

Devaney's predictions may finally hit the mark

by Jim Johnston

Johnny Majors has a tendency to exaggerate. If Nebraska Coach Bob Devaney calls someone "a fine football player," you can expect Majors to say "he's the greatest player in America."

The Iowa State football coach doesn't hesitate throwing you those "great" classifications. . . especially where his own players are concerned.

When the 1972 college football season opened, for example, Majors called Iowa State center Dave Pittman "the finest college football center in America."

"If Pittman played at a school like Nebraska or Oklahoma where they get a lot of national publicity he would be sure to be an all-American," Majors said.

Then last week Majors said, "Iowa State has the finest group of receivers in the nation." Another exaggeration, Johnny. Iowa State ranks fourth in the Big Eight in passing and the Cyclones' leading receiver split end Ike Harris, is sixth in the conference in receiving. He trails Nebraska players Johnny Rodgers and Bob Revelle.

Majors has even been pushing Iowa State quarterback George Amundson for the Heisman Trophy. "I've been around some pretty fair country football players," said Majors, a former all-American tailback at Tennessee, "but George Amundson is the finest football player I've ever been around."

Amundson will not win the Heisman Trophy. He will not even be considered by most voters. But the exaggerating Majors has a good case in pushing Amundson for all-American honors. The Cyclone senior is practically a sure bet to make the all-Big Eight first team.

Amundson has experienced a rather strange career at Iowa State. He was a quarterback most of his sophomore season, but was switched to tailback the following year when the Cyclones encountered injuries with running backs.

As a running back, Amundson established a new Iowa State rushing record of 1,316 yards. He trailed only Oklahoma's Greg Pruitt and Charlie Davis of Colorado in the Big Eight rushing department.

Amundson was switched back to quarterback his senior year. And he's having an equally impressive season.

Amundson leads the conference in total offense, averaging 228 yards a game. He has run and passed for 4,083 yards during his career at Iowa State, ranking ninth in Big Eight history. He should become the first Big Eight halfback-quarterback to surpass the 4,500-yard mark since Colorado's Bobby Anderson.

Amundson accepts plaudits rather casually. He seems partially embarrassed by the words Majors uses in describing him.

"I just want to be known as a good football player," Amundson said. "There's no need to blow things out of proportion."

Although Amundson quarterbacked most of his sophomore season, he has spent only five minutes quarterbacking against Nebraska. He served as a running back for the first time against Nebraska two years ago. But during the final five minutes he was at quarterback. Nebraska's defensive secondary doesn't need reminding that Amundson tossed two touchdown passes in those final five minutes.

The Cornhuskers will face Amundson the quarterback on the



photo by Bill Ganzel

Iowa State's George Amundson . . . practically a sure bet to make the All-Big Eight first team.

soggy natural surface at Ames, Iowa, Saturday.

"He's a big kid who can do a lot of things," Devaney said. "He's the most gifted quarterback we've faced this season."

Another reason Iowa State ranks third in the Big Eight in rushing is sophomore Mike Strachan. He was injured most of his freshman season and didn't enter varsity football with a great deal of fanfare. But he now leads

the Big Eight in rushing with 127-yard average per game.

Although Devaney claims every week that "this will be the best offensive team we've faced this season," he may be right this week.

Iowa State, a team which has come from rags to riches in the past three years since the arrival of people such as George Amundson, should be one of the stiffest tests for the nation's leading defense.

Jim Johnston

Rodgers—top Heisman candidate

Johnny Rodgers was rather surprised by the buildup he received from *Sports Illustrated* writer Dan Jenkins this week. A national publication backing Rodgers for the Heisman Trophy just isn't the sort of publicity Johnny has been receiving.

"I guess I'll have to write that man a note," Rodgers said. "Maybe the sportswriters are finally on my side. I wasn't expecting such a complimentary article from *Sports Illustrated*."

Jenkins, *Sports Illustrated's* college football writer, didn't forget any adjectives when describing Rodgers' football ability.

"For his size, which is no more than 5-9 and 173 pounds, Rodgers has to be the most devastating player who ever suited up, and every Saturday he manages to invent a new repertoire of dance steps with the ball that leaves national TV audiences and his own hoarse following mercilessly agog at the wonder of it all," Jenkins wrote.

Jenkins concludes that Rodgers has been a victim of circumstances and the troubles he has encountered have been blown out of proportion by the national press.

"If Johnny Rodgers is not this season's leading Heisman Trophy candidate (if not, in fact, the only candidate) then most of the voters must be planning on writing in the names of their cousins," Jenkins concluded.

"Rodgers may not win the Heisman because no one knows how many of the 1,200 voters are anti-stop sign running," he added.

"But there happens to be one—me—who intends to vote for the best football player in the country, in or out of the courtroom, or in or out of a crowd of tacklers, and that player happens to be Johnny Rodgers."

Suck a boost may be just what Rodgers needs to win the Heisman. It can't be denied that Rodgers' football ability is deserving of the award. And running a stop sign is a helluva reason to hang a guy. . . .

NEBRASKA 31, Iowa State 3 . . . Rich Glover said the Black Shirts will get a shutout this week. Maybe. But maybe the Cyclones will get close enough for a field goal.

OKLAHOMA 24, Missouri 7 . . . The Tigers held Oklahoma to its lowest point total of the season last year. Perhaps it was a fluke. Or perhaps all those guys Missouri puts in its defensive line causes problems for Oklahoma's wishbone.

COLORADO 28, Kansas 0 . . . The Jayhawks will have trouble passing against Colorado. And when the Jayhawks can't pass, they can't move the football.

KANSAS STATE 21, Oklahoma State 14 . . . You've got to pick at least one upset every week just to make it fun.

NU frosh shooting for perfect season

The Nebraska freshman team will be shooting for its third straight undefeated season when they travel to Ames, Iowa, Friday to meet Iowa State in their final game of the season.

The game, which was originally scheduled for Clyde Williams Stadium, will be played at 1:30 p.m. on the Ames High School field in order to preserve soggy Williams field for the Husker varsity clash with Iowa State Saturday.

The last Nebraska freshman loss was to McCook Junior College in 1969, 14 games ago.

Assistant freshman coach Bill Myles says the young Cyclones will be the strongest team Nebraska has faced.

"Based on the Iowa State-Illinois film," Myles said, "it would seem that this will be our toughest game of the season."

The Iowa State freshmen defeated the Illinois junior varsity, 18-15.

John O'Leary, Husker I-back, is within reach of two freshman records as he heads into his final game.

O'Leary has scored five touchdowns and is only one short of the record set by Jeff Kinney (1968) and then tied by Johnny Rodgers (1969) and Don Westbrook (1970).

O'Leary also has an outside chance of breaking Kinney's rushing record. O'Leary, who has rushed for 258 yards, needs 132 yards against Iowa State to set the mark.

One record that is sure to fall is the team rushing record. The Husker freshmen have been averaging 317 yards rushing a game and they need only 90 yards to crack the mark set in 1965.

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