



Larry Jacobson



Jeff Kinney

Seniors abandon Husker turf

Nebraska football fans were hungry after sitting through 6-4 seasons in 1967 and 1968.

Several promising but untried sophomores were heavily counted on in 1969 to put Nebraska back onto the Big Eight football pedestal.

Two sophomore quarterbacks—a flashy scrambler named Van Brownson and a gummy runner by the name of Jerry Tagge—were the main topic of conversation with Cornhusker fans.

The Cornhuskers opened against mighty Southern California at Memorial Stadium in 1969. USC was a big favorite. Tagge and Brownson were both slowed with injuries. But, in typical Nebraska tradition, Memorial Stadium was packed for the season's opener.

The Trojans took an early lead and left Lincoln with a 31-21 win after an 11th-hour Cornhusker rally fell short.

But neither the Cornhuskers nor their fans felt dejected after the game.

"We learned a lot that day," remembers Nebraska defensive back Jim Anderson. Now a senior he has started 31 games straight for the Huskers. "We were afraid of Southern California before the game. But, after the game, we realized that we could have beaten them. We gained respect for ourselves after that game and felt we could give anybody a good game."

There was reason for optimism. Sophomore Jeff Kinney from McCook replaced an injured Frank Vactor at I-back against USC and demonstrated some head-on running. Joe Orduna had been injured during fall practice and there was concern about the I-back position.

The loss to Southern California was one of two the present group of Nebraska seniors have suffered. In the past three seasons, Nebraska has recorded a 28-2-1 record and won a national championship.

But the goals of those young sophomores were never set that high.

"Winning a national championship never entered our minds when we were sophomores,"

says Tagge. "The main thing we were thinking about was getting a bowl invitation."

The bowl invitation came in 1969 after the Huskers tied Missouri for the Big Eight championship. Missouri was selected for the Orange Bowl while Nebraska played in the Sun Bowl.

The Huskers scored a 45-6 win over Georgia in the Sun Bowl. Since that season, people knew Nebraska was back in the national football spotlight.

In 1970, the Huskers were rated in the top ten in the nation. At the end of the 1970 season, Nebraska was No. 1.

Now, again in 1971, Nebraska is rated No. 1. Those young sophomores who were being heavily counted on in 1969 have left a mark that can never be forgotten in Nebraska football history.

Saturday at 1:30 p.m., those 1969 sophomores will take the field at Memorial Stadium for the last time. It will mark the final home appearance for 19 seniors, 13 of whom were on hand two years ago when Nebraska lost that season opener to Southern Cal.

Take a look at what they've left behind:

—Jeff Kinney has scored more touchdowns (29) than any Cornhusker ever. He needs only 273 yards rushing in the last four games to break Bobby Reynolds' 19-year all-time rushing record of 2,196 yards.

—Jerry Tagge is the all-time Nebraska leader in both passing (319 completions) and total offense (4,726 yards) and ranks second among all-time passers in the Big Eight.

The list of seniors goes on with standouts including Brownson, cornerback Jim Anderson, defensive tackle Larry Jacobson, defensive end John Adkins, safety Bill Kosch, Pat Morell, Bruce Weber, Phil Harvey, Gary Hollstein, Jeff Hughes, and Tom McClelland.

Then there are junior college transfers Woody Cox, Carl Johnson, Dick Rupert, Keith Wortman, Bob Terrio, and Dale Didur.

It's been some kind of group.

sports special

Nebraska
vs.
Iowa St.

pull out and save
for the game



Jerry Tagge