

Recruiting: Husker backbone

By Pete Wegman

Somewhere in the Midwest there lives a high school football player who could be an All American or Heisman Trophy winner in three or four years. The task of the Nebraska coaching staff is to find him.

According to head football coach Tom Osborne, recruiting is the backbone of the Cornhusker football program. "It's probably the most important thing we do," he said.

Recruiting for the 1975 freshman team began last spring. Questionnaires concerning outstanding players were mailed to high school coaches across the country.

Each Nebraska coach is assigned to a certain area of the country and is responsible for staying in touch with that area's high schools, Osborne said.

About June 1, the coaching staff puts together a mailing list of approximately 250 prospects. These players receive weekly letters on various aspects of the football program and the University of Nebraska in general.

\$70,000 spent on recruiting

By mid-December, after watching films and scouting some players in person, the list is narrowed to about 90 high school seniors. Osborne said that about 30 players from that group will decide to play football at Nebraska.

Coach Osborne justifies the approximately \$70,000 spent on recruiting each year by the fact that the entire football program grosses several million dollars and actually supports some minor

sports.

The 1974 freshman team was the first to come in under the new Big 8 scholarship limit of 30, instead of 45 as in previous years.

Osborne said the scholarship reduction has definitely been a hindrance.

"Above average, but not outstanding, high school players who may develop into outstanding college players just won't get scholarships," he said.

Easy to sell

Osborne cited former Huskers stars Jerry Tagge, Jeff Kinney, and Rich Glover as possibly falling into this category.

Despite the scholarship reduction, Osborne said Nebraska football is easy to sell. The coaches stress Nebraska's strong football tradition, consistent sellouts and excellent training and locker room facilities when talking to the players.

Osborne added that one of the best recruiting points is the "generally favorable attitude on campus towards football."

Osborne said the quality of Nebraska high school football has increased tremendously in the past ten years.

"Right now, all the coaches here feel the Class A schools in Nebraska can play with anyone in the country," he said.

It remains to be seen if the Huskers have recruited another Johnny Rodgers or Dave Humm. However, the situation should be much clearer when the day for signing the Big 8 letters of intent passes (tentatively set for February 11).

UNL seeks six straight

Bowl win hoped for

Besides looking for a record setting sixth straight bowl win, the Nebraska Cornhuskers would like to close their season with a victory. To go out winners would give the team momentum for next year.

Attitude will be one of the many factors stressed in the Huskers' preparation for their New Year's Eve contest against Florida. Right now, the emotional factor is not quite as great as it was for the Oklahoma contest but the fact that the Huskers have a chance at a sixth straight bowl win, a record achievement, provides them with extra incentive.

Florida has a good offense, Osborne said. They score an average of 24 points and average about 370 yards total offense per game. They have good size, he added, and are directed by a good quarterback.

becky morgan jock talk

"They played a tough schedule," he said. "They defeated Auburn, which I would rate close to Alabama." Osborne scouted Florida when they defeated Miami and he was impressed by their play.

The Huskers will use variations of their standard 5-2 defense with four deep backs, in order to stop the running attack of the Gators' wishbone offense.

Light workouts for the Huskers began this week and they will also practice Saturday. Practice with pads will start next Monday. The team will leave for New Orleans Christmas Eve.

Osborne added that weather factors could provide adverse field conditions. At this time of year, he said, it rains a lot in New Orleans. The playing field, however, is artificially surfaced, as is Memorial Stadium.

Injuries pose little threat and the Huskers should be in full force when they meet the Gators. The only definite out for Nebraska is split end Dave Shamblin. Quarterback Earl Everett has been experiencing muscle spasms in his back, according to Osborne, and Ritch Bahe is still slowed by a pulled hamstring.



The Daily Nebraskan staff joins three jolly old photographers in saying "Merry Christmas." Second semester publication will begin Jan. 13.