

Huskies want to get their Sooners

By Pete Wegman and Scott Jones

Husker Tony Davis isn't one to dodge questions about the importance of Saturday's UNL-Oklahoma (OU) football game.

"It's the whole season, the most important game of my career," said the senior fullback. "There are 12 steps to the national championship, and we've gone 10."

The Huskers, 10-0 and ranked second nationally, are riding an 11 game winning

streak, dating back to the 13-10 Sugar Bowl win over Florida.

Oklahoma's Sooners are 9-1 and ranked seventh. A 23-3 loss to Kansas (KU) two weeks ago broke OU's 37 game unbeaten string.

Besides playing for the Big 8 championship (Nebraska has already garnered at least a share of the title), the game winner

got a team of workers willing to pay the

has a spot in the Orange Bowl New Year's Day in Miami against the loser of the Ohio State-Michigan game Saturday.

The UNL-OU game will be an opportunity for Davis and his Huskers teammates to give Nebraska its eighth outright conference title, in what Sports Illustrated had called a rebuilding year for Nebraska.

Bundle up!

If you're going to be in Norman, Okla. Saturday, better take your heavy coats. The U.S. Weather service predicts cloudy skies and temperatures in the upper 40s to lower 50s at game time. Rain is not mentioned in the forecast.

sports



Photo by Ted Kirk

UNL's defense, leading the Big 8 in four statistical categories, will be the key for the Huskers against Oklahoma Saturday. Dave Butterfield, (34), Bob Martin (87) and Ray Phillips (80) stop Cyclone quarterback Mike Tryon during last week's 52-0 win.

Ton of supplies tackles emergencies

By Jim Hunt

With about one ton of equipment for each away football game, the UNL equipment and medical training staff wants to be prepared for any emergency.

For Gib Babcock, in his eleventh year as UNL's equipment manager, most of the work is done before the first road game. Before that game, he packs four large red trunks with everything from extra game pants to chin straps to remain there throughout the season.

The 48 players who make a trip pack their own equipment the night before they leave which, Babcock says, saves a lot of

work.

The team always carries an extra set of jerseys in case it is too cold to wear the mesh ones, and a few extra sweat suits are taken for the coaches.

No extra helmets

No extra helmets are taken because of the different shapes and sizes, Babcock said. "Usually I can fix it and if I can't, we use another player's," he said.

"We don't take as much stuff as a lot of schools," he said. "One year I think Wisconsin brought more equipment down here than we own."

Lately the team has taken its own headphones, Babcock said, because they fit over the ear and muffle sound better than most other phones.

The morning the team is scheduled to leave, Babcock and Bill Shepard (UNL's grounds keeper who helps on road trips), take the equipment to the airport.

When the team travels by bus, Babcock and Shepard drive a van to the game.

Last year when UNL went to the Sugar Bowl, the airline left behind 26 bags with players' equipment in Lincoln, he said, and players had to borrow sweat clothes for practice until their equipment arrived that night.

Packing, unpacking

For the medical training staff, preparing for a game is a constant case of packing and unpacking.

On Wednesdays, student trainer Scott Cook receives a seven-page list of medical supplies needed for a road game. Cook is helped by seven other student trainers to pack two large silver trunks, he said, which usually takes about 15 hours.

The trunks are loaded into a student trainer's car and arrive at the game site about one hour before the team.

Upon arrival, the trainers unpack, after the game, the supplies are repacked and on Sunday mornings, once again unpacked.

The team takes between 400-450 rolls of different kinds of tape on road games, Cook said, most costing more than \$1 a roll.

12-person medical staff

Usually a 12-person medical staff accompanies the team on the road, including orthopedic surgeons Pat Clare and Chuck Neuman.

On game days, the trainers tape the players ankles at the hotel where they are staying and special taping (knees, hands, shoulders, etc.), is done at the stadium, Cook said. The trainers usually have about 90 minutes to complete the taping.

In the Big 8, training staffs agree to help each other out, Cook said. At home games, UNL has one student trainer on the visiting team's sideline and the visitors can request the help of one UNL doctor.

"There hasn't been a situation that we couldn't handle yet," Cook said.

"We might not have superior talent, but we've got guts," Davis said. "We've got the price to win. We know how to compete."

Davis is 101 yards short of the all-time career rushing mark of Nebraska, held by Jeff Kinney (1969-70-71), with 2,420 yards.

The Sooners, four point favorites by one chart, also have a runner nearing a career rushing record. His name is Joe Washington, all-American and Heisman trophy candidate.

Owens mark endangered

Washington, who gained 142 yards on 21 carries against Nebraska last year, is 82 yards shy of the Big 8 career rushing mark, currently held by Oklahoma fullback Steve Owens (1967-68-69), with 4,041 yards.

Sooner coach Barry Switzer, with a 30-1-1 mark at OU, hasn't lost to UNL.

"They (Nebraska's Cornhuskers) are some team," Switzer said. "Those defensive linemen are awesome. Are they from Mars?"

"Ferragamo is a great quarterback and their runners are class. We'll have to play our best game to even stay with them. I mean that."

Conference statistics back-up Switzer's comments.

Defensive kingpins

Nebraska leads the Big 8 in four defensive categories: rushing, passing, total, and scoring defense.

Oklahoma's defense, led by tackle Leroy Selmon, middle guard Dewey Selmon and end Jimbo Elrod, is second in rushing and total defense, fifth against the pass and third in scoring defense.

The Huskers also lead the conference in total offense and scoring offense, while the Sooners, traditionally leading the conference offensively, are second in scoring offense and fourth in total offense.

The game, to be played before 63,000 plus spectators at Owen Field (the snake pit), is a sellout. Ticket officials estimate about 4,000 Nebraska fans will attend.

Unlike previous years when the undefeated Sooners had a chance at a high national ranking and the Huskers were forced into the spoiler role, the situation is reversed this year.

OU title hopes dim

OU's loss to KU virtually killed any hope the Sooners had of repeating as national champions, with the exception of a "back door championship."

Nebraska, however, has been gaining in the polls each week and is now within striking distance of the top-ranked Ohio State Buckeyes.

As one writer said, "Nebraska's got more on the line while Oklahoma's got nothing to lose."

It will be the fourth shootout between the schools since the 1971 Game of the Century.

The national championship was on the line in the 1971 game, also called the Game of the Decade. Nebraska and Oklahoma, both undefeated, were ranked first and second, respectively.

The Huskers rallied twice from four point deficits and won the game 35-31 with a 12-play, 74-yard drive late in the fourth quarter.

Three in a row

In 1972 the Sooners came to Lincoln with an 8-1 mark and were rated fourth nationally. Nebraska, number five with an 8-1-1 record, was favored by the oddsmakers.

The game was the last regular season home game for Husker Coach Bob Devaney. The Sooners spoiled it for Devaney, however, with a 17-14 victory.

The Huskers traveled to Norman again in 1973 to face the third-ranked Sooners. The Huskers, 8-1-1 and ranked fifth, already had accepted a bid to play Texas in the Cotton Bowl.

The afternoon turned into a long one for the Huskers as OU held the visitors to 10 first downs, enroute to a 27-0 win.

Last year, a Memorial Stadium attendance mark was set when the Sooners, number one in the nation, invaded Lincoln.

Nebraska led briefly, 14-7, early in the third quarter when I-back John O'Leary hit quarterback Dave Humm with an 11 yard scoring pass.

The Sooners stormed back, however, and scored three more touchdowns, taking home a 28-14 win.

The two teams have met 54 times with OU holding a 28-23-3 edge over the Huskers.

sports shorts

Four openings still remain for the UNL Recreation Dept. canoe trip to the National Scenic River System in the Ozark Mountains in Missouri, Nov. 26-30. According to Mark Ebel, coordinator of the trip, cost will be \$35 and includes equipment, meals, transportation and lodging.

Contact Ebel at the Office of Recreation and Intramurals, 1740 Vine St. or 472-3467, for additional information.