

Huskers sign 15

The official football recruiting campaign opened Tuesday and by late afternoon Nebraska had signed 15 players, including 12 from Nebraska, to Big Eight Conference letters of intent to attend UNL.

Among those signing were Fairbury's Tom Siegel, who has been contacted by about 80 schools because of his football and basketball talents. Siegel, a 6-3, 210-pound back, was a Class B all-state selection, but was chiefly recognized for his pass catching ability.

Other "most wanted" Nebraska high school players signed by the Huskers include:

--Bob Martin, a 6-1, 188-pound halfback from David City. Martin has been contacted by 40 schools.

--Rick Bonness, 6-4, 197-pound center-tackle from Bellevue, who has been contacted by 25 schools.

--Randy Benish, 6-1, 175-pound quarterback from Norfolk, who has been contacted by 21 schools.

--Jim Sledge, 6-1, 224-pound tackle from Omaha Creighton Prep, who has been contacted by 25 schools.

The Big Eight letter of intent is the first step in the college recruiting process. The Big Eight letter only commits a player to a particular school within the conference. A more restrictive national letter of intent, a joint venture of most major conferences, can be signed April 19.

Other top Nebraska athletes signed include: Bill Armstrong, 6-1, 205-pound class A all-state linebacker from Beatrice; Joe Dervin, 6-0, 195-pound linebacker from Omaha Creighton Prep; Steve Hoins, 6-3, 210-pound guard-tackle from Bellevue; Wayne Stuber, 6-2, 195-pound center-guard from Omaha North; Dan Brock, 6-3, 195-pound tackle from Columbus Scotus; Tom Heiser, 5-10, 172-pound halfback from Columbus High; and Robert Lingenfelter, 6-7, 270-pound tackle from Plainview.

"Jim Ross and Cletus Fischer have done a good job in the state," Tom Osborne, assistant head coach, said. "With one or two exceptions, if a Nebraska athlete signs the Big Eight letter with us he'll come here."

Nebraska loss scrambles race

Balance is the name of the game in the Big Eight basketball race.

Nebraska, Oklahoma and Missouri are in a three-way tie for first place with 5-2 records and Kansas State is right behind the three teams with a 4-2 record.

Nebraska lost sole possession of first place Monday night at Norman when numerous Husker turnovers against Oklahoma's full-court zone press produced a 72-70 Sooner victory.

Missouri appears to be the strongest title contender after defeating Iowa State 77-72 at Ames Monday night. Missouri, a 78-77 victim of Oklahoma at Norman earlier in the season, now has won three games on the road (Oklahoma State, Colorado and Iowa State) while no other team has won more than one. However, both Nebraska and Oklahoma have a chance to match the Tigers' road record.

Nebraska's poor performance against the zone press forced the Huskers into a desperate catch-up game which almost succeeded. Al Nissen's shot from close-in just before the final gun failed to drop.

"I was disappointed that we

didn't handle the press better," Husker Coach Joe Cipriano said of his team's turnovers. "We lost our poise."

It appeared that the Huskers were in big trouble when All-American candidate Chuck Jura fouled out with 9:50 remaining and Nebraska leading 51-50. But the Huskers held on and led 57-52 on Tom Bryan's tip-in with 6:00 remaining.

But in the next four minutes the Sooners outscored Nebraska 13-3 with the help of their full-court press and led 65-60.

Nebraska battled back and almost pulled off the impossible. Trailing 72-68, Lee Harris hit a basket from the corner with three seconds to cut the Sooners lead to two. Harris then immediately stole the in-bounds pass and flipped to Nissen. But Nissen's hurry-up shot failed and the Huskers had their second straight road loss of two points.

"I'm disappointed that we didn't move the ball better," Cipriano remarked. "If we don't get the inside shot we're hurting."

Extra Point Club to honor champs

Nebraska's national championship football team will receive team and individual honors at the annual Extra Point Club Football Appreciation Banquet at Pershing Auditorium Thursday.

The banquet, which last year attracted 2,000 fans, will start at 7 p.m. Tickets are still available and may be obtained at the Coliseum ticket office, Gerry's Sport Shop, First National Bank, National Bank of Commerce, Gateway Bank and City National Bank.

Earle Edwards, veteran North Carolina State coach and 1971 president of the American Football Association, will be the featured speaker at the banquet honoring the Cornhuskers.

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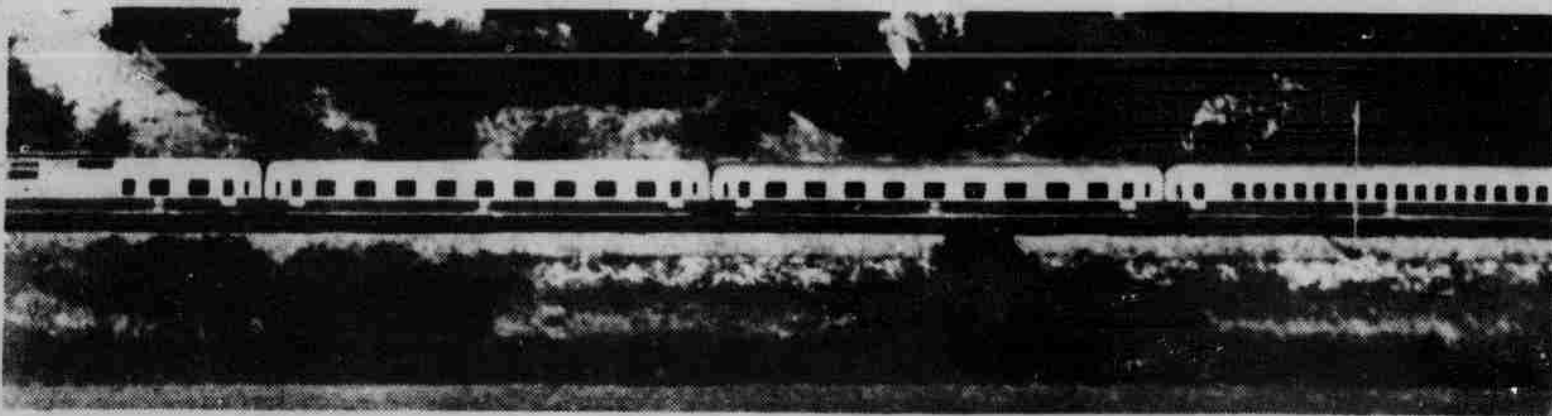
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