

sports

Talking is over; 'showdown' to be played Saturday

By Kevin Schnepf

What hasn't been said already about Saturday's football game between number one ranked and undefeated Oklahoma and number four ranked Nebraska, whose only loss has been to third ranked Alabama?

The most important factor stressed over and over is that both teams, eyeing national championships, are tied in the Big Eight with 5-0 records and are battling for an Orange Bowl berth. And a trip to the Orange Bowl would better the winner's chances of becoming national champion.

The statistics of the two teams, which rank high nationally, have been built-up, rehashed and analyzed in newspapers and magazines.

Team clout

Here is what the newspaper and magazine writers who will pack the press box Saturday, have been telling their readers. Oklahoma is the number one rushing team in the nation with a 414.7 average while Nebraska is the number two rushing team in the nation with 342.7 average; Nebraska is the number one total offensive team in the nation with a 515.2 yard average while Oklahoma is the number two total offensive team in the nation with a 483.1 yard average; Nebraska is the number one scoring team in the nation with a 41.3 average while Oklahoma is the number two scoring team in the nation with a 40.4 average; Nebraska is number eight in the nation in rushing defense allowing an average 114.4 yards per game while Oklahoma's defense is unrated.

Team start

ABC television will be in Memorial Stadium to show the national audience such superstars as Oklahoma's speed-demon backfield of quarterback Thomas Lott, halfbacks David Overstreet and Billy Sims and fullback Kenny King. Commentator Keith Jackson also will be telling his audience about Nebraska's offense led by quarterback Tom Sorley who either hands the ball to running backs Richard Berns, I.M. Hipp, Andra Franklin, Tim Wurth or Craig Johnson or throws the ball to Junior Miller, Kenny Brown or Tim Smith.

A lot of attention has been focused on the number one and two running backs in the Big Eight, OU's Billy Sims, who leads the nation in rushing as well with a 155.2 yard average, is coming off three consecutive 200 yard plus rushing games. Nebraska's I.M. Hipp, the sophomore sensation of last year, is the Big Eight's second leading rusher with a 90 yard average.

High noon

ABC will begin their pre-game telecast at 11:30 a.m. and the game will begin at 12 noon. Saturday's game is considered by many as coming close to resembling 1971's game of the century, when number one ranked Nebraska beat number two ranked Oklahoma, 35-31.

Another factor that has been stressed is that Nebraska is coming off a record

breaking offensive production in last week's 63-21 rout over Kansas. Nebraska piled up 799 total yards, making it the best offensive production per game in the nation this fall. Meanwhile, OU is coming

off a 28-7 win over Colorado in which Billy Sims continued his 200 yard plus streak.

The winner will go to the Orange Bowl since no other Big Eight team is in con-

tion. OU's next opponent will be the improving Oklahoma State team next Saturday in Norman while Nebraska will host former Nebraska assistant coach Warren Powers' Missouri Tigers.



Saturday's contest between UNL and OU is not billed the "Game of the Century," but it should be the "Game of the Season" for the two teams and their fans.

'Battered, torn' Husker fans rise again

Oh, those poor dedicated Nebraska football fans. Each year when they watch their Huskers roll along, the anticipation builds up inside as they hope for a Big Eight Championship so they can travel to

1971 to 1973 and two national championship teams in that period had spoiled the Husker fan to the point that an 8-3 record is considered a losing season. Ever since Oklahoma began its domination of the rivalry in 1972 with a revenge victory, 17-14, Husker fans have stored their Go Big Red toilet seats away until Nebraska beats Oklahoma.

Cocky talk

Not only have the Husker fans been forced to accept defeat to Oklahoma, but since 1971's game of the century, they have had to put up with Sooner talk. Sooner talk usually is straightforward, outlandishly lackadaisical and cocky. It seems to be the right weapon, along with Oklahoma's talented wishbone runners, to

psych out the Huskers and discourage Husker fans.

When the number one ranked Huskers gave their fans meaning in life with a victory over the number two ranked Sooners in 1971, revenge was, has been, Oklahoma personnel. Prior to the 1972 rematch in Lincoln, OU head coach Chuck Fairbanks said, "Our team and our coaches have had Nebraska on our minds since last year."

From behind

Nebraska led at halftime, 14-0, leaving plenty for Husker fans to buzz about. But, OU came from behind and won 17-14—something Husker fans have come to expect.

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war, balmy Miami Beach. But each year since 1974, the Husker fan is shattered, battered, and torn to pieces after the annual Nebraska-Oklahoma shootout.

Three Orange Bowl trips in a row from

Primed-up NU predicted to surpass impressive OU

There may never be another college football game to match it—the 1971 Nebraska-Oklahoma shootout. It has been considered by many the greatest college football game ever played. It had a "Game of the Century" billing and lived up to the expectations. Number one-ranked Nebraska had to come from behind in the closing minutes to edge out the number two-ranked Sooners, 35-31, in a game that had everything—super catches, a punt return, the touchdown bomb and defensive plays.

Things have changed since 1971 and it has been a lopsided change. For six years Nebraska has lost to Oklahoma. For six years Nebraska has not scored in the fourth quarter against Oklahoma. The Sooners have handed out six years of frustration after losing the biggest one of them all.

Two weeks short of seven years later, Oklahoma and Nebraska are primed for another meeting Saturday in Lincoln. It is not being billed as another "Game of the Century", but both teams are again loaded with impressive credentials.

The two teams are scoring more points than any other team in the nation. In rushing offense Oklahoma leads the nation with the Huskers second, but in total offense Nebraska is on top and the Sooners second.

The offenses are so powerful that the defenses have been lost in the shuffle. They are both capable of slowing the offenses, and turning the game into a defensive struggle.

If the "seven years bad luck" superstition has any meaning, Nebraska may have to suffer one more year. But who believes in superstitions? . . . Nebraska 21, Oklahoma 17.

In other Big Eight games:

Colorado at Kansas State—Colorado has regained some respectability since the 52-14 loss to Nebraska and might be in line for a bowl bid with wins in its last two games. Kansas State is starting to look more like the old Kansas State every week. . . Colorado 34, Kansas State 14.

Iowa State at Oklahoma State—The Cowboys are the Big Eight's comeback

story of the year. Jim Stanley's 3-6 squad has been especially impressive at home in Stillwater, holding victories over Colorado, Kansas and Missouri with a narrow 19-7 loss to Arkansas. Since this is the home finale. . . Oklahoma State 17, Iowa State 13.

Kansas at Missouri—Warren Powers' Tigers are bruised by losses to Oklahoma State and Colorado the last two weeks. But this is the rivalry that got former Missouri coach Al Onofrio into trouble. Here's to Powers and the unhappy Tiger fans. . . Missouri 45, Kansas 10.

Around the country:

East—Penn State 24, North Carolina 7; Army 27, Boston College 17; Pittsburgh 30, West Virginia 11; Navy 16, Syracuse 14.

South—Clemson 31, North Carolina 21; Louisville 29, Memphis State 20; Maryland 31, Virginia 7; Kentucky 38, Vanderbilt 19; Georgia 17, Florida 10; Mississippi State 33, Auburn 28; Mississippi 21; Tulane 17; LSU 20, Alabama 17; Duke 17, Wake Forest 12; Florida State 45, Vir-

ginia Tech 16.

Southwest—SMU 28, Rice 24; Texas 23, Houston 21; Arkansas 27, Baylor 14; New Mexico 26, Colorado State 17; Texas Tech 32, TCU 20.

Midwest—Michigan State 41, Minnesota 21, Indiana 24, Iowa 8; Notre Dame 31, Tennessee 10; Ohio State 52, Illinois 14; Michigan 44, Northwestern O; Tulsa 42, Wichita State 14; Purdue 23, Wisconsin 7.

West—Utah State 37, Weber State 7; California 34, Washington State 24; Southern Cal 24, Washington 10; UCLA 37, Oregon State 10; Utah 35, UTEP 24; Stanford 28, Arizona State 23; Georgia Tech 30, Air Force 13; Wyoming 20, Nevada at Las Vegas 16; Oregon 24, Arizona 17; Brigham Young 42, San Diego State 21; New Mexico State 24, Hawaii 21; Pacific 24, San Jose State 14.

Last week's picks were the season's best, a 36-6 mark for an .857 percentage. The season record improved to 286-90-6 (ties count half right, half wrong) for a .757 percentage.