

Photo by Kevin Higley

After missing the Indiana game with a hip injury, Husker I-back Dave Gillespie (28) returned action against TCU, picking up 39 yards on 11 carries. The Huskers won 56-14.

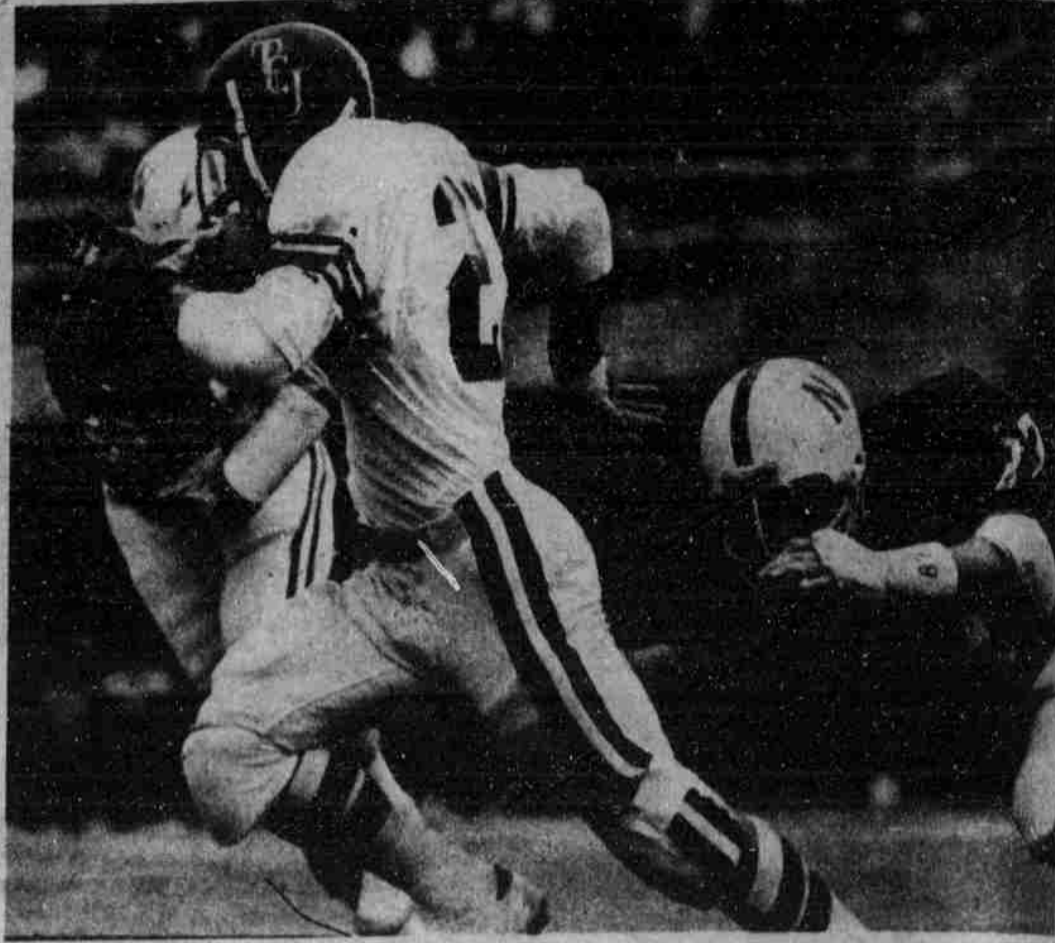


Photo by Ted Kay

Husker defensive end and Bob Martin (87) dives for Texas Christian University (TCU) running back Ricky Wright (23) while linebacker Jim Wightman (59) comes in to assist.

Expansion goal of women's athletics

By Susie Reitz

High level competition and an expanded women's athletic program are the two main goals of the new Women's Athletic Dept. administrators.

Aleen Swofford, women's athletic director, and Jay Davis, women's sports information director, say they view women's athletics as more than recreation.

"We're excited that they've accepted us here," Swofford said. "We want to have teams that compete on high level of competition."

"Some people think women's sports will take money away from football and other men's programs and hurt them," she said, "but that's not why we're here at all."

"We're here to build the women's program to the level of the men's," Davis said.

Both at Texas

Both Swofford and Davis were at Texas Womens University in Denton, Tex. before coming to UNL.

Swofford, who has a Ph.D. in women's athletic administration, came to UNL in July and immediately established priorities for the Women's Athletic Dept, she said.

One of her first priorities, she said, was establishing a Women's Sports Information Dept. to let the public know about women's athletics at UNL.

Davis, who completed her Ph.D. in exercise physiology a year ago, knew Swofford at TWU.

Davis said she saw that "women's sports information is where it's at—a really fast-growing field" and decided to accept the offer to come to UNL in August.

She also is assistant athletic director, bookkeeper, recruiting coordinator and general public relations representative for the Women's Athletic Dept.

"We would like to expand the program," Swofford said, "But there must be public, as well as an athletic, demand for a sport before it will grow."

The program will expand as the public sees women in high-level competition, Swofford said.

"Women in sports are beautiful and when public realize that, the demand for women's sports events will increase," she said.

The women's athletic program operates on funds generated by the men's sports now, Swofford said, but eventually will become self-supporting. It receives no state support, she said.

Part of building financial backing has included establishing a UNL Women's Intercollegiate Athletics Fund through the University of Nebraska Foundation, Swofford said. Funds will be used for equipment, and not for administration or salaries, she said.

Booster club

A new women's sports booster club, called "Boost-Her" has been organized by supporters of women's athletics and will be the base for organizing fans for women's athletics at UNL, Swofford said.

Competition for the UNL women's teams is with Nebraska schools as well as school in Iowa, Kansas and South Dakota. Teams also compete in regional and invitational tournaments where they meet Big 8 and other midwestern schools, Davis said.

A newly-formed small college division of the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women in Nebraska has left UNL and the University of Nebraska at Omaha as the only larger college representatives in the state. The schools will establish their own regulations regarding lengths of seasons, practices and types of

state tournaments, Davis said.

"This will permit us to compete with more schools on our own level of competition," She said.

Nine sports

UNL offers nine intercollegiate sports for women. Fall sports include field hockey and volleyball. Gymnastics, basketball and swimming and diving are winter sports and softball, tennis and tack and field are spring sports. Women's golf, in its first year at UNL, has a fall and spring season.

With two exceptions, the women's coaches are on joint assignment with the Physical Education Dept. The exceptions are Larry Romue, golf, who also coaches men's golf, and George Nicodemus, basketball.

Coaches Elizabeth Petrakis, field hockey; Myreen Loveless, softball; Karen Balke, gymnastics; Roger Capan, track and field; Gail Whitaker, tennis and Pat Sullivan, swimming and diving and volleyball are joint assignments.

Women athletes have fulltime student trainers this year for the first time. Priscilla Raasch, a senior physical education major, is head trainer. Assistants are Sandy Stuart, who works with fall and winter sports then plays softball, and Beth Pillen, who plays field hockey then works with winter and spring sports.

Conditioning program

Training includes a new weight training and conditioning program directed by strength coach Boyd Epley, according to Raasch.

With improved conditioning, the number of injuries to women athletes should decline Raasch said.

Improving the women's program includes increasing the number of scholar-

ships awarded, Swofford said.

Women's athletic scholarships are distributed equally among sports, she said. Currently 56 women are on scholarship.

Scholarship recipients this year are all Nebraska natives, Davis said. Womens scholarships pay in-state tuition and fees.

"We think this is indicative of the type of program we want to start with," Swofford said. "We are starting girls from this state and will go outside the state as our program grows."

Part of the in-state expansion will include contacting coaches within the state about athletes and working with them in clinics, Davis said.

FIRST DOWN

Special Editor: Larry Stunkel.
Managing Editor: Stan Linhorst.
Advertising Manager: Mary Ann Myers.
Business Manager: Jerri Haussler.
Production Manager: Kitty Policky.

First Down is a publication of the Daily Nebraskan. Both are written, edited and managed by students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. They are editorially independent of the University faculty, administration and students.

First Down is published by the publications committee on home game Saturdays.

Address: First Down, Room 34, Nebraska Union, 14th and R Streets, Lincoln, Nebraska 68508. Telephone 402/472-2688.