

sports

ISU conquests over NU intensify game excitement

By Brad Horky

"You've gotta be kiddin'! This one has been sold out for months."

That's what the Cyclone press release had to say on the availability of tickets for this Saturday's Nebraska-Iowa State football game in Ames.

The contest will be the conference opener for both schools. Iowa State boasts a 4-0 record with wins over Rice, San Diego State, Iowa, and Drake. The Huskers are 3-1 after an opening game loss to Alabama.

The past two seasons the Cyclones have beaten UNL. In 1976, Iowa State downed Nebraska 37-28 in Ames, and last season they turned the trick again, defeating the Huskers 24-21 in Lincoln. If ISU should win Saturday, it would be the first time the Cyclones have defeated Nebraska three-in-a-row since 1943-46.

Senior fullback Rick Berns said he feels the previous two Cyclone wins will add excitement to this year's game.

"It will intensify things," Berns said. "We want to win this one bad, but we can't be after too much revenge and forget our assignments. We just have to go out and be aggressive."

Indiana gave lift

"The Indiana game gave us reinforcement," Berns said. "It showed we do have a good offensive team. And the defense is getting stronger. They don't have any breakdowns anymore."

Iowa State head football coach, Earle Bruce, also thinks the Husker's offensive unit is a good outfit.

"There's no doubt that Nebraska is much improved since it's opening loss to Alabama," Bruce said. "They've really put it together. They run I.M. Hipp with the quick pitch, and they mix it up with some very fine passing from Tom Sorley."

"Their offensive line has jelled and they are blocking well. They're just a complete football team right now in every facet of the game," Bruce said.

Quarterback Tom Sorley said he feels

the Huskers are now on their way to a winning season.

ISU punch

The thorn in the Husker's side the past two seasons has been ISU's Heisman Trophy candidate Dexter Green. Green rushed for 109 yards in '76, and 139 last season against Nebraska.

Green isn't all the Cyclones have for offensive punch. ISU quarterback Terry Rubley doesn't go to the air much, but when he does, he's accurate. Rubley has completed 15 of 23 passes for 197 yards and four touchdowns.

Defensively, the Cyclones are strong. Iowa State is giving up an average of 9.7 points a game.

"We've faced some strong defenses this year, and Iowa State is no exception," Sorley said. "They're probably the best we've gone against."

On hand for the battle in Ames will be scouts representing the Sun Bowl and the Hall of Fame Bowl.

Osborne's optimism challenged by Iowa State

Predictions by Rick Huls

Nebraska Head Coach Tom Osborne's pre-season optimism surprised many Husker fans. It just wasn't like Osborne to make anything but average comments about his team, especially before the season had started.

After the Huskers' lackluster performance against Alabama in the season opener on national television, fans had reason to question Osborne's optimism.

Two home victories over California and Hawaii regained some confidence, but the players still lacked the intensity of past Husker teams.

Osborne's unusual optimism turned into reality last week in the Huskers' 69-17 humiliation of Indiana. Not only did the win confirm Osborne's expectations, it renewed optimism among Big Red fans.

Motivation should be no problem for

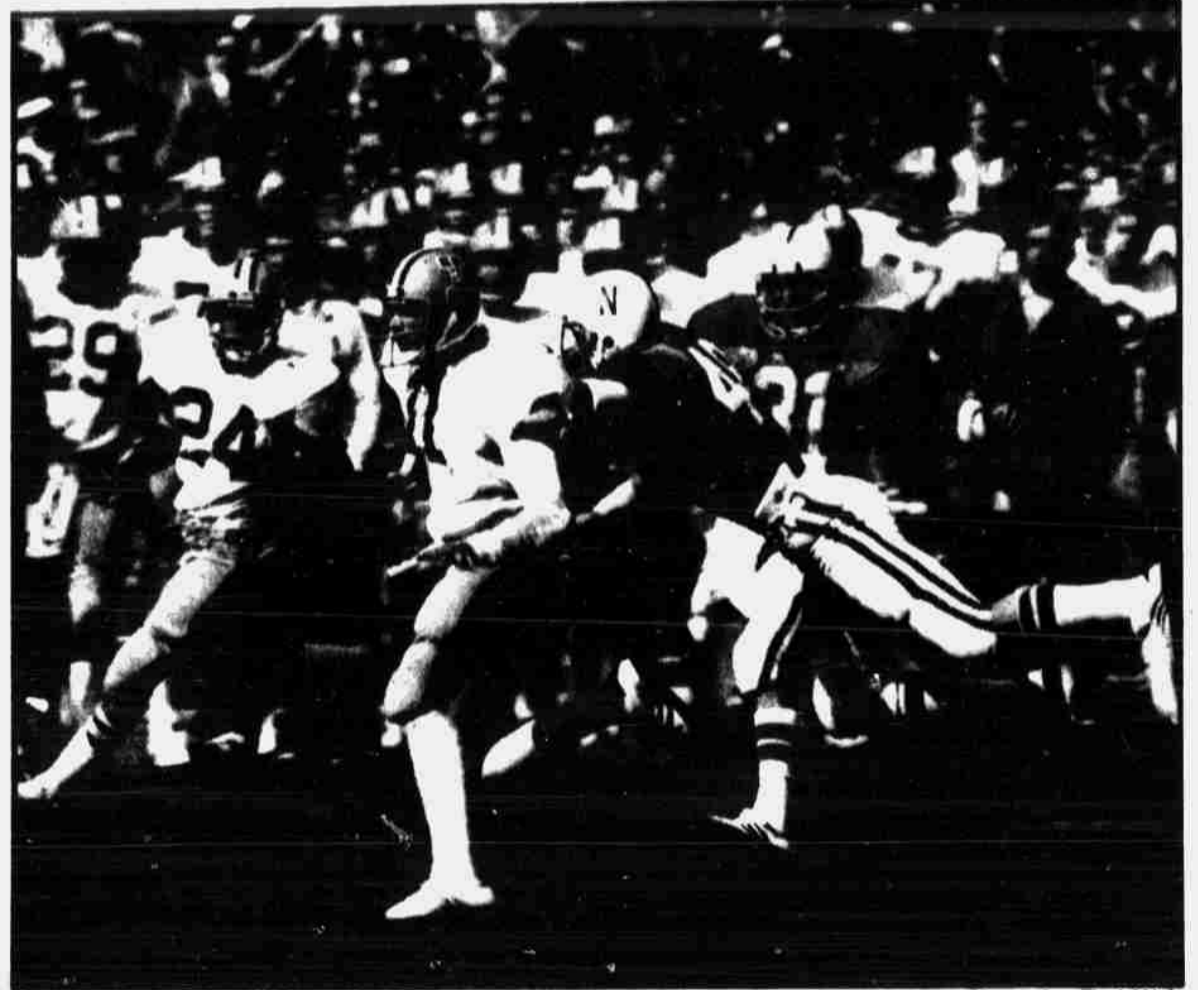


Photo by Ted Kirk

Quarterback Terry Rubley (11) will lead Iowa State against UNL in Ames on Saturday.

Nebraska this week against Iowa State, which pulled off 37-28 and 24-21 wins over the Huskers the last two years.

The problem is which Nebraska team will take the field Saturday in Ames; the one who was embarrassed by Alabama or the team who, in turn, embarrassed Indiana?

After picking the Huskers by five last week and missing by 47 points, the best idea might be to throw the scores in a hat and come out with . . . Nebraska 31, Iowa State 14.

In games involving other Big Eight schools:

Kansas at Colorado—The Buffs remember, all too well, last year's 17-17 tie which started their season-ending slide of three losses in five games . . . Colorado 31, Kansas 10.

Illinois at Missouri—The Fighting

Illini beat Missouri twice during the roller coaster years of Al Onofrio. It shouldn't happen to Warren Powers' squad, even after last week's trouncing by Oklahoma . . . Missouri 27, Illinois 7.

Oklahoma State at Kansas State—This one's a toss-up. K-State's victories usually don't come in succession but the Wildcats will be trying to break a 21-game losing streak in Big Eight play. Kansas State's offense is more explosive than the inept Cowboys . . . Kansas State 21, Oklahoma State 17.

Oklahoma at Texas—The Longhorns' defense is among the nation's best. The Sooners' offense is the same. When the two meet, the state of Texas is bound to tremble . . . Oklahoma 24, Texas 14.

Last week's record was 34-8-1 for an .809 percentage, leaving the season mark at 124-38-4 for a .765 percentage.

Football maneuvers make game rough on weak-kneed

It was 1:30 p.m. Wednesday afternoon—the usual starting time for UNL football practice. But, isolated from the lifting of weights or cracking of pads, Randy Poeschl quietly sat in the shade on the east stadium's top row.

His eyes were fixed on a group of fourth graders chasing a football on the artificial turf. Poeschl was the only spectator. He was a loner, away from his teammates in his last year at UNL.

Poeschl arose and began to walk sideways down each step favoring his right leg. It took him about five minutes to reach the bottom and about the same amount of time to walk up the steps. Poeschl was giving his left knee a workout, something a football player must do to rehabilitate a torn ligament.

Torn ligament

Last spring, Poeschl tore his interior crucial ligament, which is vital for supporting the knee. Two weeks ago, Poeschl was chasing a sweep play in practice when the knee popped out again.

Since then, the status of Poeschl's progress is undetermined. The team's surgeon and trainer are putting Poeschl through therapy—trying to avoid surgery.

The knee injury is common among UNL football players—some recovering instantly, some playing with heavily taped knees, and a few, like Poeschl, not playing at all.

For coaches, the knee injury can create nightmares; for trainers and surgeons, it can create a stiff challenge; and for the players, the knee injury is only part of the game.

Game 'worth' the pain

Starting quarterback Tom Sorley had knee surgery while playing high school football at Big Springs, Texas. With only an occurrence of strained ligaments at UNL—much less severe than Poeschl's torn ligament—Sorley knows there is a chance of

severe injury.

"Knees are just part of the game," Sorley said. "The game is well worth the time and pain I put into it."

With no previous experience of knee problems until the Hawaii game, junior third string center Paul Potadle has undergone vital rehabilitation treatments.

In the Hawaii game, Potadle twisted his knee slowing down for a Hawaii fair catch. The knee gave out without even being touched.

Potadle's knee was immediately iced to avoid swelling, which is an important first step, according to UNL trainer George

kevin schnepf

Sullivan. After two weeks of hot and cold whirlpools, walking stadium stairs, and doing leg lifts on a machine called the cybex, Potadle was playing again.

Technology aids knee treatment

The cybex machine examines the injured knee's efficiency compared to the player's healthy knee. The machine, in its second year of use at UNL, is one of the technological advancements in the treatment of the knee.

"If the human mind has something to compare the knee with, the easier it will be to build it back up," Sullivan said.

Potadle's knee was 86 percent efficient according to the machine, so he returned to practice last Monday. Feeling no discomfort and displaying complete maneuverability, Potadle once again twisted his knee on punt coverage.

Potadle is back on the treatment again, but he is confident that he'll be back on the field in two weeks.

"I have a lot of faith in Dr. Clare and

the whole training staff," Potadle said.

Dr. Pat Clare, one of UNL's athletic surgeons, said Potadle experienced a mild tear of one of the knee's cartilages. Through a process called the isogram, Clare put dye in the knee joint to produce clearer X-rays.

Knee 'exploded'

In Poeschl's case, an instrument called an arthroscope was used to determine the extent of the injury. The instrument, three millimeters in length was placed in Poeschl's knee last spring to take pictures of the injury.

"Randy's knee literally exploded when he injured it," Clare said. "The torn ligament looks like two ends of a mop. The interior crucial ligament (operation) is the biggest single knee surgery in the world."

Clare called Poeschl's case unpredictable. He said there is no evidence of torn cartilage—only a multitude of torn ligaments.

"This weakens other structures of the body, especially the muscle development in the thigh," he said.

With Poeschl standing 6 foot 8 inches, and weighing 260 pounds, the knee is taking a lot more stress than other players feel.

Not for contact sports

Sullivan said he could go through a whole list of players who have had knee problems. Barney Cotton and Rod Horn have had knee surgery, Jeff Hansen and Dan Steiner wear preventive wraps while playing, and George Andrews is playing with a history of strained knees.

"The knee wasn't built for contact sports," Sullivan said. "It is only supposed to move in one direction and football is a game with many different movements."

Many studies have been done on the effects Astroturf has on the knee.

Although the answers are not in from all the studies, Dr. Clare feels Astroturf is safer.

"All Astroturf did was create a different type of injury," he said. "There is a lot more traction and stronger impacts on Astro-turf, but on grass the high ligaments of the knee are affected more. The cleats getting caught in the grass, for instance, is a big cause for injury."

Mystifying

Dr. Clare calls the knee a very mystifying part of the body. The knee needs to be stable, withstand pressure and if it doesn't, knee injuries will reoccur, Clare said.

Poeschl's problem is especially mystifying to Clare.

"Randy had a good summer and we thought he was on his way," Clare said. "Now, since he is a senior, we'll ride it out as long as we can."

With this year being Poeschl's last season at UNL and with a possible professional football career in the future, Poeschl is in a difficult and disappointing situation.

Poeschl has talked with Dr. Clare about the possibility of another arthroscope, meaning no playing time for UNL and no chance to impress the pro scouts.

"We made it clear to him (Poeschl) that waiting it out could wipe him out of his football career," Clare said.

So, Poeschl, one of the few unlucky ones, sits and waits.

Dressed in his sweats, watching the football squirt loose from a four-foot-tall boy, Poeschl studies his swollen left knee. He glances at the empty Memorial Stadium steps he must walk—"a boring exercise," he says.

"There's just not a whole lot I can do about it right now."