



Photo by Terry Gansbom

Junior Jim Wightman of Omaha, one of two returning Husker linebacker starters.

Linebackers' badge is experience

Editor's note: In conjunction with spring football practice, the Daily Nebraskan sports page will feature a series of articles analyzing the various positions. Today's report is on the linebacker situation.

By Jim Hunt

One word describes UNL's linebacking corps—experience.

Linebacker coach Bill Myles has both starting linebackers from the 1975 10-2 Husker team returning for the 1976 campaign. Those two—Clete Pillen and Jim Wightman—also were the leading tacklers on last year's squad.

Pillen, a senior from Monroe, led all tacklers in collecting 49 unassisted and 85 assisted tackles. Wightman, a junior from Omaha, collected 33 unassisted and 63 assisted tackles.

However, Pillen and Wightman won't go unchallenged

for their jobs as three other lettermen return at linebacker. Returning lettermen from last year are senior Percy Eichelberger, a two-year letterman from Louisville, Miss., and Jeff Carpenter, a junior from Council Bluffs, Iowa. Senior Jim Belka from Prairie Village, Kan., was a letterman on the 1974 team.

Up from freshman squad

Myles said there also are good linebackers moving up from the freshman squad in John Ruud from Bloomington, Minn., Lee Kunz from Lakewood, Colo., and Tom Vering of Fremont.

All linebackers don't try for the strong side or the weakside positions, but rather for the top two spots, Myles said. He said he tries to find his best players and then move them around.

The strongside linebacker lines up on the side with two receivers. The weakside linebacker often has more running plays come his way than the strongside linebacker, he said.

In spring drills, Myles said, he looks for players who are aggressive, like contact and go to the football.

Knee puts Pillen out

The Huskers might be without the services of Pillen for most of spring football practice because of strained ligaments in his left knee. Pillen said he might be out as long as two weeks, depending on how his knee responds to treatment.

"Sitting out is definitely going to hurt me as far as losing my position," Pillen said. "There is a lot of competition for the positions this year, and when a player sits out he gets rusty."

sports shorts

Because of an error in Thursday's story on Husker javelin thrower Scott Sorchik, it was reported that his 243 ft. 7 in. throw at the Big 8 Conference meet two years ago was his last throw ever. It should have read that the throw was his last in the meet. That throw, which gave him first place, was the longest in Husker history.

The Husker baseball team's doubleheader against Wayne State College, postponed Thursday because of wet grounds, has been rescheduled for 2 p.m. today. Saturday the Huskers host Morningside College in a twin bill starting at 2 p.m.

The UNL weightlifting team is hosting the 1976 Nebraska State Powerlifting Championships Saturday in the Men's Physical Education Bldg. The meet starts at 10 a.m.

Admission is 50 cents for students and \$1 for adults. Lifts include the squat, bench press and deadlift. For more information, contact Boyd Epley, 472-3116.

Wild cow race is rodeo novelty

By Scott Jones

The term cow campus may be used with much more reverence by some City Campus students after the University of Nebraska Intercollegiate Rodeo today and Saturday.

The reason is the wild cow race, a novelty event notorious for teaching city slickers that being a cowboy requires more than a ten-gallon hat and bowed legs. The real cowboys, about 325 of them, will compete in the 10th annual event at the State Fairgrounds Auditorium. Today's session begins at 7:30 p.m. Saturday sessions will be at 1:30 and 8 p.m. Student ticket prices are \$2.50.

The rodeo, sponsored by the UNL Rodeo Club, is one of seven this spring in the seven-state Great Plains region of the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association (NIRA). Team and individual points will be awarded in the six men's and three women's events.

The top two total point earners in each event in the region advance to the national rodeo in Bozeman, Mont., June 14 through 19.

Steve Huckfeldt, Rodeo Club vice-president and rodeo manager, said the UNL rodeo compares favorably with

others on the collegiate circuit.

"It seems like here at Lincoln there's more 'restige,'" said Huckfeldt, a junior from Lewellen. "It's indoor, which is helpful."

Huckfeldt is the regional point leader in steer wrestling, and John Maudorf, Norfolk sophomore, leads the region in bareback riding. Both moved to their leads with victories at the Curtis Rodeo last weekend, the only other Great Plains rodeo in Nebraska this spring.

Huckfeldt said Lexington sophomore Mike Untzeher also may do well in steer wrestling. In women's competition, UNL's Cheryl White, Atkinson sophomore, is the defending regional champion in barrel racing. Huckfeldt said rodeo attendance has been "super" in the past and hopes this year is no different.

"We've always been packed every performance except Saturday afternoon," he said.

Incidentally city slickers, to win the wild cow race each three-man team must catch and saddle a cow and then persuade one member to somehow ride it over the finish line.

The Nebraska Educational Television Network will broadcast the rodeo finals Saturday at 8 p.m.

nebraskan sports

Soccer to draw 'Ralph' onto field

By Pete Wegman

Ralph Crabtree, the cartoon creation of Omaha senior Ron Wheeler, has run for homecoming king and kicked field goals for the football team on the pages of the Daily Nebraskan.

But Saturday, Ralph will be involved in a completely different sport using his foot. And this time it won't be in newsprint.

In an attempt to bolster attendance at soccer games, Ralph will attend the UNL-Kansas State University (KSU) game in Memorial Stadium at 10 a.m., said Soccer Club president Jim Fullerton, an Omaha junior.

"I don't know if people really know we have a soccer team here (at UNL)," Fullerton said. "Ralph will be at the game. It's questionable he'll play because he's only second team, but he'll be there."

Saturday's game will be a rematch of a game UNL and KSU played in the University of Kansas (KU) Tournament last Sunday when the Huskers lost 2-1.

English prof. Franz Blaha, in his sixth year as soccer coach, said three of UNL's best players were missing in the K-State loss.

"This game is important in terms of finding out what we can do with our best men," he said. "I think this is probably the best team we've had in approximately six years."

Blaha said the game also is important in preparation for the Big 8 Conference tournament April 24 and 25 in Boulder, Colo. UNL's division in the tournament includes KSU, KU and the University of Oklahoma.

"We can beat Oklahoma for sure. Kansas is the best in the Big 8," he said. "If we can beat Kansas State there, we'll be playing for third."

UNL's previous best Big 8 finish was last spring when the team placed fifth.

Blaha said defense has been the strong part of the Huskers' game, citing junior defensemen Mike Bush from Greeley, Colo.; Kirk Nelson, a graduate student from Emporia, Kan., and Wheeler.

He said the team's experience has helped, noting that "about 70 per cent of the team has played together for two years."

on record | Sports complex is rescued, but artificial turf needs aid

By Larry Stunkel

It will be understandable if UNL athletic director Bob Devaney is one of those sending thank you notes to 32 state senators—those who overrode Gov. J. James Exon's \$6.8 million university budget veto which would have clipped \$390,000 off the \$590,000 request for operation of the new sports complex.

If the original request had not been restored, the complex could not have operated year-round.

However, Husker head football coach Tom Osborne may tack a p.s. on that note, asking for a new carpet of artificial turf for Memorial Stadium.

Osborne expressed concern Wednesday that the seven-year-old playing surface is becoming hazardous to players, especially when it's wet (as it was after a half-inch rain Tuesday night).

Among the maladies of the current surface is lack of traction and hardened padding under the carpet.

This spring, 27 players missed practice because of injuries.

Head trainer Paul Schneider said the number of injuries is not unusual for spring practice, since there are more players (about 150) than in the fall.

"The kids are hitting harder because they're trying to prove themselves," Schneider said. "I think they're hitting viciously."

Among the more serious injuries was junior Tim Fischer's broken arm. Schneider said Fischer had surgery Wednesday to place a pin in his elbow.

Only 17 players missed practice Wednesday compared to 27 Monday. Schneider said he expects the majority of players back next Monday, including senior linebacker Clete Pillen, who is out with a strained knee.

Knee injuries account for the majority of ailments plaguing the team. Nine players are out with knee injuries, three have ankle sprains, three have fractures and two have shoulder injuries.

Schneider said the number of pulled muscle injuries has decreased because of a 10-minute stretching program introduced at Husker practices after last fall.