ara Parseghian and his Fighting Irish of Notre Dame may have an indication.

Notre Dame plays host to Louisiana State Saturday and a win would in all practicality assure the Fighting Irish of bids from the Orange and Cotton Bowls. Some people say there's not really a choice — the Irish couldn't resist the possibilities of a rematch with Texas in the Cotton Bowl.

But then there's the gamble that Arkansas will upend Texas for the trip to the Dallas Classic. Is this too big of a gamble to make Cotton pickin' a leary choice?

That's the same problem Nebraska was faced with last week. After all, the Orange Bowl offers more fun, more money, warmer weather and better television coverage.

Players prefer Miami

According to the sports editor at the University of Notre Dame newspaper, the Irish players prefer the glamour of Miami.

But this same source also revealed that the Notre Dame coaching staff was eying the rematch with Texas and thoughts of a national championship. And it's no secret that coach Parseghian will hold an iron hand in deciding where the Irish will spend the Holidays.

But Nebraska coach Bob Devaney told a Sports Illustrated writer last week: "I learned long ago that the worst thing a coach can do is take his team to a bowl the players don't want to be in."

Parseghian may take heed to Devaney's comments. But then he might have some support from the Notre Dame co-captains — quarterback Joe Theisman and offensive guard Larry Dinardo. "We don't really care where we go," said Theisman and Dinardo. "We'll let the coaches decide."

So it looks like Cotton pickin' after all for the Irish. But that possibility of a clash between Nebraska and Notre Dame in the Orange Bowl cannot be left out.

There were rumors earlier in the season about Notre Dame going to Miami and Nebraska coach Bob Devaney sports an Irish twinkle in his eye when talking about the Huskers' blind date.

Does he already know that the Huskers' date is quite attractive?

Aerials set records

There appears to be no way Nebraska's exceptionally consistent passing game can be kept from becoming the most accurate in Big Eight history.

Behind the tandem quarterbacking of Jerry Tagge (90 of 143 for .630) and Van Brownson (47 of 72 for .653), the Cornhuskers are com-

pleting an amazing 62.3 per cent of their aerial tries. After ten games, the Huskers have been successful 140 of 225 tries.

Missing on 25 straight wouldn't even take the Orange-Bowl-bound squad off the record pace of .569 hung up by Oklahoma in 1966. That's when the Sooners attempted just 152 passes.