

Different dilemmas confront coaches

by Jim Johnston

Bob Devaney and Vince Gibson had problems of contrasting sorts late Saturday afternoon.

Devaney was concerned about such things as Oklahoma on Thanksgiving Day, the improbable combination of upsets necessary for Nebraska to win a third straight national championship and the recent uprising of Nebraska farmers.

Gibson, the Kansas State head football coach, should be so lucky to have such problems. The Georgia gentleman has a decrepit football program and possibly his own job at Kansas State to worry about.

Gibson, who had preached togetherness at the beginning of the 1972 football season, had just watched his Wildcats bumble through a 59-7 loss to Nebraska.

"I never dreamed this would happen to us this year," Gibson said. "It's been a frustrating, miserable year. But we're not ashamed."

Kansas State, which was supposed to contend for the No. 4 spot in the Big Eight this year, finished the season in last place with 1-6 mark.

"I swore to my players this would never happen again at Kansas State," Gibson said. "The thing that amazes me the most is that two years ago we came up here and were first in the Big Eight in defense. This year we're last in almost everything. Isn't that amazing?"

Wildcat quarterback Dennis Morrison, whose personal failure this season paralleled that of the entire team, also was amazed by Kansas State's showing this year.

"I've got to sit down and evaluate just what happened this year,"

Morrison said. "I have to try and make myself believe that I gave it my best shot. I'm a senior, but I just can't get myself to believe it's all over. I kept saying all season that I would have another chance to do good, but now I've run out of turns."

It was a contrast in the Nebraska dressing room.

A rather good-natured Devaney had just been presented the game ball for his 100th coaching victory at Nebraska. A third straight bowl invitation was guaranteed, needing only a 6 p.m. deadline to become official. The Huskers had played a near perfect football game after last week's showing at Ames, Iowa.

"I told the players that they played like a bunch of farmers doing their everyday good job," Devaney said. Farmers had voiced criticism of Devaney last week after he said the Nebraska players "looked like a bunch of farmers on a picnic waiting to be served lunch."

Devaney didn't talk much about the 59-7 win over Kansas State, except to say he didn't play the starters in the second half "because we sure didn't want to risk anybody getting hurt just to add to their statistics."

As for the possibility of winning a third straight national championship, Devaney kept with his feeling that the possibility still exists—even though the Huskers don't get a shot at No. 2 Alabama in the Orange Bowl.

Devaney preferred to talk about the Big Eight championship showdown with Oklahoma on Thanksgiving Day in Lincoln.

"This is the one we've been waiting for," Devaney said. "We know Oklahoma has a better defense than

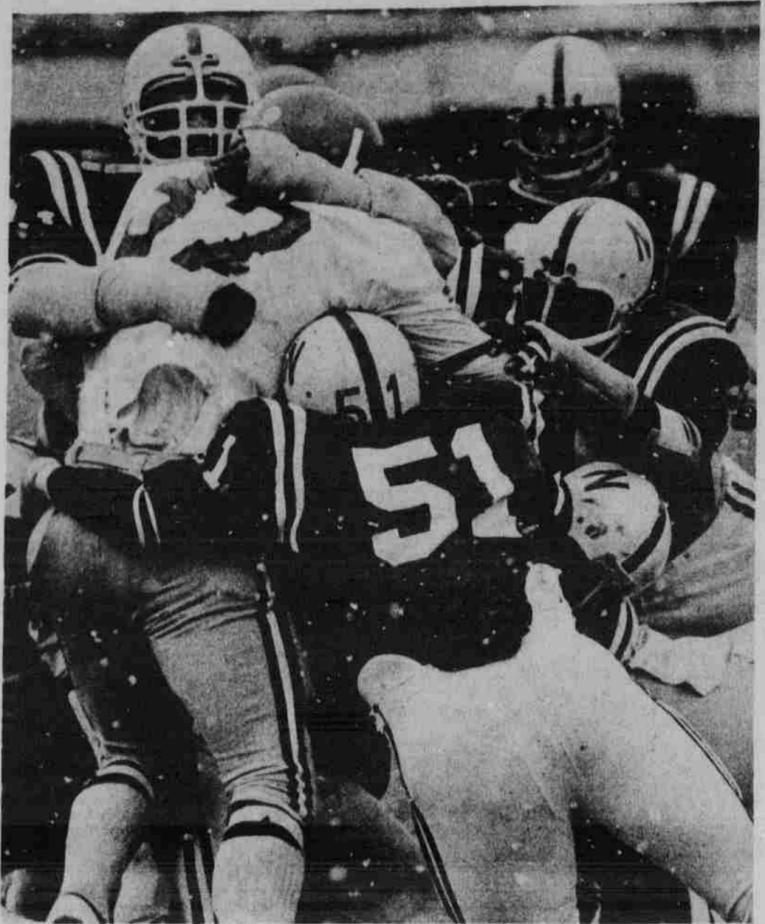


photo by Bill Ganzel

Willie Harper, Jim Branch and company . . . stop KSU's Don Calhoun

last year, and their offense is tougher to defense because they do so many different things."

Devaney then left for a 6 p.m. dinner party at his house where a long-time Orange Bowl official made the bowl bid to meet Notre Dame New Years Day.

There was no dinner party planned for Vince Gibson. There was no bowl

invitation or pleasant problem of finishing first or second in the Big Eight, either.

In a year when Nebraskans are discouraged about the chances of winning the national championship, folks in Manhattan, Kan., are concerned about just being respectable.

Intrasquad BB game opens season

Nebraska opens the 1972-73 basketball season tonight at the UNL Coliseum with an intrasquad game at 7:35 p.m.

Cornhusker basketball coach Joe Cipriano has elected to divide his varsity and freshman players for the annual Red-White game instead of the traditional freshman-varsity encounter. Cipriano said 12 minute quarters would be used to give more players an opportunity to play.

The intrasquad clash will be the final tuneup for the Cornhuskers before the regular season opens Friday when Nebraska hosts North Texas State. All-sports tickets, which can be purchased at the Coliseum ticket office, will be honored for tonight's game and all home Nebraska basketball games.



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