

Winless netters have the 'smarts

By Larry Stunkel

So far this season, the UNL tennis team has been winless. If it's any consolation to Husker Coach Jim Porter and his team, they may be one of the most intelligent collections of tennis players in the nation.

"Our top six men have a grade point average of 3.8," said Porter. "We're a group of scholars who play tennis as a sideline, whereas we seem to be competing against tennis players who study as a sideline."

John Duncan, the No. 1 man for the Huskers, is attending UNL on a regents scholarship. He said that a person's intelligence doesn't have much bearing on one's ability to play tennis.

"The problem is we've got some good players, but don't have a bunch of guys who've been around playing as much as the other teams do," said Duncan.

"There's only one man back from last year's top six," he continued. "We don't have the scholarships to go out and get tennis players, so it's just who happens to be around that plays."

Porter said the major problem for his team is consistency. "We're hitting the ball well but making too many errors," he said. "We're improving, but competition is too tough."

The weather also has failed to cooperate with the Huskers. The cold, wintry climate of last week infringed on practices and postponed a dual meet with the University of Kansas from April 3 until last Monday.

After a match with Doane College Wednesday, the Huskers will be looking for a win Friday against Drake University, Washburn University and Iowa State University next week. Duncan said the team has a good chance against Iowa State because "they're in the same situation we are."

"I don't think we have anybody on the team that has really worked hard at tennis over the summer. We won't improve until more of the guys get out in the summer," Duncan said.

When asked if there was any incentive to work at improvement, Duncan said, "Going out and getting clobbered is motivation enough for me."

Fastest man on team corners backfield spot

By Steve Taylor

There are several similarities between a defensive back and a fire-eater. Both perform in front of large crowds. Both can be devastated by a single mistake. Both live in constant fear of being burned.

"Getting burned" in football jargon means being beaten on a long pass. It's not a very healthy practice for defenders allergic to benches.

Last year, UNL's defensive backs were burned less than any group in the college ranks. They allowed fewer than 40 yards a game and led the nation in pass defense.

Though most of that unit will be graduated, Husker coaches are hoping to duplicate the efforts of last year's defensive backfield.

One of the keys to this difficult task will be Ardell Johnson, the fastest man on the team.

Two years ago Johnson came to UNL to study architecture. Though a standout high school athlete in Chillicothe, Mo., Johnson received no scholarship offers for football. So the 20-year-old junior decided to head north to Nebraska. It was almost incidental that he chose to go out for freshman football.

Since then, Johnson has rid himself of two things. One of them was his architectural ambitions (he switched to business administration). Johnson has also shirked his walk-on status. Now a full scholarship athlete, he will likely be a starting cornerback in September.

Johnson feels it's too early to speculate on the chances of the 1974 Husker football team.

"We have a lot of vacancies to fill, and most of them won't really be filled until fall," he commented. "We don't know who will break a leg over the summer or who will develop, so it's just too soon to tell."

Can next season's defensive backfield match the success of last year's?

"There was nothing exceptional about last year's backfield except the way they played together," Johnson said. "It's just a matter of finding the right combination."

Johnson reports that the defensive strategy employed this spring hasn't been too complicated, but that it's likely to become much more refined.

Does Johnson think it's worth it to go through winter conditioning, spring practice and fall practice for 11 or 12 games a year?

"In the long run, I really do," he said. "It keeps your body in shape all year round. It's also an open door to opportunity. All that, and an education too."

Rowers hopeful about tri-meet

After postponing last Saturday's meet in Topeka with Washburn University because of bad weather, the UNL crew team will open its spring season Saturday in a triangular meet at Manhattan, Kan. Opposition will come from Kansas State University and the University of Minnesota.

bob hill over the hill

Crew is a 2-season sport. In the fall, races vary anywhere from 2 to 20 miles in length; in spring however, all races are 2,000 meters (slightly more than a mile).

Competing largely against varsity intercollegiate crews, the UNL crew team does not feel hindered by its club sport status. (A club sport is not financed by the Athletic Dept.).

Zandbergen said most funds for the team come from the ASUN Senate and the Recreation Dept.

"This year we potentially have a greater chance for competitive success than any other previous year in our history," Zandbergen said. "We represent one of the physically strongest teams in the Midwest. All our varsity oarsmen have rowed at least two years, thus we are in addition experienced."

High among Zandbergen's list of priorities is allocating additional funds for new equipment.

"We recently bought a new set of oars, our first new piece of equipment in years. Teams we compete against yearly receive new equipment. I hope to acquire some new shells by next fall. Our present shells are not only over 50 years old, but they have received heavy usage over the last few years," he said.

The UNL Rowing team's first home meet will be April 20 against conference rival Oklahoma State University at Branched Oak Lake.

sports shorts

Intramural entries for three sports are due Friday to the Recreation Dept., 1740 Vine. Eight-man soccer will begin Monday. Co-rec golf entries will be posted Monday, and teams have until April 29 to complete their matches. Each team consists of one male and one female. The third sport is NBA-style one-on-one basketball. For more information, contact the

Recreation Dept., 472-3467.

The UNL women's softball team will host the University of Nebraska at Omaha on the Women's Physical Education Bldg. field at 5 p.m. today.

Huskers golfers travel to Wichita, Kan., to participate in the Great Plains Invitational today and Friday.

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