



Devaney—three years later

By Susie Reitz

Bob Devaney, former UNL football coach and now athletic director says what he misses most about coaching is the camaraderie with players and coaches.

"I don't miss the actual coaching and recruiting much," said the twice-national champion coach in an interview in his Big Red-furnished office. "I had enough of that."

Devaney said his duties keep him busy and don't leave much time for reminiscing.

"I don't sit back and just think about things in general," he said, "usually I think about things I have to do. But when I think back it's about the mistakes and what could have been done differently."

National champions

Devaney coached national championship football teams in 1970 and 1971. Hopes of an unprecedented third straight national championship were ended the first game of the following season when Nebraska lost to UCLA 20-17. Later in the season the Huskers tied Iowa State 23-23 and lost 17-14 to Oklahoma.

"I think I took the UCLA threat a little too lightly," Devaney said, "and I know there are things that could have been done technically different—we could have won all the games that season, and I think about that."

In 1973 a Devaney assistant, Tom Osborne, took over head coaching duties while Devaney retired from coaching to devote full time to athletic director. He had been athletic director since 1967 in addition to coaching.

Press box

Since 1973 he has watched the games from the press box and said he hasn't called any plays.

"I don't think there's any place for unasked advice," he said. He "might consider" calling a play if asked, he added.

Devaney hasn't gone on the field during a Nebraska game since leaving coaching, he said, although he goes to watch practice, when he gets the chance.

One of his main interests as athletic director has been the construction of the new multi-sports complex, a project

scheduled for completion next summer. Devaney visits the construction site to check progress a few times a week, he said.

He also spends time on the road and at speaking engagements. This week for instance, he spoke in Falls City Monday and at a realtors dinner in Lincoln Wednesday. He tapes two television football prediction shows every week and has a live radio show before home football games.

Main sport

Football is still the main sport at UNL, Devaney says, and he doesn't see that changing very soon.

"Football makes the money to support the athletic program and all the other sports," said Devaney. "It has to be kept strong to give that support."

National Collegiate Athletic Association regulations restricting the number of football scholarships to 30 rather than 45 will hurt the program, Devaney said.

"We'll be hurt by not getting as many Nebraska kids," he said. "they will go to smaller schools where they can get scholarships rather than come here without one."

Nebraska could have lost some good players in the past if similar scholarship restrictions had been in effect, Devaney said, and named Nebraskans Dennis Thorell (defensive back 1963-66), Larry Frost (wingback 1965-59), and Mike "Red" Beran (offensive guard 1968-72) as examples.

Income potential


Other sports have the potential to bring income, possibly enough to break even, he said.

"Teams have to get championships to draw much income," said Devaney. Meanwhile football provides funds to build the sports program to championship level.

Potentially basketball could make money, Devaney said. He mentioned track and baseball as possibly break-even sports and said wrestling and swimming could bring income but probably not enough to pay expenses.

The gymnastics team could bring more income this year if they do as well as last year, he said. The Husker gymnasts placed fifth in national competition in 1975.

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