

nebraskan sports

Stingy Blackshirt front enjoys offensive variety

By Pete Wegman

The Los Angeles Rams had their Fear-some Foursome, the Minnesota Vikings had the Purple People Eaters and the UNL football Cornhuskers have the Black-shirt defensive line.

Although the Blackshirts may lack the experience and size of their counterparts in the pro ranks, they have helped to place the Cornhusker defense among the NCAA leaders.

The defense has allowed an average of 83 rushing and 85 passing yards a game this season. Last year Nebraska allowed 263 total yards a game.

Nebraska's defensive front line consists of ends Bob Martin, a senior, and junior Ray Phillips; tackles Jerry Weid, a senior, and junior Mike Fultz, and senior middle guard John Lee.

Martin, a three-year regular and all-Big 8 defensive end last year, is Nebraska's defensive captain.

Unwritten rule

"I don't feel that much pressure being captain," he said. "There's kind of an unwritten rule that the captain tries to keep things going all right."

Martin said that while he can't compare defenses from year to year, the Huskers improve defensively each week.

Oklahoma State, Nebraska's opponent Saturday, runs both an I-slot and a wishbone offense, according to Martin.

"It's kind of fun playing against both offenses," he said. "It breaks the monotony of doing the same thing week after week."

Martin said the loss of starting defensive tackle Ron Pruitt for the season because of a broken leg could work to the Huskers' advantage.

Valuable experience

"Ron's a great athlete," Martin said, "but adversity brings out the best in you sometimes. A couple of guys are gaining valuable playing experience."

Phillips, the other defensive end, was

red-shirted last season after transferring from Marshalltown Iowa Junior College.

Phillips said the most important thing in playing against different types of offensive sets is knowing what to do in each situation.

"With a wishbone offense, you have so much coming at you, it's confusing," he said. "There aren't any real mental problems, but rather physical problems. You have to play off a lot of blocks."

Defensive tackle Fultz, a two-year starter, was the 1974 Big 8 Defensive Sophomore-of-the-Year.

"I think we're a little better defensively than last year," Fultz said. "I think we hustle a little more and we don't depend so much on one or two players."

Fultz said OSU's wishbone differs slightly from the wishbone offense run by Kansas against the Huskers last week.

Get the job done

"Oklahoma State doesn't pull the guard like Kansas did," he said. "The type of offense doesn't make that much difference. We just go out and play and get the job done."

Weid, Nebraska's other defensive tackle, took over Pruitt's position.

"I think I've done the job and I hope to keep improving each week," he said. "I hope to be looked at as a bonafide Black-shirt starter, instead of just as Ron's replacement."

"We're still a little young, but desire and hustle are making up for it," he continued. "It seems like this year we've been able to play more than two or three quarters each game."

Weid said if he had a choice, he'd rather play against an I-slot offense.

"I like to put pressure on the quarterback. It's kind of exciting to get at the quarterback," he said.

Lee, a senior, is the fifth member of Nebraska's defensive line. He led the Blackshirts with 97 tackles last year and is leading again this season with 35.

Women gymnasts dive into fall competition preparation

By Susie Reitz

From dive roll to handspring-backflip-layout-full twist the UNL women gymnasts are learning superior difficulty stunts for competition beginning in November.

The gymnasts are taking five weeks of pre-season lessons in gymnastics skills, according to gymnastics coach Karen Balke.

The lessons are taught by freshman Tim Matthews from Omaha. Matthews, an Omaha North graduate, was an all-around gymnast in high school and won several medals in his specialty, floor exercise, he said.

Matthews helped coach the girls gymnastics team in high school under coach Eugene Williams, he said. He also taught gymnastics in Omaha junior high summer school programs and taught dance and acrobatics in high school.

Own team

"I got interested in coaching in high school," Matthews said. "I always thought it would be great to have my own team."

"I study the techniques of coaches like Francis Allen (UNL gymnastics coach) to learn a style of my own."

Matthews met some of the women on the gymnastics team in a gymnastics class this fall, Balke said. He came to open gym practices and helped with spotting.

"Tim's giving the lessons now, and we hope he can be an assistant coach when organized practices start," Balke said. His status will depend on funds available, she said.

Need spotter

"Even if I don't get to be assistant coach this year, I hope I can still help with practices," Matthews said. "There are a lot of difficult tricks the girls are working on in these lessons and they need a spotter to practice them."

Matthews said the lessons are paying off

for the women.

"I'm really excited about how much improvement they've shown," he said. "All the girls are working on new superior difficulty tricks in all events."

Team members Kathi Ruddick and Sandy Czaplowski have improved and learned superior difficulty skills, Matthews said. Peggy Newport, Barb Baker and Carla Gerbig also have improved, he said.

According to Balke, 20 women have shown interest in the team and practices will start about the first of November.

Women's volleyball squad braces for grueling tournament schedule

A grueling weekend is in store for the UNL women's volleyball team this week, according to coach Pat Sullivan.

UNL, 6-1 on the season, joins seven other colleges in the Graceland College Invitational tournament Friday and Saturday in Lamoni, Iowa, and will face some of the top teams in the region, Sullivan said.

Friday UNL plays Augsburg, Minn., Southwest Missouri State (SWMS) and Kansas University. SWMS won the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women regional tournament last year and KU was third, Sullivan said.

Saturday, Graceland College is the Huskers' first opponent, followed by Kearney, University of Minnesota and Kansas State.

"We play one match right after the other," Sullivan said. "The tournament last weekend (at Kansas State) was a test of endurance with four matches, but this will be tougher because these are even better

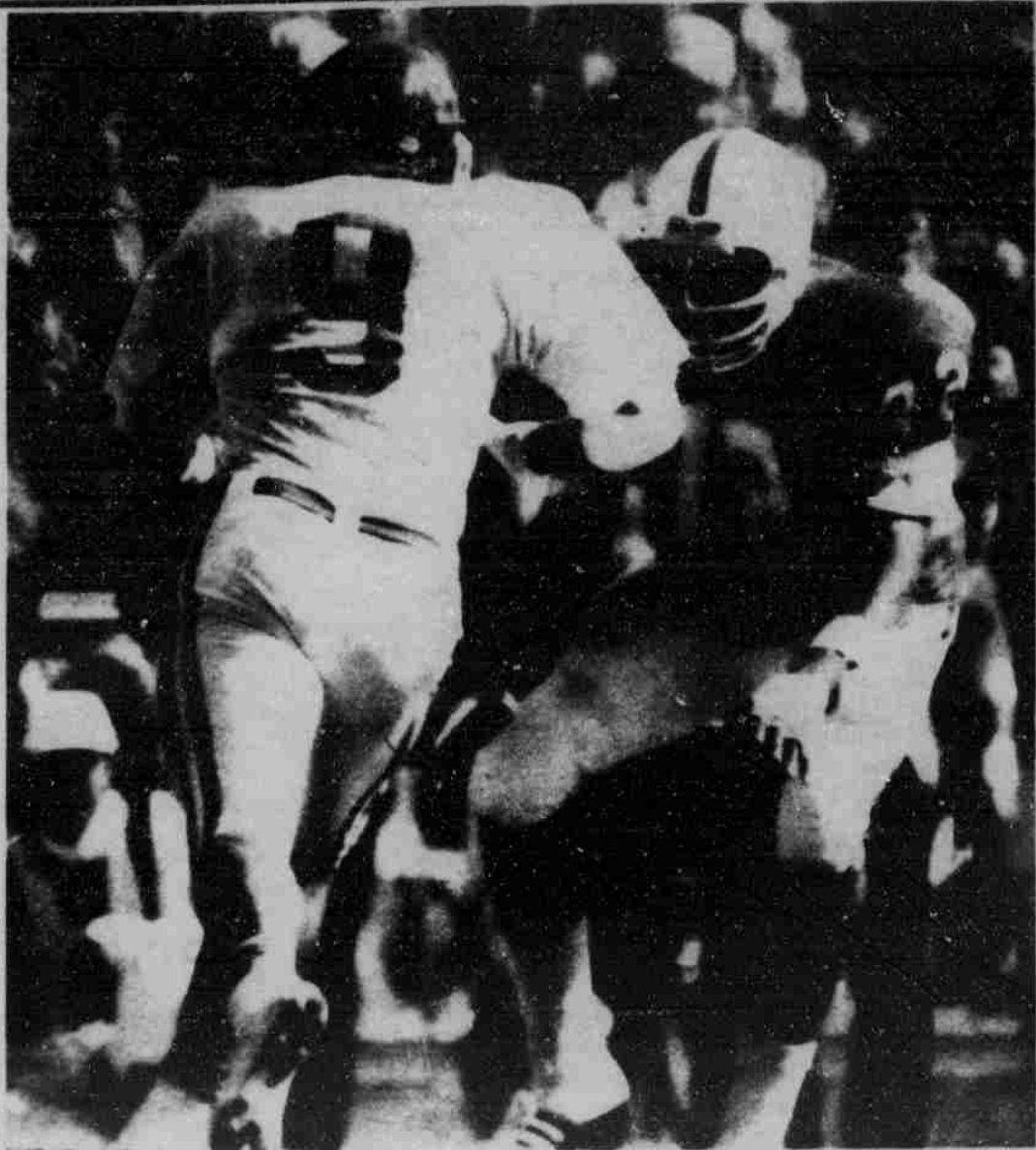


Photo by Ted Kirk

Husker tackle Mike Fultz (72) waits for Kansas quarterback Norm Cromwell to make his move during Saturday's 16-0 Husker win.

World's largest regatta draws UNL competition

By Pete Wegman

Members of the UNL crew will travel across half the continent in late October to compete in a three mile race, according to head coach Ron Rusthoven.

The crew will participate in the world's largest regatta, the Head-of-the-Charles Regatta in Boston on Oct. 26.

The eleven-year-old regatta consists of 18 events, each limited to 40 entries. The regatta's three-mile course will carry the various sculls and shells past Radcliffe and Boston Colleges and Harvard University.

UNL submitted entries in three of the 18 events. The Husker will send a women's four-person shell, a men's intermediate four and a lightweight men's four to Boston.

Placed ninth

Last year the crew sent only a men's eight, which placed ninth of 54 entries.

"We're going with fours this year because I didn't think we could field a competitive eight," Rusthoven said.

"This way the heavyweight men, lightweight men and the women get to go and everybody's happy," he said. "This

does leave some people behind, but it does make for more competition in getting a seat (in a shell)."

Rusthoven said the crew will have a two-fold purpose in traveling to Boston: to compare favorably with other entries at the regatta; and find a new coach.

"We're shopping when we're in Boston," he said. "We need at least one new coach."

Rusthoven and Mark Stormberg, women's coach, have shared coaching duties for the 65 crew members this season.

Rusthoven said he had hoped for a coaching staff of five when the fall season opened, but because of previous commitments and other problems, he and Stormberg have been forced into what has become an almost full-time job.

"Last year I coached just the varsity and I thought I was overworked," Rusthoven said. "Now I know I'm overworked."

Rusthoven said he has already contacted some people involved with crew on the East Coast concerning a coaching position.

"I think the improvement in Nebraska's crew program can be evidenced by the quality of the people who have responded to our offers thus far," he said.

He said it is difficult to find coaches this year because many of the better ones are concentrating on training for the 1976 Olympics.

Rusthoven cited one problem the crew has that most coaches would like to have: too many people.

"We're getting in a much better position equipment-wise, but there are too many people to be on the water at the same time," he said.

UNL has 37 freshmen out for crew, according to Rusthoven.

"They're (freshmen) ahead in development of the freshmen last year," he said, "but I hope they don't reach that proverbial plateau and level off."

Rusthoven said the fall regatta is especially important to freshmen crew members, Nebraska's only Big 8 champions last year.

"It (the regatta) gives you something to point to when you're rowing in the fall," he said.

The regatta will be Nebraska's first competition since the Nationals in Syracuse, N.Y., last June.