

Trades pigskin for horsehide

Vactor chases diamond job

by WARREN OBR
Assistant Sports Editor

When Frank Vactor opened the 1969 football season as the Cornhuskers' top I-back, it looked like a dream-come true for the Pennsylvania junior. Joe Orduna had been sidelined by a knee injury and now Vactor was starting on a major college football team.

But then, in a classical Wally Pipp story, Vactor was injured in the season's second game. Jeff Kinney replaced Vactor and went on to Sophomore of The Year honors in the Big Eight. And in 1970, Vactor found himself behind both Kinney and the recovered Orduna. Vactor never started another game.

Pipp, was the New York Yankee first baseman who was injured and replaced by Lou Gehrig. Gehrig then started every game for the next ten years. The Pipp-Vactor comparison fits in another way.

It is in baseball that Vactor is now competing. Although he hasn't played any serious



baseball for over four years, he opened the season as the Husker's starting leftfielder.

"I ALWAYS wanted to play baseball, but I never could because I never really had a position sewn up on the football team and I had to play spring ball," said

Vactor. "I've got no regrets about football though. It's been very good to me. And being No. 1 was a great way to go out."

Vactor first came to Nebraska in 1967 turning down scholarship offers from 30 other schools. He admits his brother Ted, who started for two seasons for the Huskers and who now plays for the Washington Redskins, had a big influence on his decision.

Before entering school, though, Vactor went to the Pittsburgh Pirates training camp. And now four years later, he hopes to get another tryout.

"I'm hoping to play some pro ball because that's really what it's all about," said Vactor. "If I have a good year in the Big Eight, there should be some feelers, but whether I'm picked up or not I want to try out."

VACTOR ADMITS that the odds are against him right now, but he's "not really worried about it. My main worry right now is being 100% for the Big Eight opener this Friday at Colorado."

In the Huskers' opening game of the recent Houston series, Vactor had two hits including a triple. But following the triple, he pulled a hamstring muscle and sat out most of the rest of the series.

Vactor's speed should be his biggest asset in baseball while his only real problem will be "getting my timing back at the plate."

Graduating in June with an elementary education major and a physical education minor, Vactor could coach or teach in the future, but he would prefer to coach.

"Coaching would be nice, and I like to work with young people," said Vactor. And asked where he would settle, Vactor said it would definitely be in Pennsylvania or on the West coast.

Looking back at his career, Vactor would definitely have had a better chance to start on any other Big Eight team. But it is not his philosophy to ask "what if".

"I have no regrets," Vactor concluded, "and I can't look back."



Jim Johnston

Scottsbluff Sen. Terry Carpenter pronounces Bob Devaney's name De-Vain-ey instead of De-Van-ey. He yells "Go Red" instead of "Go Big Red." He has been a constant critic of many aspects of the University of Nebraska.

But Tuesday he quarterbacked an amendment to a bill which would provide funds to build a new fieldhouse at NU. LB 87, which adds an additional five cent tax on cigarettes to be divided evenly between a fieldhouse and a new state office building, advanced first reading with ease 41-3.

The landside victory is significant. An emergency clause, which is included with the Bill's third reading, needs 33 votes to pass. The clause would provide for immediate construction plans on the field house.

Carpenter: "Devaney deserves it"

Devaney, who took Carpenter to lunch last week before he introduced the bill, was introduced by the Scottsbluff lawmaker Tuesday.

"I am introducing to you the most distinguished citizen this state has had in a long time," Carpenter said of Devaney. "Bob Devaney has done more for Nebraska's publicity than any person recently."

"I'm not saying football is the only thing in this state, but many people around the country take a state on the success of its football team."

"I'm not saying if this is good or bad," continued Carpenter. "I'm just saying that Devaney and his coaches have made athletics an important part of the state and we must recognize this. He deserves a new fieldhouse."

Strong opposition by Omaha Sen. Richard Proud was voiced. But only two other senators joined Proud in voting against the measure.

Where does Exon stand?

But one person's opinion that is still unknown is Gov. J. J. Exon. Exon's views are tested on two fronts by the bill.

Exon ran on a campaign of reduced spending, but he also takes pride in Nebraska athletics. "I don't think Nebraskans are proud enough of their No. 1 football team," the governor charged last month. "I hope by next year all Nebraskans wear No. 1 buttons with pride."

Lincoln Sen. Roland Luedtke, the original introducer of the bill to tax cigarettes for building a new state office building, said Exon has not yet expressed his opinion.

Nebraska's athletic department, although pleased that Exon took an interest to express how he feels about Nebraska being No. 1 in football, may feel shortchanged about his statements.

Just because Nebraska is No. 1 in football doesn't mean the school is No. 1 in other sports. On the contrary, Nebraska's minor sports usually fall in the Big Eight second division. But with the claim that Nebraska is No. 1, out-of-staters are getting a distorted picture of the entire athletic program.

Facilities help recruiting

Devaney, in addressing the Legislature Tuesday, said, Nebraska's facilities are definitely below most Big Eight schools.

"When we bring in a recruit we don't show him the swimming pool in the Coliseum," said Devaney. We tell him that it is being painted because we're too ashamed of our facilities to show him."

Cornhusker Basketball Coach Joe Cipriano, in discussing recruiting two weeks ago, said a survey shows that 85 per cent of the athletes select a college because of its facilities.

"I'm at a disadvantage in recruiting," said Cipriano. "Other Big Eight schools have great basketball facilities to show off."

Iowa State and Missouri will move into new fieldhouses next year. Oklahoma and Colorado have new facilities under consideration. And Kansas...well what can be said for a 17,000 seat complex and a basketball team that produces year after year.

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