

# Fischer witnessed Big Red football revolution

By Bob Cullinan

Cletus Fischer has witnessed the revolution in the Nebraska football program. During his 15 years on the Cornhusker staff, he has seen the change from a mediocre Big 8 team to a perennial national contender.

Fischer came to Lincoln in 1960 after he had coached high school and small college teams in the midwest. He was hired as an offensive and defensive backfield coach, mainly because of a troublesome player.

That player was his younger brother Pat, who had given the Nebraska staff a headache the previous season (1959).

"Pat was pretty feisty then," Fischer said. "At the time, the staff felt he was one of their best players, and they expected more from him. They thought I could give him the help he needed."

Pat Fischer became a great football player, Fischer said. He went on to start with the Washington Redskins of the NFL.

Offensive formations then were different than they are today. The Husker squad used the split-T and double-wing formations under Head Coach Bill Jennings.

Fischer said he recalls the job of assistant coach as being tougher then because of a rule that made players play both offense and defense.

"You could have had a boy who was a great tight end, but not as good a defensive end, but because of the rule, he had to play both ways," he said. "A lot more time was spent on defense then."

The rule change allows players to play on either offensive or defensive squads.

"I think football is more exciting with the advent of the two-platoon system," Fischer said. "Because of it, the Northern schools were able to catch up to those in the southwest and southeast part of the country."

Fischer was retained as coach when Bob Devaney assumed the head post. He said he

watched and helped Devaney reverse the "low ebb" of the Nebraska football program.

"He (Devaney) got the overall program going. He brought back the feeling and the spirit throughout Nebraska," Fischer said.

Devaney changed the coaches' positions on the coaching staff, and Fischer became head freshman coach in the '60s. In two seasons at that job, he guided the frosh to an 8-0-0 record.

He later returned to the varsity staff as kicking coach. In 1973 he became offensive line coach when coach Carl Selmer left for Miami University. That year was also the first season for Tom Osborne as head coach.

Fischer said the change in the football team is obvious to the fan, who is happy when the team wins more games. But the biggest change has come in the attitude of the players and staff.

"Everybody had a great deal more respect for each other after Devaney came," he said. "The total atmosphere was much more relaxed."

The coaching staff has been given more freedom to make decisions for the team, he said.

"You're expected to do your job, and it's left up to you to get it done."

"We expect our people to be the best on the field, and we expect them to play like they're the best," Fischer said. "In turn, they expect us to be fair with them."



Cletus Fischer

## Harriers set running pace, season looks questionable

A young squad, mostly freshmen and sophomores, makes up Coach Frank Sevigne's university cross country team.

The distance runners, paced by returning sophomore letterman Keith Whitaker, will open their '74 season on the road in a contest with the University of Wisconsin Sept. 28.

"As of yet, the season outlook is questionable," Sevigne said. "We have a young squad with good talent, but at this stage of the game it's too early to say."

The runners practice every afternoon at Pioneer Park. They are improving but still have adjustments to make, Sevigne added.

"Time will tell," he said. Keith Whitaker, Leif Olson, Bob Fink, Matt Reckmeyer, Harold Stelzer, Dave Johnston, and Don Grow will try for starting positions, Sevigne said. Whitaker and Reckmeyer are sophomores and Johnston is a junior.

The rest of the squad is first year men. Sevigne said he plans to use combinations of the first seven men until definite starters can be established.

Four duals, one open date and the Big 8 meet make up the season's schedule: Sept. 28 Wisconsin, away; Oct. 5 Kansas State, home; Oct. 12 Missouri, home; Oct. 19 Drake, away; Oct. 26, open date; and Nov. 2 Big 8 Conference Meet at Ames, Iowa.

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