

UNL needs weekend win to make Big 8 playoffs

By Mike McCarthy

Coach Tony Sharpe and his baseball team are not exactly in the catbird seat with a 2-6 Big 8 Conference record.

The Huskers might not even be in any seat for the conference playoffs if they do not beat Iowa State University this weekend.

The Huskers will prime for the weekend test against Missouri Western State College (MWS) today on the UNL diamond.

"I really don't know anything about them (MWS)," said John Sanders, UNL assistant coach. "I do know they are well drilled."

Sanders said strategy prior to baseball games is not important.

"Most of the baseball strategy is on-the-field adjustments," he said. "We just go out and play hard and try our best."

Sharpe said the Huskers will be throwing their "down-the-line pitchers" against

MWS and throw the top pitchers against Iowa State.

The Huskers will meet the Cyclones for four games Friday and Saturday.

UNL and Iowa State currently share the cellar in the Big 8's eastern division. The top two teams in the conference's eastern and western divisions will travel to Oklahoma City April 29 and 30 for the conference championships.

In the eastern division, UNL and ISU share the cellar slot with 2-6 records. The University of Kansas holds down second at 5-3 and the University of Missouri already has claimed one of the two eastern division qualifying spots at 7-1.

"It's very possible we can qualify," Sanders said. "We're very capable of it."

Sharpe added that the Husker's qualification hinges on the four Missouri-Kansas games this weekend.

If Missouri can beat the Jayhawks three times, and the Huskers win all four from

ISU, UNL and Kansas would be deadlocked at 6-6. But UNL would qualify because when the two teams met last weekend, the Huskers won the first game of the series, Sharpe said.

"We'll have to win at least three games," Sharpe said. "We'll have to catch it, hit it and pitch it and just hope things go all right down at Missouri."

But Sharpe said things have not been going right for the Husker's defense. "Our defense has fallen down," he said.

"Earlier in the season, our pitching and defense carried us, but now our hitting is."

Against Kansas last Sunday, the Huskers won the first game 10-9, while collecting 15 hits. UNL took the second game 15-6 and pounded out 13 hits.

"Maybe the kids are thinking about hitting and are forgetting they have to catch the ball," Sharpe said.

"You couldn't believe the foolish errors we had at Kansas," he added. "We could have won so easily but we didn't catch a few balls."

sports

sports shorts

Sharon Meir, the coordinator for women's sports at Loup Center YWCA in Chicago, will be the featured speaker at the UNL Women's Athletic Banquet May 3 in the Nebraska Union.

For all those interested in playing field hockey next fall, there will be a meeting Thursday, April 28 at 7 p.m. at 3315 "R". For further information call Harriet Gould at 784-6461.

Randy Hisey, a UNL junior law student and Lincoln's top-seeded player, recently took 2nd place in the Nebraska State Singles Handball Tourney played at the Lincoln YMCA. Hisey lost to Rich Hill of Omaha in the finals 21-18, 21-10.

Sigma Chi fraternity raised \$500 for the Wallace Home for Minimally retarded children in Colorado from its first All-Greek Fight Night Boxing Tournament Fri-

day night.

Bill Kottas, Sigma Chi fraternity member, said that from 800 to 1,000 people attended the 13 bouts in the National Guard Armory.

Fraternity members from the UNL campus competed in the tournament. Kottas said Sigma Chi plans to sponsor a similar tournament next year.

He said there may be a possibility of fraternity and residence hall members boxing next year.

The winners of the 13 bouts were: Don John of the Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity; Dave Dale of Sigma Chi; Todd Peterson of Kappa Sigma; Russ Hoffbauer of Tau Kappa Epsilon; Jay Darce of Phi Delta Theta; James Doyle III of Alpha Gamma Rho; Doug Wright of Kappa Sigma; Scott Hoffman of Kappa Sigma; Mike Blanc of Theta Chi; Andy Fitzmorris of Kappa Sigma; Rich Villars of Phi Kappa Psi and Jack Lanowski of Chi Phi.



Photo by Kevin Higley

UNL's softball team travels to Omaha today to play the University of Nebraska at Omaha. The Huskers, who take a 7-6 record into today's games, also will play Friday and Saturday at the state tournament in Omaha.

Aggressive, tough players greet coach on his return

By Jim Kay

An aggressive style of defense and plenty of tough players are two things that assistant football coach John Melton said would greet him on his return to coaching linebackers at UNL.

Melton coached linebackers under former head coach Bob Devaney from 1967-72. He then moved to the wing-back-tight end coaching job when Tom Osborne became head coach in 1973. Melton returns to his old coaching grounds with the arrival of new assistant coach Gene Huey from New Mexico State University.

"The position hasn't really changed that much," Melton said. "When you coach offense you're looking at defenses all the time too."

He added that the style of play at UNL has changed somewhat this year in that the linebackers will be more aggressive.

Aggressiveness is one thing Melton said he looked for in his linebackers.

"That and speed," he said. "Not flat out speed, but speed in reacting quickly. Also you have to be pretty tough to play linebacker."

Two new players are running with the first team at linebacker. Jeff Carpenter is starting at weak side linebacker where graduated all-Big 8 player Clete Pillel played last year. Sophomore Lee Kunz is at the other linebacker position in front of two-year starter James Wightman.

"I think we've come up with a good set of linebackers," Melton said. "Carpenter and Kunz have looked good and Wightman is proven. And Tom Vering is looking pretty good, too. The young guys like John Ruud, Willie Young, Greg Olson and Kim Baker are coming along."

In moving to a new position, Melton said, he started evaluating all the linebackers this spring from the same starting point.

"We've taken away the Black-shirts and really started from scratch," he said. "The races are still wide open. We grade them every scrimmage and those grades are the basis for their standing on the team."

He added that all the linebackers have had good moments this spring.

"There isn't one of them who hasn't been aggressive," Melton said. "It's a different brand than they're used to playing. They're going forward for more play on the line than going sideways or dropping back. But I think they're all pretty well adjusted by now."

The latest depth chart lists Ruud behind Kunz and Wightman at strongside linebacker. Behind Ruud are junior Dan LaFever and sophomore Roger Adams.

Carpenter and Vering are running one-two at the other

linebacker spot, followed by junior Bruce Dunning, Young, Baker and Olson.

Depth chart listings could change Saturday during the annual Red-White football game at Memorial Stadium.

The Spring game begins at 1:30 p.m. One Husker starter who will miss the game will be defensive back Ted Harvey. The Lexington senior will be taking an all-day entrance exam to dental school.

Husker kicking competition tough as eight vie for top two spots

By Jim Kay

Cletus Fischer may sometimes wonder if he's coaching spring football drills at UNL or conducting a punt, pass and kick competition.

Fischer, who handles the kicking game for the Huskers, started spring practice with eight unproven kickers vying for starting jobs.

The top two punters, Randy Lessman and Russ Vanous, and the top two placekickers, Al Eveland and Ron Vandemeer, were graduated from last year's team. But Fischer said the kickers have improved this spring.

"They're starting to come along pretty good," Fischer said. "I think the cream is starting to rise to the top. Especially in punting. We've limited the field to four in both punting and placekicking."

Fischer said several players have shown promise with their punting skills, including left-footed junior college transfer Billy Todd.

"He's doing both punting and placekicking at the present time," Fischer said of Todd. "And he's doing a very good job. He looked good at Sunday's scrimmage. Tim Smith is doing pretty well, and Scott Gemar has been a

real surprise. He's showing some great promise."

Fullback Steve Davies and Scott Mensing are the other punting candidates this spring.

Smith, also a split end, and Davies will have their work cut out for them in playing two positions, Fischer said.

"They have meetings with their other coaches before practice so they miss a lot of punting time," he said. "They're going to have to do a lot of punting this summer to keep up."

The placekicking picture is a little more clouded, Fischer said, mainly because of the lack of work on the kicking game in the spring.

"It's tougher to work on in the spring because we don't devote much time to it," Fischer said. "The difficult problem is not punting but the field goal and point after touchdown kicking in scrimmage conditions. We did kick some PAT's Sunday but there aren't many chances to kick if you don't score touchdowns."

The other kickers trying for the top spot besides Todd are sophomores Tim Bergkamp and Rod Dixon and redshirt sophomore Dean Sukup.

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