

CU's Stearns, Orvis disown image of Big Eight 'bad guys'

by Jim Johnston

John Stearns and Herb Orvis are not known as nice guys.

Their Big Eight opponents refer to them as "late hitters" as "cheap shot artists." Stearns has been given the name "Bad Dude" because of his tactics on the field.

But that reputation, according to Stearns and Orvis, is quickly dying.

"THAT 'BAD DUDE' image just doesn't make it in football," said Stearns, Colorado's junior safety. "I was green when I was a freshman and made the mistake of saying I wanted to be the meanest defensive back in the conference. Now I'm trying to live down that reputation."

Orvis, Colorado's all-American candidate at defensive tackle, agrees with Stearns.

"Our philosophy on defense at Colorado is to go out and hit people," said Orvis. "I don't think it's fair to accuse us of cheap shots or late hitting. We just like to crack people."

After the Nebraska-Colorado game at Boulder last year several of the Nebraska players charged Stearns and Orvis with late-hitting tactics. Stearns feels the Cornhuskers had a legitimate complaint.

"I'VE WATCHED the films from last year's game and I agree with Nebraska," said Stearns. "There were several incidents where there was some cheap hitting. But that's all changed. Our philosophy now is to stop people before they gain any yards instead of getting in a good lick after they've already gained three yards."

That's not the only new defensive philosophy at Colorado this year. New defensive coordinator Jerry Claiborne, who built the strong defensive units for Bear Bryant at Alabama a few years ago, has changed the Colorado defensive look.

The new defense is a multiple-front set that often features an eight-man front. One of Claiborne's first changes was to move Orvis, an all Big Eight defensive end in 1970, to defensive tackle.

"I didn't really mind the switch," said Orvis. "My duties are basically the same and I feel we're a much tougher defense with this setup."

THE ABILITY of Colorado's defense was evident in the early weeks of the season. The Buffalos used their defensive strength to stop nationally rated Louisiana State and Ohio State.

But injuries have weakened the Buffs' defense. Three defensive players who started in the opener against LSU—guard Carl Taibi, tackle Stu Aldrich and end Rick Kay—will not play against Nebraska in Saturday's nationally televised game starting at 12:50 p.m.

The Colorado defense was even weaker when the Buffs dropped a 45-17 decision to Oklahoma two weeks ago. Orvis was slowed by an ankle injury and linebacker Billie Drake, possibly the Buffs' best linebacker, didn't see action.

"We're about six positions away from total disaster," said Colorado sports information director Mike Moran. "Our defensive depth is about as thin as a ten-cent ham sandwich."

THE LOSS OF defensive

talent has definitely hurt the Colorado attack...including the offensive attack.

"The job of our defense is to give our offense good field position," said Orvis. "We try to stop the opponents and force them to punt so we can have good field position. We have a great punt returner in Cliff Branch (9.2 speedster) and we can usually get good field position after Cliff's return if our defense can just do the job."

Orvis, who should be at 100 per cent Saturday, says the Buffs have to stop Nebraska from making the big play. "The tough thing about Nebraska's offense is that they try to put you to sleep," said the Buff defensive tackle. "If they get you used to the same thing then they'll try to surprise you. We have to be ready for the surprise play."

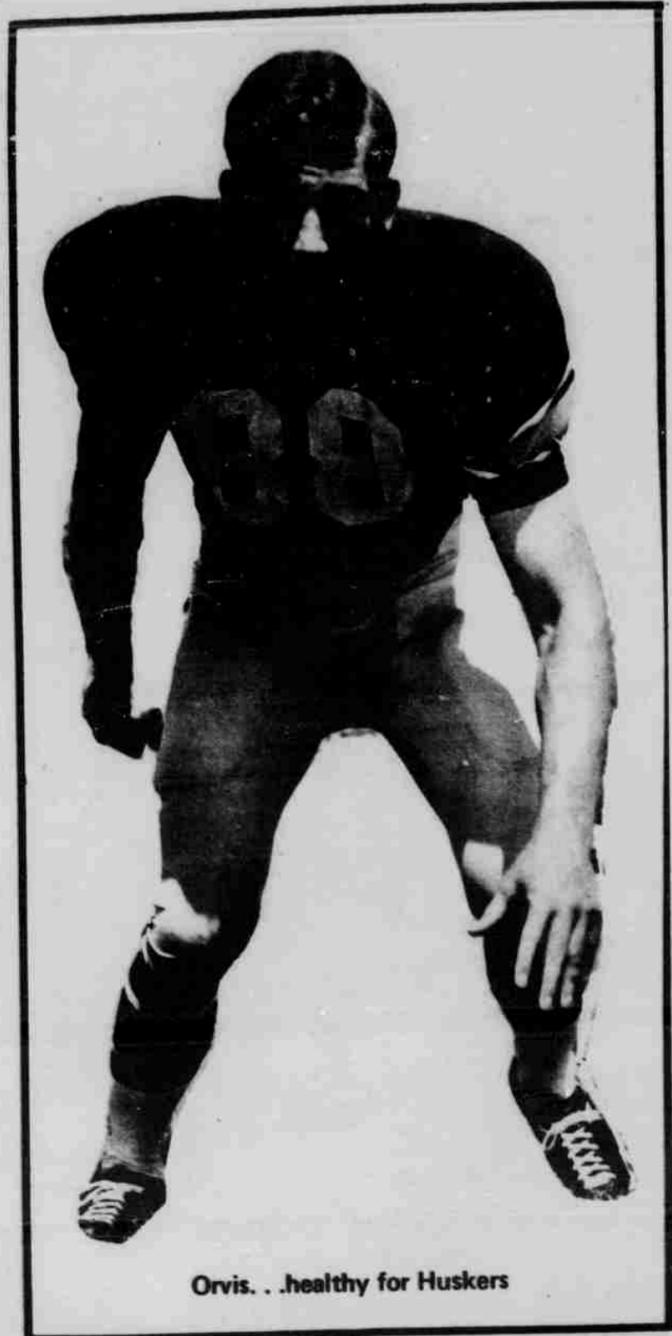
THE CORNHUSKERS will also try to hurt the Buffs with a strong passing attack. Colorado's defensive secondary has allowed an average of 166 yards passing per game this year.

"The long pass really hasn't hurt us," said Stearns, who also does the punting for the Buffs. "We've been hurt by the dump pass and then they run for long yardage."

Orvis says the defensive line must get to Jerry Tagge, Nebraska's quarterback.

"We have to apply pressure on Tagge," said Orvis. "Our dream is to make it a long afternoon for Tagge. If we pressure Tagge, we're taking a lot away from their offense."

Orvis' dream is a nightmare for a quarterback. And Jerry Tagge is no exception.



Orvis... healthy for Huskers

Surprising Cyclones meet Oklahoma

Johnny Majors has been talking about building a winner at Iowa State. He has accomplished the task. The Cyclones are 5-1 on the season and received mention in this week's Associated Press college football poll.

But Majors is realistic when he talks about being a big winner in the Big Eight Conference. This year the Cyclones must face the nation's two top rated teams in league play. To make things

especially tough, Iowa State faces No. 2 Oklahoma and No. 1 Nebraska on consecutive weekends and both away from home.

"WE'RE NOT going to be over-awed by Oklahoma," said Majors of Iowa State's opponent at Norman, Okla., Saturday. "but Oklahoma would have to have a bad, bad day for anybody to stop them. I think you might have to score 40 points against Oklahoma to win."

That's no exaggeration. Kansas State scored 28 points against the Sooners last week and still lost by 47 points. In that game, Oklahoma rushed for 711 yards to establish a new national record. The old mark was 645 yards set by Texas at El Paso against New Mexico State in 1948.

When you look at Iowa State's defensive statistics, it appears that the Cyclones could give the Oklahoma running game a serious test.

But other teams—like Kansas State—also brought impressive defensive statistics into games against Oklahoma and left giving up enormous chunks of yardage.

THE CYCLONES are second in the Big Eight in every defensive department, trailing the Cornhuskers in each of the four categories. The Cyclones are giving up 258 yards total offense each game and have limited their first six opponents to 14.8 points per game.

Majors doesn't need reminding about Oklahoma's 75-28 win over Kansas State last week.

"With us playing them this week I'm sure not going to ask Chuck Fairbanks (OU coach) if he runs up the score on teams."

Kansas State and Missouri, two contenders for the Big Eight championship in 1970,

will be trying to avoid the conference basement this year when they meet at Columbia, Mo. Both teams are winless in Big Eight play this season.

MISSOURI, a 27-7 loser to Colorado last weekend, still hasn't found the answer to its stale offense. The Tigers are rushing for only 101 yards per game and averaging just 8.4 points.

Kansas State hasn't won a game in Columbia since 1957. If the Wildcats lose again this year, it would mean more than just a discouraging season for coach Vince Gibson. It would be a complete disaster.

Oklahoma State and Kansas, both with a pair of talented (but lame) rookie quarterbacks, square off at Lawrence, Kan., Saturday.

OKLAHOMA STATE coach Floyd Gass, who has seen eight

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Nebraska's offense... tough test for Buffs' injured defense.

BIG 8

Colorado at Nebraska

Iowa State at Oklahoma

Oklahoma State at Kansas

Kansas State at Missouri