

sports

Karate—a life philosophy, not just chops and blocks

By Kathy Chenault

Spectators long have marveled at the amazing demolition feats performed by karate experts without being aware of the history and philosophy underlying the martial art.

Interest and involvement in the Asian-originated sport stem from motivation to gain self-respect, acquire and maintain peak physical condition and to develop the ability to immobilize an adversary with well-directed, powerful blows.

Karate is more than crushing blocks of ice, splintering stacks of pine wood or shattering piles of roofing tiles. It is an art stressing respect and discipline.

Karate philosophy

John Pitts, former UNL football player and now a black belt in karate, said it is important to respect others and to get along, which he incorporates into his karate philosophy.

"I believe that if you're hard no one will like you. If you're soft people will take advantage of you. So I try to stay somewhere in the middle," Pitts said.

Richard Schmidt, UNL karate instructor, said there is a difference between styles and between karate as it traditionally existed and in its modern form.

"The major styles are Okinawan, Korean, Chinese and Japanese. There are differences in form and execution, but basically the philosophies are constant," Schmidt said.

Modern, traditional differences

The differences between modern and traditional concepts of karate are philosophical, according to Schmidt.

"The basis of the modern arts is to strive for self perfection, while the tradi-

tional arts were concerned with protection," he said.

Schmidt believes the martial arts have grown in popularity since they were put into the curriculum five years ago, and the general interest is in technique.

"Most of the people have an image in mind as far as karate is concerned and they want to learn better execution to improve their form. Then, after they're in it awhile they get into the philosophical side of karate."

Pitts emphasizes the point that karate is not something you can just start working at and hope to master.

Lifetime study

"Karate is a lifetime study. It's not something you can completely know in a year, in ten years, twenty, thirty or even forty years. But if you concentrate and keep working in it you will become closer to understanding and feeling it," Pitts said. "But yet, you can spend an entire lifetime in it and still not know it."

Acrobatic boxing, as karate is sometimes referred, involves different levels and areas of training that can be divided into three categories.

Calisthenics involve a rigorous building-up process designed to increase and improve flexibility and speed.

Imaginary opponent

Another area features specific karate blows, kicks, chops and blocks while the third stresses acrobatic forms of punching, turning, leaping and dodging often practiced with an imaginary opponent.

Participants in karate tournaments engage in sparring matches in which attacks and defenses are simulated. Kicks and blows are stopped just short of contact or delivered with controlled contact.



Photo by Ted Kirk

Kansas State quarterback Dan Manucci will lead a potent offensive attack into Memorial Stadium Saturday when the Wildcats play UNL. Manucci leads the Big Eight Conference in passing and total offense and is 11th and ninth respectively in those departments nationally. The Huskers will counter with the running of I-back I.M. Hipp. Hipp is fourth in the Big Eight in rushing with 452 yards or an average of 90.4 yards per game. That figure places him 40th in the nation in rushing.

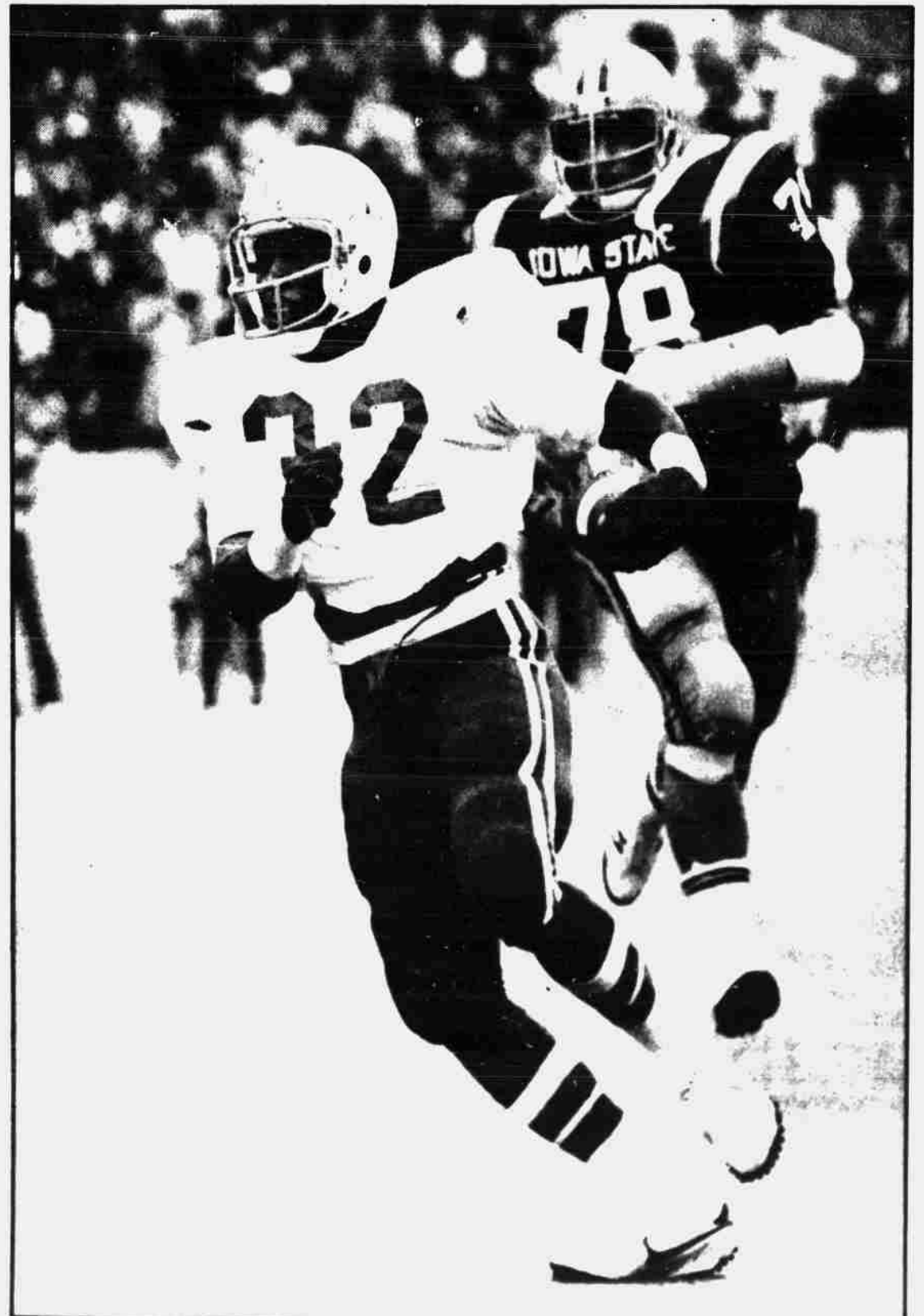


Photo by Mark Billingsley