

Nixon visit substitutes for phone call

by JIM JOHNSTON

The President of The United States can usually get through on a telephone line.

That's what President Richard M. Nixon told the Nebraska football team at the NU Coliseum Thursday afternoon. But the President, as an apology, said he was unable to get through to the Cornhusker dressing room after the victory in the Orange Bowl.

"I understand the team was waiting around the telephone in the locker room for a call from the White House," said Nixon. "But the operator informed me that all the lines were busy. She said everybody from Nebraska was calling."

Nixon's call never did get through to the football team. So the President came in person Thursday to honor the nation's No. 1 team.

"I watched the last quarter of the Orange Bowl on television," Nixon informed the team. "Wasn't that something? It shows what the defense means."

Nixon presented a plaque to the football team which read: The University of Nebraska 1970 football team, champion of the Big Eight Conference, victor in the 1971 Orange Bowl and picked by the Associated Press the Number One team in the nation.

Cornhusker co-captains Dan Schneiss and Jerry Murtaugh accepted the plaque along with head coach Bob Devaney. It is still undecided where the plaque will go, but it definitely won't be placed "in someone's locker" as Nixon suggested.

In naming Nebraska the No. 1 team, Nixon admitted that he ran into political difficulties last season picking the nation's top college football team.

"I couldn't even go to Pennsylvania without a passport," said the President in reference to Penn State coach Joe Paterno's remarks about the President naming Texas the No. 1 team.

"So this year I was careful," continued Nixon. "Nebraska U.S. Senator Carl Curtis advised me during my October trip to Nebraska to wait until after the bowl games before naming the No. 1 team."

And that's what the President did. The Cornhuskers were officially named No. 1 in the final Associated Press poll following two major upsets New Years Day.

Secretary of Agriculture Clifford Hardin, the former NU chancellor who was mainly responsible for the President's visit, also spoke briefly about the Cornhusker football team.

"Coach Devaney has two things which he thinks most important in his theory of coaching," said Hardin. "He insists that the best time to be ahead in a game is at the end and the best time to be No. 1 is at the end of the season."

The former NU chancellor said, "The 1965 game plan was also to be No. 1 at the end of the year. But something went wrong. This year's squad accomplished a goal no other team has been able to do."

What has the 1970 squad accomplished that no other Nebraska team has ever done. The President himself supplied the answer when he lifted his finger signifying No. 1.



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