

Bowl matchups depending on one little word-'if'

Editor's note: The following is an analysis of the bowl situation. Bowl officials can deliver their bids at 6 p.m. Saturday. This analysis includes prediction and speculation.

By Bob Barney

If UNL gets its running game untracked against the University of Oklahoma Sooners (OU), the Huskers may spend New Year's night in Miami, Fla.

That is, if the Oklahoma State University Cowboys (OSU) beat the Iowa State University Cyclones (ISU) Saturday.

If the Sooners should derail the Huskers and OSU beats ISU, the University of Colorado (CU) Buffaloes probably will make the Miami trip as the Big 8 Conference champion.

In next Friday's UNL-OU battle, the Huskers will have to improve on their rushing of the past two games to down the Sooners.

The Cornhuskers offense is designed to be balanced. But quarterback Vince Ferragamo has shouldered too much of the load the last two weeks, and he'll need help to beat the Sooners.

Despite injuries in their defensive backfield and a young defensive line, the Sooners have enough to beat the Huskers if all they have to do is defense against Ferragamo's arm.

OU has a young offensive backfield that has improved tremendously throughout the season. It is led by freshman quarterback Tom Lott.

If UNL does not beat Oklahoma this year, the next opportunity to do it may be a long way off. OU looks to be strong the next few years.

If Michigan beats Ohio State Saturday, the Pacific 8 Conference runner-up is the probable opponent for the Big 8 champion. If Ohio State wins, Michigan probably will return to the Orange Bowl and the Pacific 8 runner-up could be in line for a Gator Bowl bid.

In the other major bowls, UCLA should make it to the Rose Bowl by downing USC in their annual battle Saturday. The Bruins, with only a tie to Ohio State to blemish their season, are playing for the mythical national championship.

UCLA probably will play Michigan in the Pasadena classic. The Wolverines are superior to Ohio State this

year. They have compiled the best record in college football during the past five seasons and do not want to settle for second best again this year.

The Sugar Bowl is presumably set with Georgia and Pittsburgh. Johnny Majors' Panthers, currently ranked number one in the country, may have ducked the Orange Bowl and a Big 8 opponent, but it looks like a sound move now because Georgia will have the best record, 10-1, of any team that the Panthers could face.

Maryland will be going to the Cotton Bowl and should be undefeated (11-0) with only Virginia left to mar their record Saturday.

Maryland's main reason in going to the Cotton Bowl apparently is to play another undefeated team, Texas Tech. However, this writer thinks the Terrapins will be playing the Houston Cougars instead.

Houston has been impressive in their first season in the Southwest Conference. In their last outing, they embarrassed Texas 30-0. This Saturday they should down an overrated Tech team, despite playing at Tech's home field.

Both teams would have one loss in the Conference but the Cougars would get the nod because of the victory Saturday. Houston, barring a season ending upsets to Rice and Miami (Fla.) will go to the Cotton Bowl 9-2.

The Fiesta Bowl, which last year boasted about having the best bowl match-up (Arizona State-UNL) this year will feature Wyoming, the Western Athletic Conference Champion. The Oklahoma Sooners, may be their opponent if they lose to the Huskers.

The Astro-Bluebonnet Bowl would like to have the local team, Houston, and would surely take the Cougars if they lose to Texas Tech. But the bowl probably will settle for Tech if Houston wins.

A probable opponent would Oklahoma State. If the Cowboys down Iowa State, they would be a logical choice since they are from the area.

If the Cyclones win, the Florida Gators could get the nod instead of OSU.

Alabama coach Bear Bryant has dictated this year that his team will play in the Liberty Bowl in Memphis against a non-Big 8 Conference foe. Bryant's influence in the south could prevent ISU or even UNL from playing in a bowl.

Bryant has said he would like to play Penn State University, a probable 7-4 finisher or North Carolina University, a probable 9-2 team. North Carolina played against weak competition in the Atlantic Coast Conference.

The Sun Bowl will feature an area team, Texas A&M, against Colorado, if Nebraska goes to the Orange Bowl. Nebraska may be in El Paso if they lose.

Sun Bowl officials have expressed interest in the Buffaloes.

The Peach Bowl in Atlanta probably will bring two area teams to its bowl to draw fans. Probable opponents would be North Carolina and Mississippi State University. Both teams, barring upsets, would be 9-2 going into the game.

sports shorts

The UNL women's volleyball team is competing in the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) Region VI championships at the University of Minnesota.

The Huskers, 41-8 on the year, are seeded second in the 12-team field. Nebraska's pool includes the University of Northern Iowa, Mankato State University and the Universities of Kansas, Missouri and Minnesota.

The Huskers' first match was Thursday afternoon, the results of which were not available at the time of publication. The final round will be played Saturday.

The women's swim team will compete against Oklahoma State University today at 7 p.m. in Stillwater, Okla. The Huskers are 1-0 in duals.

Tryouts for the UNL women's track and field team will begin Nov. 29 at the indoor track in the UNL Sports Complex. For additional information, contact coach Carol Frost at 799-3543.

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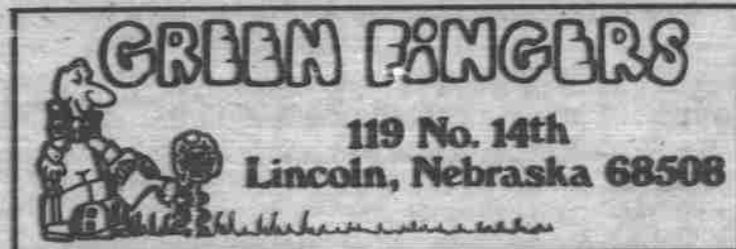
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