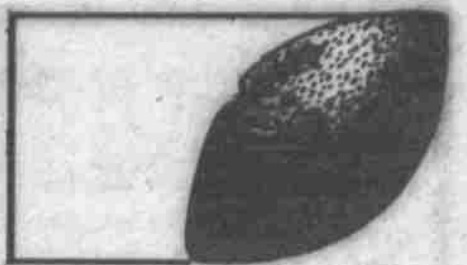


sports



Kiffin considers 'concentration' to be a key word

By Jim Hunt

Husker defensive coordinator Monte Kiffin is confident his defensive line can do the job this year.

But along with confidence comes the need for concentration, something he said was missing in practice earlier this week.

"We had a lack of concentration the last couple of days," Kiffin said. "We can't afford to wait until next week to start concentrating. We looked better in practice."

In tackles Mike Fultz and Ron Pruitt, the Huskers have what might be the best pair of defensive tackles in the country.

"They certainly have the potential to be the best pair of tackles in the country," said Kiffin, who is starting his tenth year as a full-time coach at UNL. "I hope they play that way for us. They are extremely dedicated athletes who put the team's goals ahead of their own."

Pruitt in third year

Pruitt, a 6 ft. 3 in. and 247 lbs. senior, will be entering his third year as a starter at left tackle for the Huskers. Pruitt missed all of the 1975 season with a broken ankle which required surgery.

"My ankle feels 100 per cent," Pruitt said. "I've been stretching on it all summer. It feels good, but I can't quite get the full range of motion out of it as far as moving it up and down."

"I am already looking forward to getting back," Pruitt said. "It is going to be a tough week and a half composing myself to play in a game."

One of the problems of getting ready to play is all the talk of Fultz and himself being the best set of tackles in the country, Pruitt said.

To do the job

"We just have to do our job the best we can," he said. "We have to do our jobs as individuals."

Fultz, Pruitt's counterpart at right tackle, is 6 ft. 5 in. and 275 lbs. He will be beginning his third year as a starting right tackle. Fultz already has been named to Playboy Magazine's 1976 All-American Team.

Backing up Fultz at right tackle will be senior Dan Brock. Sophomores Rod Horn and Randy Poeschl and senior Scott Avery are struggling to see who will back up Pruitt on the left side.

Junior Jeff Pullen, 6 ft. and 215 lbs., has established himself as the top middle guard.

Pullen had 'strong' camp

"Pullen has had a strong fall camp and I'm confident that he can do the job," Kiffin said. "We have always

had a great middle guard at UNL and we expect that out of Pullen. We need to have that with the type of defense that we play."

The Huskers play a 5-2-4 type of defense, with five linemen, two linebackers and four defensive backs.

Sophomores Odious Lee and Mitch Webb are vying for the back up middle guard job.

A tightly-contested battle is being waged and the right end position between junior Tony Samuel and sophomore George Andrews according to Kiffin.

Left end will be manned by senior Ray Phillips, 6 ft. 4 in. and 222 lbs., who started for the Huskers last season. Phillips collected 62 tackles last season, including 25 unassisted. He also broke up three passes and blocked two kicks.

Backing up Phillips at left end will be Reg Gast, a junior.

Husker secondary young but talented

By Mike McCarthy

Inexperience echoes throughout UNL's defensive secondary, but defensive backfield coach Warren Powers said he thinks that sound will change before the Huskers meet Louisiana State University on Sept. 11.

"We're young at spots and we're not ready to play tomorrow," he said "But the backs are working hard and have enough ability to be ready by game time."

Senior Dave Butterfield, this year's only returning backfield starter, anchors the secondary. Juniors Ted Harvey, Larry Valasek and Kent Smith fill the remaining slots.

"All four backs have excellent speed and are good tacklers," Powers said. "Each has enough ability, soundness and intelligence to overcome their inexperience. I'd be more worried if the three newcomers didn't have fine athletic abilities."

Powers said Harvey, Valasek and Smith also look to Butterfield for leadership, which he has shown.

Butterfield said he doesn't feel any additional pressure despite the leadership role and being a pre-season All-Big 8 Conference selection.

"We work well in the backfield together and I feel I don't have to live up to pre-season pressures," he said. "I'm just going to try to have the best season I can. The other guys ask me questions since I'm more experienced and can recognize some plays faster."

However, despite the secondary's inexperience, Butterfield said the four have gone over everything and extreme weaknesses aren't apparent.

Harvey said, "Butter's nice to have back there. Inexperience is my biggest weakness, but Dave really helps out."

Harvey said he needs to read offensive plays better and faster, but a defensive back can always improve in that department.

Last year's starters—Wonder Monds, Jim Burrows and Chuck Jones—are definitely missed, Powers said, adding with more game experience this year's secondary can do the job. Powers said junior college transfer, Rene Anderson, also is doing well in the defensive backfield.

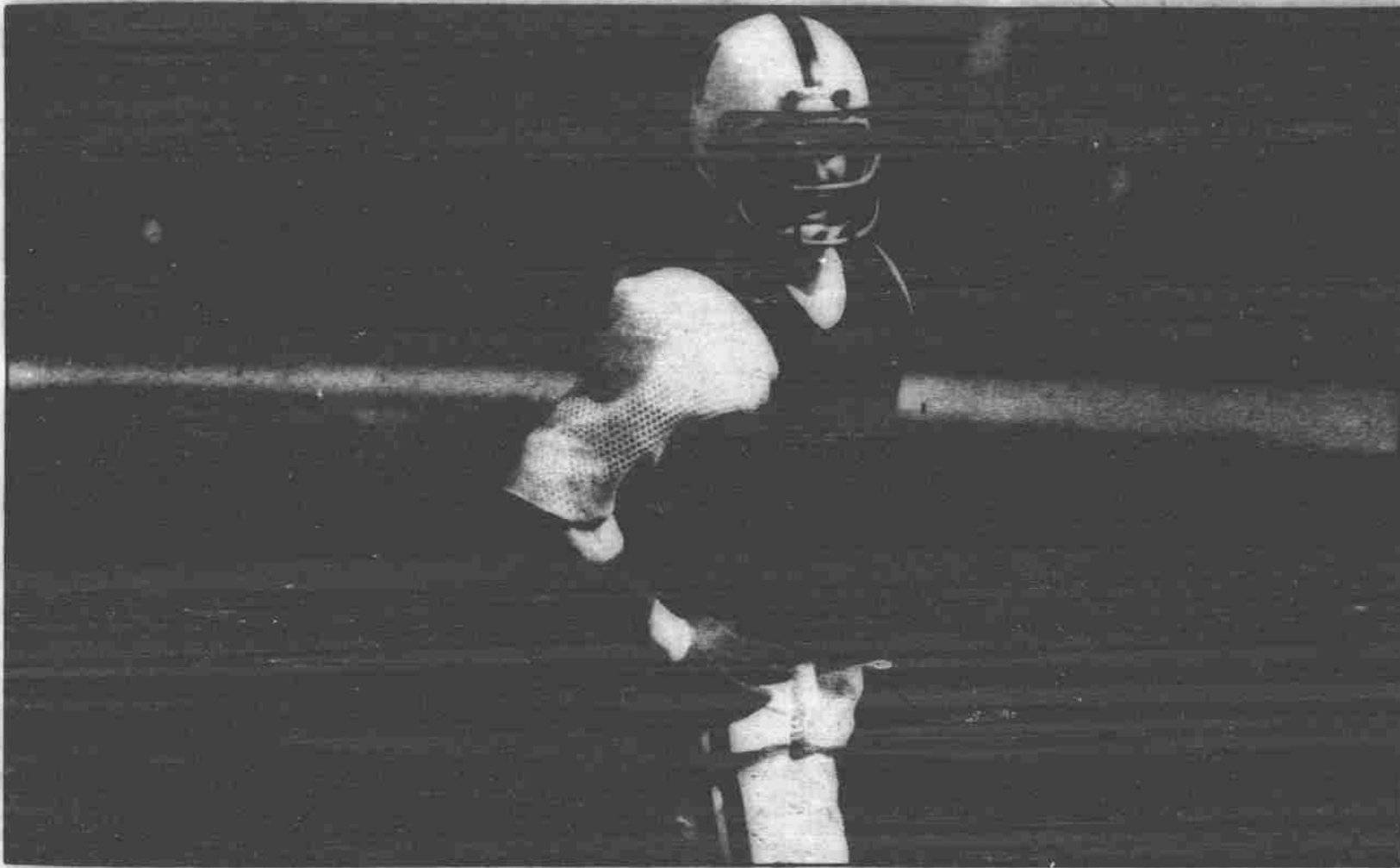


Photo by Kevin Higley

Senior cornerback Dave Butterfield will anchor the Huskers' defensive secondary.

Cornhuskers take number one spot says prognosticating pigskin pollster

By Pete Wegman

Polls seem to be the in thing in college football this year. Anybody can open almost any periodical or newspaper worth its weight in paper and find a college football poll written by some ordinary Joe.

Like any red-blooded American sportswriter, I, too, become a peerless prognosticator of pigskin affairs in the fall. Not to be outdone by my higher paid, more experienced contemporaries, I offer my predictions on what's going to happen in the fall of 1976 in the Big 8 Conference.

With everybody and his dog picking Nebraska number one this year, I'll have to jump on the bandwagon, too. From top to bottom, the Huskers are the most awesome

and Jimbo Elrod, and still field a team as strong as last fall's Sooner unit.

Rather, I think the Big 8 title will be decided almost a month earlier when the Huskers travel to Lawrence to face the Kansas Jayhawks.

Kansas' front-line players are top-notch and the only real concern is questionable depth on the team. The entire offensive backfield returns led by all-Big 8 quarterback Nolan Cromwell.

A healthy Jayhawk team should finish second. An injury-plagued team could finish last.

The Sooners are the team with all the question marks. Can they come up with another breakaway back like Washington? What's going to happen to Oklahoma's defensive line with no Selmons around?

Oklahoma always seems to come up with an excellent team, but I think the 1976 Sooner squad is at least one year from greatness.

Competition for the remaining spot in the upper division should be keen, but my nod goes to that other team from Oklahoma, the Oklahoma State Cowboys.

The Cowboys have the talent this year for a good season, returning more lettermen (45) and starters (17) than any other team in the Big 8.

Missouri's Tigers have the talent but a non-conference schedule which includes Southern Cal and Ohio State could break their back.

Colorado should be sixth. They have good ballplayers as usual but who wants to play football in Colorado? There are too many diversions.

As far as the cellar-dweller goes, flip a coin. I did and Iowa State lost. Kansas State seventh, Iowa State eighth.

sports shorts

Today is the final day UNL season football student tickets will be sold. The season tickets cost \$20 for six home games and may be purchased in the Coliseum today from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m.

A meeting for all freshmen who want to play baseball at UNL will be at 4 p.m. Tuesday in the second floor auditorium of the South Stadium office bldg.

To participate in fall varsity baseball tryouts, students must attend the meeting.

Workouts for UNL's women's swimming and diving program begin next week. Women should report to the WFE pool at 2 p.m. Tuesday.

UNL students who want to play rugby this fall should meet at the Cather-Pound Recreation Field at 6 p.m. Tuesday. For additional information, contact Tom or Jim at 432-7751.

An organizational meeting for all UNL students interested in trying out for the women's tennis team will be at 3 p.m. Tuesday in the South Stadium lounge.

Physical examinations for all prospective UNL women athletes will be given at 6:30 p.m. Sept. 9, in the UNL Health Center.

A general meeting for all current and former members of UNL's crew will be at 7 p.m. Wednesday in the crew boathouse. A meeting for newcomers to the program will be later this fall.

fourth and twenty



team in the nation and that should be enough for them to rule in the nation's best football conference.

Picking first place was easy. My crystal ball gets a little cloudier and more obscured when looking at the rest of the Big 8.

Most football fans are pointing to Nov. 26 when Oklahoma's Sooners invade Lincoln as the date the conference title will be decided. I disagree.

I fail to see how the Sooners can lose such proven stars as Leroy and Dewey Selmon, Joe Washington, Steve Davis, Tinker Owens, Billy Brooks, Tony DiRienzo