

Baseball team begins season with 6-game swing into Dixie

By Bob Hill

Six lettermen, including pitcher Denny O'Doherty, will start today as the UNL baseball team opens its 45-game schedule in Waco, Tex. against Baylor University.

The Huskers will play six doubleheaders at six Texas institutions in six days. The southern swing will close at Fort Worth on March 25 against Texas Wesleyan University.

Husker coach Tony Sharpe rated the schedule "the most challenging spring trip we've had in many years."

UNL, which recorded a 15-14-1 season a year ago, opens conference play with a 3-game set at Kansas State University March 29-30 just prior to the opening of the home season with a doubleheader against Morningside College, April 2.

The first home conference action will bring the 2-time defending Big 8 champion University of Oklahoma Sooners to UNL for a 3-game series April 5-6.

"I'm pleased with the physical condition of my squad, everyone appears ready to start the season. The morale of the team has given me reason for optimism, I really am expecting an exciting season," Sharpe said.

O'Doherty led the conference last year in

earned run average with 0.78 for Big 8 games. His battery mate will be lettermen catcher Doak Fowler.

Other Husker team veterans included in the lineup are third baseman Jim Smith, the top returning hitter with a .364 batting average last year; first baseman Sam Sharpe, who last year tied the UNL fielding record of .991 with two errors in 234 chances, and left fielder Dick Anderson, who a year ago as a freshman was a .274 hitter.

"Our infield seems solid, we have some good arms in the outfield, if our pitching comes through we will be a certain Big 8 contender," Sharpe said.

1974 Schedule:

March—18, at Baylor (2); 19, at Texas Christian (2); 20, at Southern Methodist (2); 22, at Hardin-Simmons (2); 23, at Abilene Christian (2); 25, at Texas Wesleyan (2); 29, at Kansas State (2); 30, at Kansas State.

April—2, Morningside (2); 5, Oklahoma (2); 6, Oklahoma; 9, Northwest Missouri (2); 12, at Iowa State (2); 13, at Iowa State; 16, at Creighton (2); 19, at Missouri (2); 20, at Missouri; 23, UNO (2); 26, Colorado (2); 27, Colorado; 30, Drake (2).

May—3, Kansas (2); 4, Kansas; 11, Friends, (2); 14, at Oklahoma State (2); 15, at Oklahoma State.

while Johnson was beaten 2-0 by Rich Molbury of Potsdam State University.

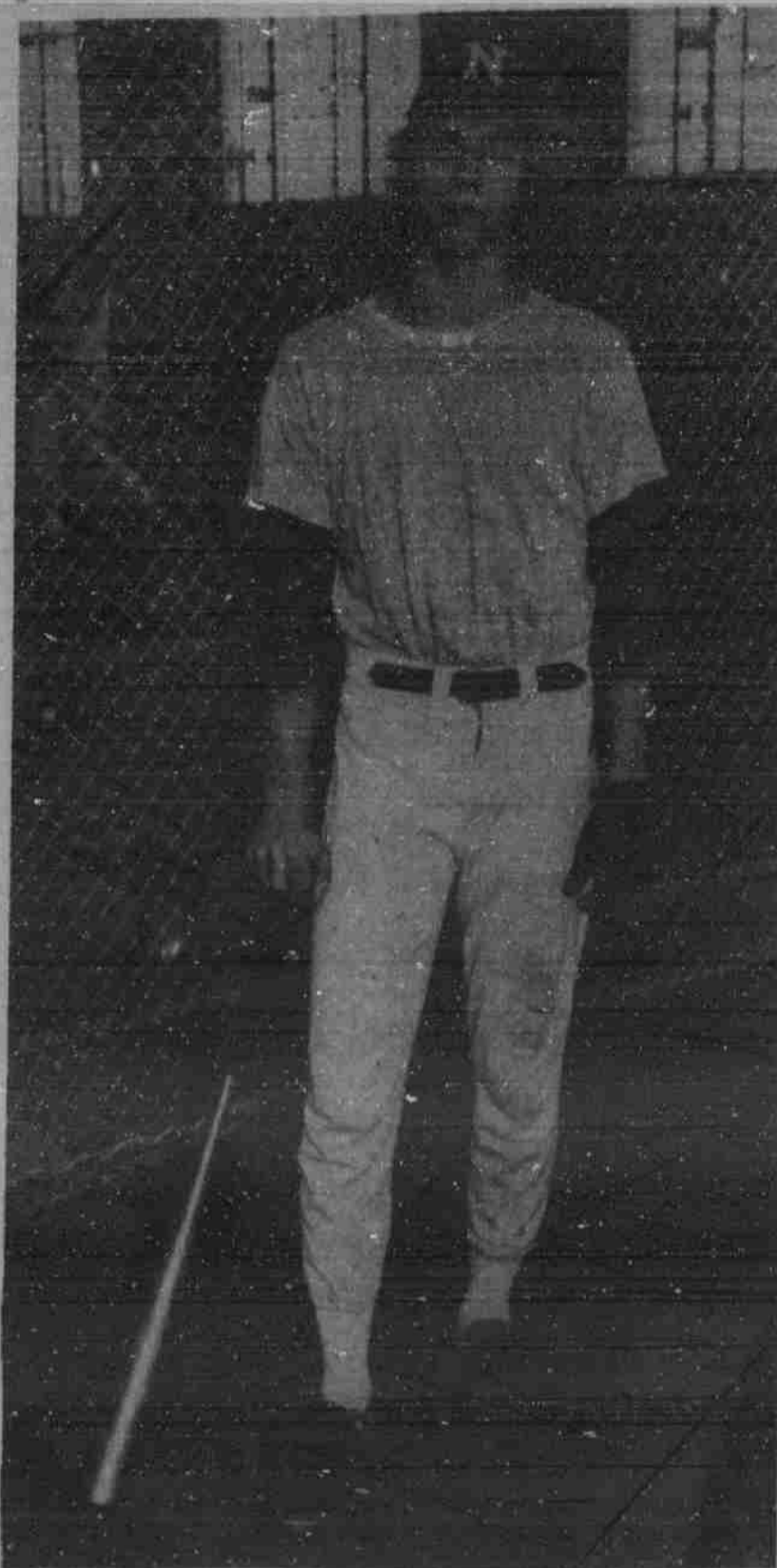
The new UNL outdoor track was named the Edwin F. Weir Memorial Track by the Board of Regents Saturday. Weir was a former Husker track coach and made All-American as a tackle on the 1924-25 Husker football teams.

Maury Damkroger Saturday was presented with the Guy Chamberlin Award, given annually to a senior football player for his "play and contribution to the betterment

of the squad." He also received the trophy given by the Lincoln Optimists Club to the outstanding senior offensive back.

Other award winners were Bob Thornton, top defensive back, Daryl White, top offensive lineman, and John Bell, top defensive lineman.

Practices for the UNL Water Polo Club have begun in the Coliseum pool. They start at 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Anyone interested in joining the team should contact Mark Rinne, 467-2603.



Third baseman Jim Smith is the top returning hitter with a .364 average.

sports shorts

Both Husker wrestlers in the NCAA tournament lost in the second preliminary round Thursday in Ames, Iowa. Bill Hoffman, in the 177 lb. class, and Bob Johnson, in the 190 lb. class, received byes in the first round.

In the second round, Hoffman fell 3-0 to Bill Hill of the University of East Carolina,

Big Red machine shifting gears?

After the University of Oklahoma (OU) football team handcuffed UNL's every move last November, a frustrated Tom Osborne hinted there would be some drastic changes in the Husker football philosophy. An overhaul of the Big Red Machine was forecast.

His comments left fans and sportswriters speculating about whether the Huskers would switch to the wishbone offense next season or if they would fill the air with 40 passes a game.

It's doubtful that the Husker coaching staff will go to either extreme, but the Husker system might need a little corrective surgery if it is to avoid a rerun of last year's televised loss to OU.

The Oklahoma Sooners will be an overwhelming favorite to win the Big 8 race this year. They will have one of the most lethal backfields in the country, with Steve Davis, Waymon Clark and Joe Washington continuing their wishbone

escapades.

OU was simply too fast for UNL or any other team last season. Osborne's changes might be an effort to fight fire with fire and put more speed into the lineup.

steve taylor taylored sports

The one ingredient UNL lacked last year was offensive speed. There was no home run threat. After watching Johnny Rodgers for three years, UNL's plays sometimes seemed to develop in slow motion.

The Huskers did have one dangerous player last season: freshman Bobby

Thomas. Unfortunately the only people Thomas endangered were the fans whose view he blocked while standing on the bench. The Philadelphia prep star spent the season learning the Husker system.

Osborne recruited heavily from the Omaha area and came up with a few quick candidates for the backfield. However, the most heralded prospect has been Curtis Craig, from Davenport, Iowa. The 5 ft. 10 in. speedster already is being mentioned as UNL's starting I-back for 1974.

This would mean shifting Tony Davis to fullback, where he could continue running over, rather than around, opponents.

If the Huskers do find a fast, elusive I-back, the backfield will give enemy defenses reason for alarm.

If not, it might be a season of three yards and a cloud of dust.

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