

# sports



Photo by Mitch Hrdlicka

Tom Holmes from Millard shows the Husker baseball coaches his stuff during freshman tryouts this week.

## 'Tough' image baffles academic adviser Walsh

By Scott Ahlstrand

Ursula Walsh is entering into her ninth year as the academic counselor for UNL's Athletic Department, and she's developing quite a reputation.

In *Sport Magazine's* September issue, Nebraska's football team was previewed and Walsh was mentioned. A Husker lineman told *Sport* "you don't mess with her (Walsh)."

How she developed this rough image was Walsh baffled.

"I didn't realize that I sounded like an ex-marine drill sergeant," Walsh said. "But I talked to a few players and they agreed with the statement."

Although Walsh has been at her job for almost a decade, when she was hired in 1972, she never considered making the position full-time.

"I was offered the job in 1972 when (Husker Head Football Coach) Tom Osborne was moved from academic counselor to assistant head coach," Walsh said. "Tom asked me if I would like the position and since I was a graduate student going for my doctorate and was short on money I took it. But at that time I never really thought of it as a full-time profession."

Walsh's job begins the minute athletic recruits visit the campus.

### Talk to recruits

"I try to talk to the recruits about our academic program," Walsh said. "I try to find out what each recruit's individual academic interests are, and how our program can help them."

In Walsh's work she said she sometimes faces the prejudiced image of the "dumb jock."

"I don't agree with the dumb jock image at all. I think that our athletes as a group are as academically motivated as any fraternity house on campus," Walsh said. "Sure we have some players who aren't too motivated. But we also have some players who are highly motivated and dedicated to getting an education."

Walsh said she thinks one reason why Husker athletes have been successful is because of the quality of recruits Nebraska brings in every year. Walsh believes that Nebraska doesn't have to take chances on questionable players, because the winning tradition brings in a high caliber of recruit, both physically and academically.

"I check on some of the less-motivated players every week. If they are cutting their classes I tell them they had better start attending them or I'll have to report them to the coaches," Walsh said.

### Study program

Another element that contributes to the academic success of many of the athletes, is the Nebraska study program. The "study table" is on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and is mandatory for all freshman athletes and anyone else Walsh feels needs it.

In recent years several schools have suffered from academic scandal, and several more have been investigated by the NCAA. It has been disclosed that several major colleges have allowed athletes to receive credit for courses that they either did not attend or in some cases never existed.

Walsh feels that while these scandals hinder athletic programs, Nebraska has nothing to worry about.

"Last year we had ten football players on the academic All Big Eight team, while the other seven schools only had 12 players combined. We've had 11 players make the academic All-American team, and that's just since I've been here."

"When I'm questioned about our success, I tell people it's because of Tom Osborne," Walsh said. "Tom not only believes in academic superiority, he stresses it."

Walsh constantly is kept busy in her job. The pace of the day is rushed, but Walsh said she loves her work. She said she's more concerned for the athlete's grade point average than their yards per carry.

## Sanders pleased as fall baseball opens practice

By Joni Kramer

Heading into the fall season, UNL baseball Coach John Sanders says he's pleased with his returning players as well as with the new Husker players.

"All our returners had a good summer playing ball on town teams and semi-pro teams," Sanders said, "and after bringing in some good new people, I feel we've established a good team nucleus. But only time will tell."

A good year of recruiting, according to Sanders, has brought in five freshmen pitchers, two high school infielders, one junior college outfielder and one big school outfielder.

After tryout camp, coordinated by Assistant Coach Ron Johnette, Sanders says three or four walk-ons will join the team, and should make some contributions.

"With the group we've got now, I feel we would have more speed than in past seasons," Sanders said.

Being used as a time for overall conditioning, Sanders said the fall season is used much like the Spring football season.

"We teach basic fundamentals, conditioning as well as building strength and confidence, then we evaluate our personnel," Sanders said. "After the fall we can see if we need to do something different offensively in the spring."

According to Sanders, the fall season is used as a time to experiment with personnel.

"We try some different things and if they work out we make some changes at the end of the season," Sanders said.

During the fall baseball season, the Huskers have practice games every Sunday at 1:00, but according to Sanders, statistics from these games aren't as important as in the spring.

"At fall practice games, we keep statistics, but they don't really count toward as much as those in the spring do," Sanders said.

At practice games, Nebraska usually plays a junior college, or else they have an inter-squad game. This Sunday they play Iowa Western Junior College.

There is no Big Eight play scheduled in the fall because of "no travel" rule, Sanders said.

Sanders said his team will use this season of non-league play to prepare themselves for league play in the spring.

"We need to get our personnel molded and blended during the fall," Sanders said.

"The players are working hard to improve, and we're making our best effort to sort everything out."

## Football breakfasts begin

The Cornhusker football coaches review/preview breakfast begins this Thursday at the Nebraska Center for Continuing Education, 33rd and Holdrege streets, at 6:45 a.m.

Each week, a member of the Big Red coaching staff will review the previous week's game and preview the upcoming contest. This week will feature a rundown

of the pre-season practice and a look ahead to the Utah game.

Sponsored by the UNL Division of Continuing Studies and radio station KLIN, the breakfast programs will also include scouting reports, special features, door prizes, and the UNL Pep Band.

Doors open at 6:30 a.m., with the program beginning at 7 a.m.

## want ads

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