

A late night plane had just brought Bob Devaney, the nation's winningest college football coach, home from Florida and the American Football Coaches Association's annual convention. Flanked by well-wishers, he appeared exhausted and troubled from the trip. For in Florida, not only was Devaney bypassed again as coach of the year by his fellow coaches, but more important he admitted he was thinking of retiring after 10 incredibly successful years as head football coach at Nebraska.

The outcry from the state over Devaney's possible retirement was quick. It was not easy for the football crazy state to contemplate the retirement of the man who had put Nebraska on the map through his winning football teams.

Gov. J. J. Exon and NU President D. B. Varner both encouraged the 56-year-old Devaney to continue as coach for at least one more season. Devaney was also flooded by letters from admiring fans urging him to stay on as head coach.

One letter from Columbus read: "We hope and pray that you'll continue as our One and Only Coach of the Year, year after year." A Omaha fan wrote another typical letter: "I want to personally thank you for giving our state some pride in itself for the first time. You are No. 1 in the hearts of all Nebraska."

Devaney didn't disappoint the fans.

Last Monday, in announcing he would remain as head coach for one more season before retiring to become full-time athletic director, Devaney said the ordinary fan influenced his decision as much as anyone.

But there were other factors that influenced his decision. "One of the factors was that I had made commitments



to some of the players when we were recruiting them," he said. "Another factor was the challenge of trying to win a third consecutive national championship."

Like a king leaving his throne, the head coach named his heir. Devaney said he would recommend that 34-year-old Tom Osborne, a member of his staff since 1962, replace him as head coach.

During the decade that Devaney has been at Nebraska he has compiled an amazing record of 92 wins, 18 losses and one tie. His teams won consecutive national championships in 1970 and 1971 and haven't been beaten in their last 32 games.

Sitting in the "Big Red" leather chair that adorns his office, Devaney recently discussed why he wants to retire after the 1972 season.

"I'm sure I'll miss coaching," he said. "But I would like to quit before they tell me to."

Another reason for his upcoming retirement is a desire to help upgrade all sports at Nebraska as a full-time athletic director.

"I feel that although I like to coach, I've got much to do as athletic director. I would like to follow up on the fieldhouse project and other parts of the athletic program that need more emphasis."

Gymnastics coach Francis Allen is one minor sport coach who is looking forward to Devaney becoming full-time athletic director. "I hate to see Devaney retire as

football coach," Allen said. "But once he becomes full-time athletic director the minor sports will move, because he's a winner."

Devaney certainly demonstrated that he is a winner during the 1971 football season as his team went undefeated in 13 games, climaxing their record-breaking season with a devastating 38-6 Orange Bowl victory over previously undefeated Alabama.

In winning their second straight national championship, Nebraska accomplished "the modest stunt of taking Bear Bryant and Alabama and making them look like your neighborhood Texas A&M with a little dash of Oklahoma State thrown in," according to a *Sports Illustrated* writer.

One Orange Bowl committeeman, noting that the Cornhuskers will return 11 starters for next season and may be well-stocked for the next few years, remarked, "We might as well sign a five-year contract with them. . . they're going to be mighty strong for a long time."

Even Devaney, a noted pre-season pessimist, admitted that his 1972 squad should be "sound," which spells trouble for opponents. But he cautioned against over-optimism:

"That we can win a third straight national championship is improbable, but not impossible. No one has ever done that, but I'd like to be a part of trying to accomplish it."

## Devaney eyes third national title

by Gary Seacrest

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(Room to be posted)

Sign up in Room 128 Union

## sports shorts

It's time again for students to put on their dirty sneakers and head out to the basketball courts for the continuation of the men's intramural basketball season. The action gets back into full swing this week with the first games scheduled for Tuesday.

Coordinator of Intramurals, Phil Sienna will conduct a referee clinic for all the old and any new referees at 6:30 p.m. tonight at University High. Anybody who is interested in refereeing intramural basketball games this season is

urged to attend this clinic to learn procedures and study films.

Sienna would also like all team managers to check their mail boxes in his office for basketball schedules.

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Nebraska Assistant Coach Mike Corgan and Sports Information Director Don Bryant substituted for Devaney at two different sites Saturday night where Devaney was honored as coach of the year.

Corgan accepted the award for Devaney at the Washington Touchdown Club banquet in Washington, D.C. In addition, Nebraska's All American defensive tackle Larry Jacobson was honored by the Touchdown Club as College Lineman of the Year.

Bryant accepted coach of the year honors for Devaney at

the Walter Camp Dinner in New Haven, Conn. where Nebraska players Johnny Rodgers, Willie Harper and Rich Glover were also honored as members of the Walter Camp All-American team.

Devaney was unable to attend the two functions because of a prior commitment to participate in a coaching clinic in California.

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The Cornhusker swimming team was routed by Kansas and Missouri in a triangular meet in Lawrence, Kan., Saturday.

The Jayhawks won all the events, defeating the Huskers 95-18. Missouri beat the Nebraskans 81-32, but lost to Kansas in their dual.

The Nebraska swimmers are now 1-2 for the season.



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