

Six quarterbacks vying for Ferragamo's throne

By Kevin Schnepf

The quarterback race is on for the 1977 Husker football squad.

With the graduation of All-American Vince Ferragamo, the quarterback position is open to six candidates, according to head football coach Tom Osborne.

"Right now, we have the people that can play," Osborne said, "but the number one, two, three and even four spots have not been determined."

After last Saturday's scrimmage, senior signal caller Randy Garcia was listed as the number one quarterback followed by junior Tom Sorley and senior Ed Burns both in the number two spot.

"The order they're listed in doesn't mean that much right now," Osborne said. "The practices have been adequate so far but we haven't had anybody declaring themselves as number one."

Osborne also said sophomore Tim Hager cannot be counted out of the picture as well as sophomores Jeff Quinn and Brad Humphrey.

Scrimmage

Garcia, Burns and Sorley were equal in the scrimmages,

Osborne said, adding that their passing was affected by poor pass protection and strong winds.

"Randy has a fine arm in terms of just throwing the ball and has good leadership," Osborne said. "Sorley is the better runner of the three, whereas Garcia and Burns are better throwers."

Osborne said the quarterbacks feel no pressure about replacing Ferragamo, and Garcia agrees.

"I really don't feel any pressure," Garcia said about replacing Ferragamo. "We'll have a good overall team, smaller but quicker."

"The running backs will have a much better year not depending on the pass so much as last year," he said.

Garcia, who will be a senior next fall, has played behind Terry Luck and Ferragamo the past three years. He said the experience will help both himself and Burns.

"Ed Burns and I have been here the longest," he said. "We can relax more because we know the system. Guys like Sorley and Hager who have their confidence already make things that much harder."

Garcia said throwing the ball is one of his strong-points, but said he'll run if he has to.

"In high school (in Los Angeles, Calif.), I didn't run at all unless it was scrambling," Garcia said. "I'm becoming more familiar with the option so I'll run the ball if I have to."

Garcia did not gain any yardage in last Saturday's scrimmage compared to Sorley's six carries for 13 yards.

Garcia completed only two of eight passes for 23 yards, and Sorley completed eight of 16 for 94 yards with one interception. Burns completed five of 11 passes for 52 yards.

"The wind influenced the passing game a lot," Garcia said, "but you can't blame it all on the wind. When it calms down, the passing will be improved."

Garcia said the first scrimmage went well and said Saturday's scrimmage didn't go that well.

"The whole offense didn't do that well," he said. "I think it'll get better but I wish we were more consistent."

Sorley, a junior from Big Springs, Tex., agreed with Garcia about the scrimmages.

"The first two scrimmages were nothing terrible and nothing good," he said. "Saturday's scrimmage was not real good."

Sorley said he can throw the ball and run when he has to.

Confidence

"I feel the best thing I got are the other guys on the team," he said. "I got the confidence to do any job, if I need to run, I'll run. If I need to throw, I'll throw."

Sorley, who may bring back memories of Dave Humm by throwing left-handed, said the competition for the quarterback position is stiff.

"We have about six guys who think they'll all be starting," he said. "I'm using my God-given talent and doing my darndest to start."

Both Sorley and Garcia said the outlook for next season is good.

"We don't have any superstars," Sorley said, "but we do have guys who'll pull together to win."

Garcia said the new coaches and the defense have done a good job.

"The guys have picked up the new system well," he said referring to first-year defensive coach Lance Van Zandt's attack defense. "Both the offensive and defensive lines are smaller but are quicker," Garcia said.

"A lot of feelings have been expressed about a poor team next year," Garcia said, "but I think we'll surprise a lot of people."

UNL women tracksters trying for more records

By Rob Barney

The UNL women's track team will try to continue its record setting ways Friday at the Oklahoma State Invitational in Stillwater.

"We broke every existing school record during the indoor season and so far we've broken two or three outdoor records," said Husker coach Carol Frost.

Record-breaking performances have earned four team members a trip to the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women national meet next month. They are Toni Midder in the 100-yard dash, Pam Baker in both the 100-yard dash and the 100-yard hurdles, Cindy Dixon in the 880-yard run and Deb Raddatz in the shot-put.

"We're hoping to qualify more girls as the season goes on," Frost said. "The season is still young."

Friday's meet will include teams from Oklahoma and Texas besides UNL, Frost said.

"The Kansas schools might be there, but I don't know," she added.

"The Oklahoma schools, The University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University aren't very far along with their programs. Oklahoma didn't even show up at the Big 8 meet and Oklahoma State sent just a few girls."

"We're farther along than they are. But the Texas schools are noted for their track programs."

Besides the four women who qualified for the national meet, other team members have performed well, Frost said.

Freshman Karen Frazee broke the UNL outdoor record in the long jump with a 17 ft. 10 in. jump in the Red Grovert Relays at Fairbury April 2.

Other winners in the meet were Midder in the 100-yard dash, Baker in the 100-meter hurdles, Cindy Vickers in the 880-yard run and Pam Koontz in the discus.

The mile relay team and 880 medley relay team also won.

One performer who won't be running any events this season is freshman Sondra Obermeier.

The 1976 Nebraska High School Girl Athlete of the Year from Aurora will be redshirted, Frost said.

Obermeier has been out much of the season with pulled thigh muscles and is just now getting back into top form, Frost said.

"We could use her if we wanted to," Frost said, "but there are only five or six meets left. I think it would be to her benefit and the team's benefit that we redshirt her."

"It just wouldn't be fair for her to have to try to qualify for nationals in just the meets left. I have talked to her and her parents and they agree."

The women's team still has two or three scholarships to offer, Frost said.

"We feel we potentially have the best girls in the state of Nebraska. But there are always some dark-horans. We're just going to wait and see what happens in the state and the surrounding area during the season."

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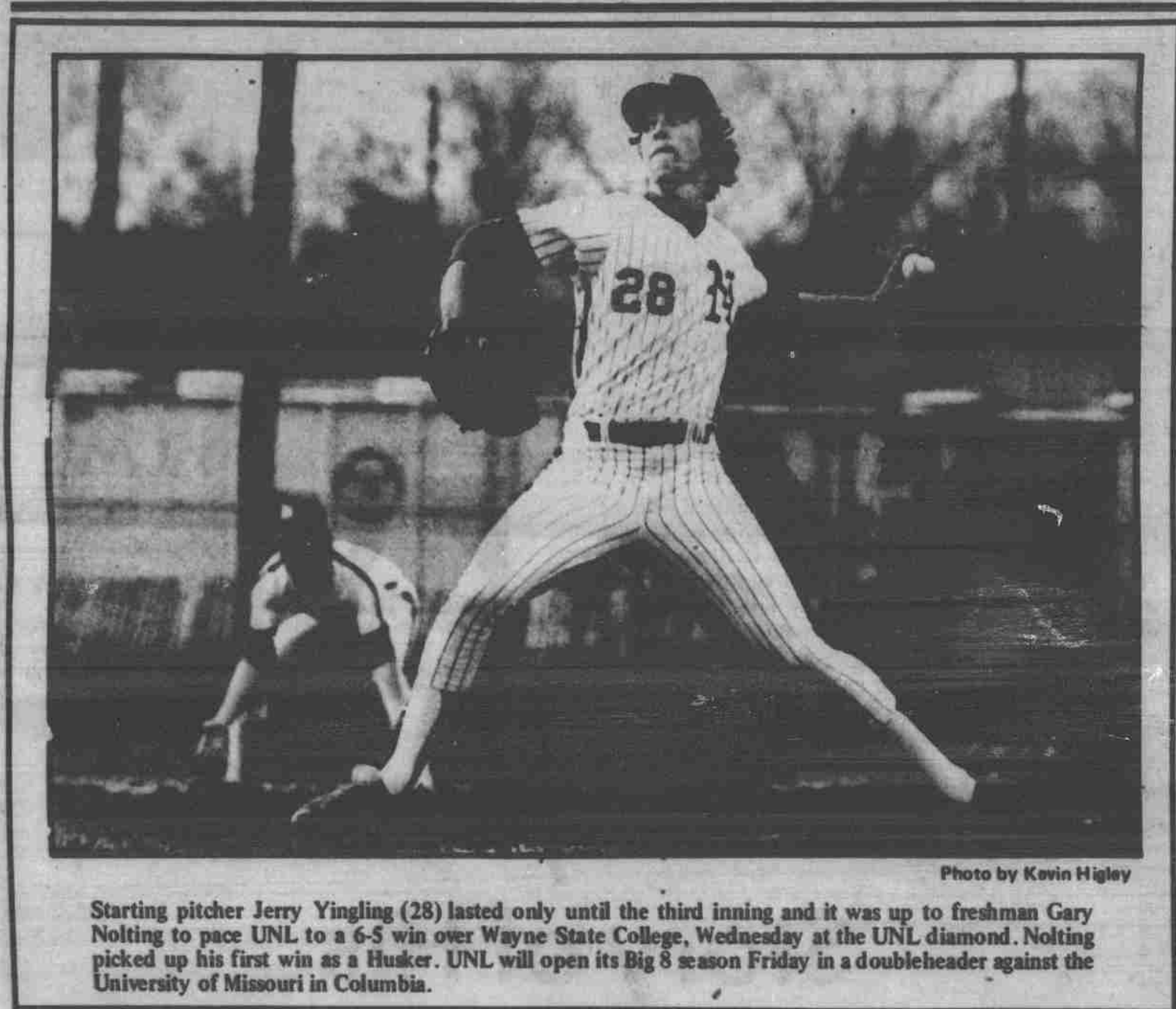


Photo by Kevin Higley

Starting pitcher Jerry Yingling (28) lasted only until the third inning and it was up to freshman Gary Nolting to pace UNL to a 6-5 win over Wayne State College, Wednesday at the UNL diamond. Nolting picked up his first win as a Husker. UNL will open its Big 8 season Friday in a doubleheader against the University of Missouri in Columbia.

Allen wins coach-of-the-year award as gymnastics team ties loose ends

By Rob Barney

Gymnastics coach Francis Allen said being named one of four regional coaches of the year by the National Association of Gymnastics coaches last week "has to be one of my biggest honors."

"I'm too young to have accomplished much of a list," he said. "Of course I'm pleased. To be cited by your fellow coaches is a great honor."

Allen is keeping busy even though the regular gymnastics season is finished. He said some of the team members are practicing at the Sports Complex.

He said there still are some meets left. Larry Gerard and Kurt Mackie qualified for the United States Gymnastics Federation (USGF) meet in Baton Rouge, La., May 5. And the AAU National Meet is June 3 through 5 in Rogers, Ark. Allen said some of the gymnasts might go to the meet.

UNL had four individuals compete at the NCAA championships in Tempe, Ariz., April 2. They were Gerard fourth on the Horizontal bars, Mackie fifth on the still rings, Duane West seventh in the floor exercise and Mike Cosgrove 13th on the pommel horse.

All-American

With their performances, Mackie and Gerard earned All-American status. Mackie's brother, Gene, was an All-American performer for UNL in 1975.

"I thought we did reasonably well at nationals," Allen said. "We thought West had a perfect routine on the floor exercise but he got ripped off."

"The head judge gave him a 9.6 and the other judges gave him a 9.3, 9.3 and a 9.0," he said. "He won the Midwest Invitational with a 9.5, and he's certainly not a 9.0 performer."

Allen also was disappointed his entire team could not

make the trip to Arizona.

"That's the ultimate goal, to make nationals," Allen said. "It was the highlight of my career the last two years to take a team to nationals. And I'm sure it was a big highlight for the team members."

Recruiting

The scavenger hunt for top gymnastics recruits also is keeping Allen busy, he said.

"I'm going to take a look at an all-rounder and ringman in Illinois a week from Thursday, but we've pretty much decided on who we want," he said.

"I have two full scholarships open and I'm giving out one-and-one-half of them. I have to save something for next year for (Jim) Hartung. He's the best gymnast in the country."

Hartung, a junior, hails from Omaha South High School.

Along with the two from Illinois, Allen said he hopes to recruit a junior college performer from Texas and an all-rounder from Illinois. Allen said he is trying to get an Omaha gymnast to walk-on.

"We've had to turn down three other super gymnasts because we just don't have the money," Allen said. "That's unfortunate because the more people you have the better the competition you have and the better team you have."

Allen said he thinks next year's team will score comparably with this year's, even though junior Gerard might be redshirted.

"It looks like we'll do it," Allen said, "but there are things to consider like his schooling, health and attitude."

"Larry's attitude is good and he wants to do it. I'll just have to sit down and evaluate the situation and make a decision. We'll have a good team without Larry."