

nebraskan sports



Nick Zanetich (left) and Stan Waldemore (right) are both out of action as guards for the Huskers. Zanetich quit the team Tuesday while Waldemore injured his knee.

Huskers lose two guards; one injured, one quits team

By Pete Wegman

It's been said that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link and that is exactly how football coach Tom Osborne described the Husker offensive line following Tuesday's practice.

The Husker offense received what appeared to be a severe setback Tuesday with the loss of the top two right guards, Nick Zanatich and Stan Waldemore.

"We were hard hit in the line by graduation last year in the first place," Osborne said. "To lose two experienced or semiexperienced players at the same time makes it real tough."

Zanatich, a junior from New Jersey and the only returning letterman at right guard, failed to attend practice Monday, and Tuesday told Coach Osborne he decided to quit the squad.

Rated ahead

Zanatich had entered fall practice as the No. 1 but after Saturday's scrimmage, Waldemore, a redshirt from New Jersey, was rated slightly ahead of him.

Osborne said Zanatich decided to quit because of an ulcer he has had for about a year. "The pressure does bother him," Osborne said.

The situation got worse midway through Tuesday's practice when

Waldemore was injured during a drill.

"Usually linemen have less of a chance of getting injured than running backs since their collisions occur after only two or three feet of movement," Osborne said.

Strained knee

Waldemore strained his knee when someone apparently fell on him following a play. Osborne said Waldemore could have damaged ligaments and may require surgery.

Waldemore was treated Wednesday morning by trainer Paul Schneider, who said the injury may not be as severe as originally thought.

"We're just going to have to treat it day by day," Schneider said. "He could be practicing in a week."

According to Cletus Fischer, offensive line coach, Dan Miller, a sophomore redshirt from Hebron, and Steve Lindquist, a sophomore who played defense last year, will fill the position.

Position moves

"The situation doesn't look too good," Fischer said.

Fischer said the Huskers have received more injuries in fall practice this season than in any year he can remember. According to trainer Schneider, 14 players missed practice Tuesday because of injuries.

Monte Anthony (bruised thigh), Dave Gillespie (pulled muscle) and Jon Kroneberger (broken toe), should be available for practice next week, Schneider said.

The only serious injuries appear to be to quarterback Ed Burns, who will miss four to six weeks because of a broken thumb, and linebacker Jim Belka, who may require knee surgery for an injury received in spring practice.

Defense coaches agree Blackshirts have potential, but need more work

By Scott Jones

Nebraska's four defensive football coaches agree on the defense's progress thus far.

Effort and hustle have been good, they say, but more work is needed on technique and assignments.

Defensive coordinator Monte Kiffin has seven returning starters from last year's squad, second defensively against rushing, passing and scoring and third in total defense in the Big 8.

Four of the five defensive linemen return, including all interior linemen: middleguard John Lee and tackles Ron Pruitt and Mike Fultz.

Potential good

"They could be as good down-linemen as we've had here," Kiffin said, "but they aren't yet. They have the potential."

Pruitt, a 6 ft. 3 in. 247-pounder from Compton, Calif., is a two-year starter who plays consistently, Kiffin said.

"He's a very good technique player who doesn't make very many mistakes," he said.

Playing opposite Pruitt at the right tackle position will be either Fultz or senior George Mills, a 6 ft. 5 in., 228-pounder. Mills started in the spring game May 3 but Fultz was again named No. 1 in changes made this Monday.

Kiffin said Fultz, a Lincoln High School graduate and Big 8 defensive Sophomore-of-the-Year in 1974, "worked hard this summer and he played better than Mills last Saturday" in the Huskers first scrimmage.

Several tackles

The tackle position has depth, Kiffin said, with seniors Jerry Wied and Dean Gissler behind Pruitt and junior Dan Brock supporting Mills and Fultz.

Middleguard Lee was the Husker's leading tackler last year with 97 tackles. The 6 ft. 1 in. 248-pound senior from Red Bank, N.J., is backed up by Central City junior Jeff Pullen and senior Willie Thornton, who started against Colorado last year.

Linebacker coach Bill Myles said four Huskers are battling to replace Tom Ruud, Bob Nelson and John Starkebaum, who graduated.

Sophomore Jim Wightman and junior Cletus Piller are the leaders. Percy Eichelberger and Larry Young are close behind, Myles said.

Eichelberger was the No. 1 strongside linebacker until Monday when Piller

moved to that position and Wightman was elevated to the first team on the weakside.

Need best 2

"Of all the linebackers, Cletus Piller and Jim Wightman are playing better than the others right now but that may change," Myles said. "We're just looking for the best two athletes, whether weakside or strong."

Lettermen Eichelberger and Piller are the most experienced, Myles said, but Young, a 6 ft. 208-pounder, is the fastest of the four and Wightman, 6 ft. 3 in. and 215 pounds, is the largest. He said "the position is still wide open."

Three Huskers, cocaptain Bob Martin, Ray Phillips and Dave Redding are ranked as No. 1 defensive ends, said George Darlington, defensive end coach.

Suspended

However, Phillips, along with tackle Gissler and safety Jim Burrow, won't play in the Sept. 13 season opener against Louisiana State University because they illegally accompanied Husker teams to a bowl game.

Redding, a senior from North Platte, is a two-year letterman at right end and Martin, All-Big 8 in 1974, is a two-year starter from David City.

Phillips was redshirted in 1974 after he transferred to Nebraska from Marshalltown Junior College in Iowa. The 6 ft. 4 in. 225-pound junior is the best defender against the run among the ends, Darlington said.

In addition, sophomore Tony Samuel, second team right end, was impressive during the spring, Darlington said. Other support should come from Randy Rick and Chester Talley at right end and George Andrews, Tom Coccia, Reg Gast and Tom Ridder at left end. Andrews, a sophomore from Omaha, injured his Achilles tendon in the first practice this fall and still limps, Darlington said.

All-America candidate Wonder Monds, Jim Burrow and Dave Butterfield return as starters in the Husker secondary. Joining Butterfield at the cornerback position is Beatrice senior Chuck Jones.

Need depth

Depth is the main concern in the secondary, especially without No. 1 safety Burrow available for the LSU game, said Warren Powers, defensive backfield coach.

Competing for Burrow's vacancy are redshirt sophomore Larry Valasek and sophomore Ted Harvey. He said a safety starter would probably be named within a week.

The other secondary reserves, Harvey and Valsek, are nonlettermen. Kurt Stacy is second team behind Jones, Jack Cabell supports Butterfield and Kent Smith is behind Monds.

sports shorts

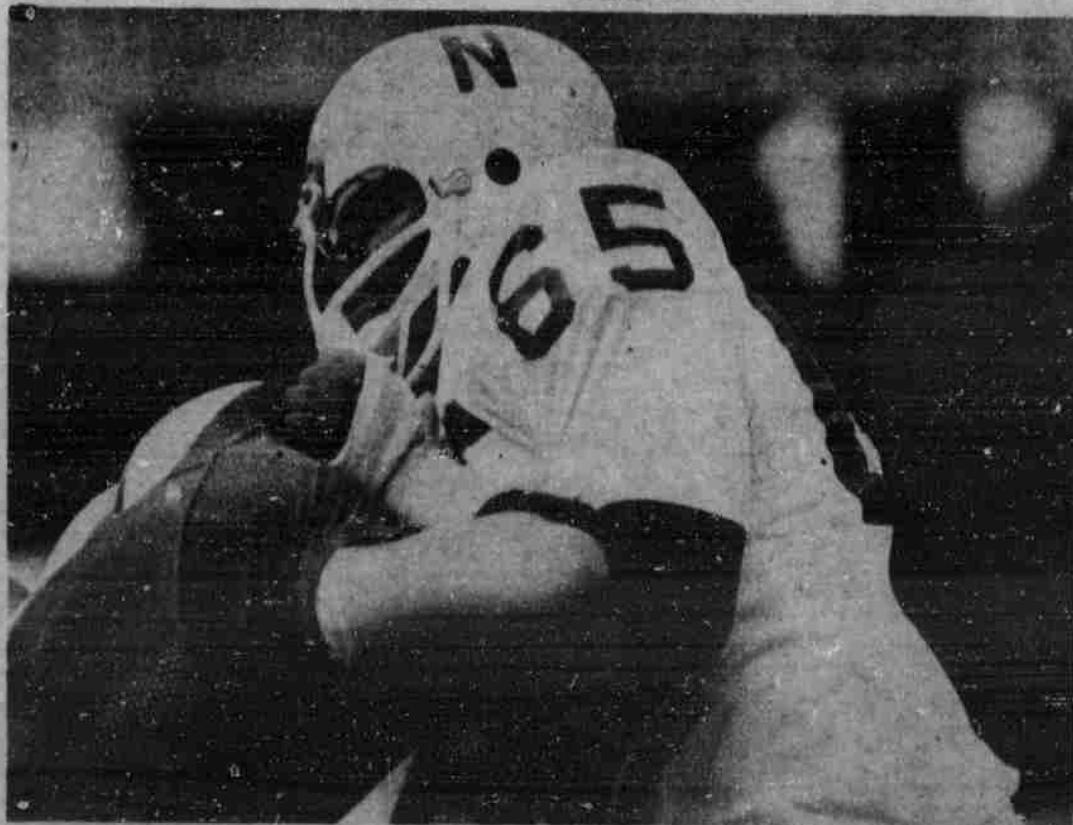
UNL's men's swim team will hold a meeting Friday at 3:30 p.m. by the Coliseum pool. Last year's varsity members and those wishing to try out for the team are invited to attend.

All women interested in timing men's varsity swim meets this season are asked report to Room 206 in the Coliseum anytime.

Physicals will be given for UNL wrestlers Sept. 12. The wrestlers will begin weight training three days a week starting Sept. 8. Daily practice starts Oct. 13.

All women wishing to participate in intercollegiate sports are required to attend a meeting at 6:15 tonight in the South Stadium office building. Physicals will follow at 7 p.m. at the University Center.

There will be a meeting of the UNL baseball team today at 4:30 p.m. in the South Stadium Office Building. Freshmen wishing to try out for the team are asked to attend.



Senior middle guard Willie Thornton (65) squares off against Rik Bonness during Saturday's scrimmage. Thornton is listed as a second team middle guard.

Photo by Ted Kirk