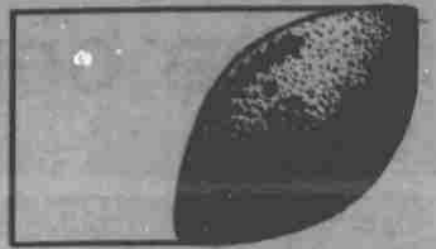


sports



# Big 8 is own worst enemy in Top 20 scramble

Analysis by Jim Kay

Okay, now pay close attention. Oklahoma beats Iowa State who beats Missouri who beats Nebraska who beats Colorado who beats Oklahoma State who beats Oklahoma . . . ad nauseum.

The Big 8 Conference football race for the crown and a coveted Orange Bowl bid has become a vicious circle of "kill thy neighbor" this season.

With the exception of one team—Kansas State University (KSU)—every Big 8 school has been rated in the top 20 nationally in news service polls at some point this season.

Big 8 dominance outside the conference was evident again this season with a 23-6-2 record against non-conference opponents. Half of those six losses were by Kansas State, the Big 8's annual doormat. There also are two more non-conference games to be played by the Big 8 with Nebraska going to Hawaii and Oklahoma State (OSU) playing the University of Texas-El Paso.

Conference play this season has echoed Nebraska coach Tom Osborne's thoughts at the beginning of the year when he said he feared the Big 8 schools would "chop each other up."

Close race

"This is the closest race that I can remember," Osborne said. "There are usually two teams that are undefeated and three or four that are out of it by this time."

Osborne noted that five teams still have a shot at the Big 8 crown.

The Huskers currently are in a three-way tie for the lead with Oklahoma State and Colorado (CU). The fog which clouds the picture may clear after this weekend's games between UNL and OSU, and Colorado and Missouri.

Colorado head coach Bill Mallory said he thought Oklahoma State would be in the driver's seat should it beat Nebraska Saturday. A look at the Cowboys' schedule supports Mallory's statement. After the Nebraska game, OSU finishes the season with Kansas State on the road and Iowa State (ISU) at home.

Colorado itself would not be in bad shape if they

get by the Missouri Tigers (MU), who seem to play football every other Saturday.

Colorado finishes the season against both Kansas schools, currently seventh and eighth in the Big 8, after this week's contest with the Tigers. But this is Missouri's "up" week, if past history is an indicator.

Three-way tie

Of the three teams tied for first in the conference, it appears that UNL has the toughest road to Miami. The Huskers must defeat Oklahoma State, which has beaten Missouri and Oklahoma (OU) this year, Iowa State in Ames, and perennial power and rival Oklahoma.

It is, however, more than a three-team race, according to Missouri head coach Al Onofrio.

"It's still up for grabs," Onofrio said. "There are teams with one loss in conference play that still may lose and that includes Nebraska. We can't give up hope because we have two losses."

The momentary absence of Oklahoma from the Big 8 race is a strange sight. The Sooners, who lost two straight games this year for the first time since 1970, dropped out of the nation's top 20 for the first time in ages this week.

They still may have a shot at some league recognition as they close their season with games against Kansas State, Missouri at home, and then the big game at Nebraska.

This year's conference dark horse, Iowa State, also could play the role of spoiler in its final three games. ISU plays Kansas State Saturday, Nebraska at home and OSU on the road.

It seems that only the two Kansas schools are out of the running for the Big 8 championship, and Osborne said "it appears they are in trouble."

But upsets by the two teams still could throw the Big 8 picture into deeper doubt.



Husker fullback Dodie Donnell strains for extra yardage against Kansas Saturday. Coach Tom Osborne called the Huskers' 31-3 win over the Jayhawks the team's most complete game of the year.

Photo by Ted Kirk

## sports shorts

The Husker women's volleyball team improved its record to 37-0, winning the Big 8 Conference tournament Saturday in Ames, Iowa, and winning a match in California Monday.

The Huskers breezed through the Big 8, winning all six matches and losing only one game.

Following the tournament, the team flew to California Sunday to play a series of matches this week in preparation for the National Women's Invitational Tournament Friday and Saturday at University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) Pauley Pavilion.

Monday the Huskers beat California State at Fullerton 15-8, 15-17, 15-11 and 15-10.

UNL played Pepperdine University and UCLA Tuesday. Game results were unavailable at publication time. The Huskers play Long Beach State University today.

The UNL women's field hockey team raised its record to 4-7-4, beating Emporia State University Saturday in Emporia, Kan. A match with the University of Kansas scheduled for Friday was canceled because of snow.

Defending Big 8 champion Kansas University downed the UNL Soccer Club 5-2 in Lawrence Sunday.

Halfback Dave Arnold and Forward Dave Egr pumped in UNL's two goals. UNL took no substitutes on the Kansas trip. The match was never as close as a game between the two teams earlier this season when the Huskers took the Jayhawks into overtime before bowing by an identical 5-2 score.

# Extra Point Club gets inside 'slope' on workings of NU-KU frosh game

The atmosphere was lighter at Monday's Extra Point Club meeting following UNL's 31-3 victory over the University of Kansas (KU) than it was a week ago after the Huskers lost to Missouri 34-24.

Nebraska football coach Tom Osborne took time to joke about the playing conditions under which Nebraska's freshmen team lost to KU's junior varsity last Friday 19-18, ending a 14 game frosh win streak.

"We began to wonder a little when we got there and saw that the field ran downhill," Osborne said. "And we had to play on grass where it had been raining all day, and the lines on the field weren't straight. And then we really began to wonder when the referees started cheering for the Kansas team."

Osborne said he had a few ideas on how next year's game between the UNL freshmen and the KU junior varsity would be played.

Mudball game

"At first we were just going to cancel next year's game," he said. "And then we got to thinking we'd just go out to that big dirt hill out by the airport and water it down for two days and put some goalposts at the top."

It was the first loss for the freshmen since a 1973 loss to the University of Missouri junior varsity team.

Osborne termed his the varsity's effort the most complete game UNL has played this season.

"There were still things we could have done better," Osborne said. "But most things were on an even keel." Osborne said UNL's kicking game was particularly

good against KU and that the defense played well in not giving up the big play.

"In the seven or eight years since Warren Powers (defensive backs coach) has been here," Osborne said, "we've always had an outstanding secondary. He has taken some walk-on athletes, who usually are the athletes who give the most effort, and molded them into great athletes."

UNL only gave up 14 yards in passing against KU. Defense praised

Osborne also cited the defense against the run which surrendered only 170 yards rushing to KU. The Jayhawks had been the Big 8 Conference's leading rushing team before Saturday's game.

Osborne had nothing but praise for Nebraska's upcoming opponent Oklahoma State University (OSU) and in particular, Cowboy running back Terry Miller. Miller had 224 yards rushing last Saturday against Missouri.

"Miller is probably a combination of Tony Dorsett and Ricky Bell in that he can run both inside and outside," Osborne said. "He made about 60 or 70 of his yards against Missouri by breaking tackles. He's the type of player who can hurt you because he can make yards and score points."

Osborne noted that OSU returns 19 of the 22 starters that played Nebraska close in last year's 28-20 Husker victory.

"The Oklahoma State name doesn't conjure up images of national recognition," Osborne said. "But this is a solid football team. They will be the most complete football team we play this year. And they have possibly the best personnel in the Big 8."

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