



Nebraska's Bob Unger . . . carries Huskers hopes.

The long-distance runner

by Steve Kadel

A cross country runner is a hard person to figure out.

He runs year-round, often 100 miles per week. He runs in snow, mud, rain and summer heat. His dedication to this lonely and little known sport is total—anything less and he's finished as a competitor.

Cross country runners get used to being ignored. There are no sell-outs or ticket scalpers at cross country meets. Usually the only people who come to the races are runners' friends and relatives or curious spectators who want to get a closer look at the kind of people who can run through parks and golf courses, through forests and over hills, for a lung-bursting four miles and call the ordeal fun.

Saturday at 10 a.m. Nebraska hosts the Big Eight Conference cross country meet at Pioneers Park. The Huskers will be trying to improve on last year's dismal seventh place finish.

They won't win. The top spot is generally conceded to Kansas State. But NU coach Frank Sevine thinks Nebraska could wind up as high as second.

The Huskers have won four straight dual meets after losing the season opener to Kansas State in Manhattan. One of the victories was against Missouri, last year's conference champion.

Leading NU's squad is sophomore Bob Unger, whose only defeat this year was to K-State's Jerome Howe. He'd like to avenge that loss, but is cautious in his outlook for this weekend.

"I'll be trying to win Saturday," Unger said, "but I have to be realistic about it. There are some good runners in the Big Eight, maybe some of the best in the country."

Unger began his athletic career in high school, as an end for the Lincoln Southeast football team.

"When I began I never thought I'd do much in sports," he said. "I really tried, though. I realized I wasn't getting anywhere in football and one of the basketball players talked to me and said I might make a good distance runner. So I gave it a try."

He tried track for the first time during his junior year, concentrating on the mile and two-mile relay. As a senior he moved up to the two-mile run and won the state meet. He never ran cross country in high school.

After graduating from Southeast Unger planned to enroll at Nebraska Wesleyan University, where he could participate in football as well as track. But shortly before September he received a scholarship offer from Nebraska and decided to attend the Big Eight school.

In his first track season at Nebraska Unger surprised everyone by running an 8:46 two-mile at the United States Track and Field Federation Meet in Houston, Tex. It was the first time a Nebraska athlete had ever been under nine minutes for two miles and would have been a school record except the Astrodome's track is larger than normal, and Unger's time was not officially recognized.

Unger has become a success in a quiet way, without adopting the philosophy that you must hate your opponents to be a true competitor.

Nebraska's team is young, with no seniors on the seven-man roster. Rounding out the NU squad are Lynn Hall, Dan Speck, Jim Hawkins, Dave Bosley, Mike Fertig and John Perez.

Kansas State, which last won the conference cross country title in 1966, has the oldest team in the Big Eight. Six of their top seven runners are seniors.

The Wildcats were contenders last year, but choked under pressure at Stillwater, Okla. This

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Bufs regroup, aim for bowl bid

Now that the mysticism of Colorado's football team has worn off, the Buffs must get back to the basics.

After early season wins over nationally rated Louisiana State and Ohio State there was talk in Colorado about winning a national championship. Oklahoma and Nebraska put a quick stop to that idea and even put the Buffs out of contention for the Big Eight championship.

Now Colorado must regroup and concentrate on finishing the season with a 9-2 record and receiving a bowl invitation. And a 9-2 season would be a boost to Colorado's football program. Only one Colorado football team in history (the 1961 Big Eight champions) have won nine games.

BUT BEFORE THE Buffs reach the nine-win plateau, they must face Kansas at Lawrence and then return home against Oklahoma State and Air Force. And injuries continue to be the biggest

obstacle the Buffs must overcome.

Defensive guard Bud Magrum, the lone member of Colorado's defensive line which started the season and escaped injury in the first seven games, suffered a severe ankle injury against Nebraska and will be out of action against Kansas Saturday. Defensive guard Carl Taibi, however, is healthy and should be back in the lineup. Injuries are even hurting the Buffs' offense.

SPLIT END Cliff Branch, Colorado's 9.2 speedster, is doubtful for Kansas after suffering a strained ligament on his right knee against the Cornhuskers.

But, despite the injury list, Colorado is still favored to score their seventh win of the season Saturday. Kansas has lost three straight games and stands 3-5 on the season.

Kansas' leaky defense has given up 112 points in the last three games and the offense hasn't recovered since being

held to minus 42 yards rushing against the Huskers.

OKLAHOMA TAKES its "you can't stop us" Wishbone T offense to Columbia, Mo., Saturday to meet the Tigers. Missouri is the only winless team in Big Eight Conference play.

Oklahoma's speedy halfback Joe Wylie re-injured his ankle against Iowa State last week and is a doubtful starter. But that's really not a big concern in the Sooner camp. Wylie has been left as "second best" this season behind Greg Pruitt.

Pruitt continues to lead the Big Eight in rushing with an unbelievable 181-yard average per game. He's averaging 11 yards each carry.

Sooner quarterback Jack Mildren has put another play

into Oklahoma's offense. It's called the forward pass. Mildren completed seven of 12 passes last week for 175 yards and set a new school total offense record of 323 yards as he rushed for 148 yards in 23 carries.

IF MISSOURI reads enough about the Sooners this week, the Tigers might not even show up for their homecoming game Saturday.

Kansas State visits Oklahoma State in what could result in a scoreless tie. Both teams feature stingy defenses.

Oklahoma State gets the favorite role, mainly because the game is being played at Lewis Stadium in Stillwater, Okla.

Kansas State, however, scored its first conference win of the season last week with a

28-12 win over Missouri. The Wildcat offense, behind quarterback Dennis Morrison and backfield performers Bill Butler and Issac Jackson, had one of its best games of the season.

THE WILDCATS are back to their wide open offensive tricks and are definitely an improved offensive team.

Oklahoma State is also hoping for improvement on offense. Senior Tony Pounds and "Mr. Everything" Dick Graham will share the quarterbacking for the Cowboys Saturday.

Oklahoma State coach Floyd Gass says his team will have to throw the ball more effectively if it hopes to find running room against the Wildcats.



Huskers defensive end Willie Harper . . . tough to get around.

BIG 8

Iowa State at Nebraska

Oklahoma at Missouri

Colorado at Kansas

Kansas State at Oklahoma State



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