

sports

Anderson cites 'killer instinct' in football champs

By Bill Dunbar

Despite close finishes the last three years, the Nebraska football team has not won a national championship since 1971.

A 17-14 victory against Oklahoma in 1978 cleared the way for a possible national title showdown with Penn State in the Orange Bowl. An old nemesis—Missouri—had to be disposed of first. Drained the previous week in the victory over Oklahoma, the Cornhuskers lost 35-31 and had

to wait until the following year to defeat Penn State in Lincoln.

In 1979, Nebraska lost the last two games of the season after winning its first 10. The Cornhusker defense failed to stop Oklahoma's Billy Sims as he rushed for 247 yards. The Houston Cougars scored in the last 10 seconds of the Cotton Bowl to defeat the Cornhuskers 17-14.

The Cornhuskers had at least two pivotal moments in 1980. A potential winning touchdown drive in the closing seconds of

the Florida State game ended at the Seminole three-yard line. They emerged with Nebraska's scalp 18-14.

And in the 21-17 loss to Oklahoma, the Sooners cruised 80 yards in eight plays with only three minutes to go in the game for the winning touchdown.

Sometimes the defense makes the big play to win a game, and sometimes it's the offense that delivers the knock-out punch. Jim Anderson, a defensive back during the national championship years of 1970 and 1971, said those teams possessed a quality that made winning big games possible.

"We had a killer instinct," said Anderson. "It's an intangible thing, but all great teams have it. It carried us through a lot of big games."

Anderson said the defense came up with a big play in the 1970 game against Oklahoma which Nebraska won 28-21.

"Oklahoma was moving for a touchdown late in the game," he said. "Jack Mildren (Oklahoma's quarterback) threw a pass into the end zone that bounced off a receiver and high into the air. The defense picked it off and won the game."

"In the 1971 Orange Bowl, LSU scored a touchdown when the defender fell down," he said. "The offense bailed us out

with a touchdown drive in the fourth quarter. It got us a national title."

Anderson said the game against Oklahoma in 1971 was the biggest thrill of his career. Nebraska prevailed 35-31.

"Late in the game it became apparent that the team that got the ball last was going to win," he said. "In that game, the offense got the chance to win the game for us. They had the kill in them."

Anderson said he feels football conditions have changed in the last ten years. He cited economic conditions and more stringent recruiting rules.

"There are so many more good teams today," he said. "In 1971, Nebraska and Oklahoma were unquestionably the best two teams in the nation. Nobody else was close except Colorado and we beat them 31-7."

"It's very difficult to win a national title," he said. "Coaches and players have really improved and there are so many more good ones than in 1971."

"Limits on recruiting have forced Nebraska to look closer to home for good football players," he added. "I think only four or five players on the 1970-71 teams were from Nebraska."

Men swimmers win dual; establish records in meet

The Nebraska swimming and diving team defeated Drury College 80-33 Saturday at the Bob Devaney Sports Center. The win pushed the Huskers to 2-0 in dual meets.

Dave Achtemeier, Dave Goodwin and Matt Rye all scored double wins to help UNL capture nine of the 12 event titles.

Achtemeier won the 1000-meter freestyle in 9:46.86 and the 500-meter freestyle in 4:46.01, setting UNL dual meet

records in both events.

Rye also set two new records by winning the 200-meter individual medley in 1:57.29 and the 200-meter breaststroke with a time of 2:10.48.

Goodwin scored 303.30 and 344.15 points to win the one- and three-meter diving events.

Nebraska will host the Husker Invitational Friday and Saturday at the Sports Center pool.

Despite disappointing basketball losses

Iba encouraged by progress of Cornhuskers

By Scott Ahlstrand

The Nebraska men's basketball team finished its non-conference season with a 6-6 mark. And although Coach Moe Iba is disappointed with the Cornhuskers' record, he is encouraged by the team's progress.

"I can't be happy with our record," Iba said. "We've had some moments that I'm not proud of, but I also feel that we've played some very good basketball at times."

Nebraska dropped its first three decisions of the year, as they sandwiched a 64-53 loss to Idaho between two overtime defeats at the hands of Wyoming and Creighton.

A key factor in the three early season losses was an ankle injury of senior center Andre Smith. Smith, who was Nebraska's leading scorer last year, was injured in the first half of the Wyoming game, and did not recover until the fourth game of the season against Penn State.

"You plan just about every aspect of basketball except injuries," Iba said. "When Andre was hurt, it hampered our whole game plan. He's one of the best players in the Big Eight, and it hurts a lot when he's out of the game."

With Smith fully recovered for Nebraska's game against the Nittney Lions, the Huskers trounced the unbeaten Penn State 75-50 in front of a home crowd. The win was especially satisfying for Iba.

Best game

"I think we probably played our best ball of the year against Penn State," Iba said. "We had everything going for us in that game. Andre was healthy, we were home, and we weren't expected to beat them. That was definitely a very important

win for us."

After dumping the Nittney Lions, the Huskers continued their winning ways by defeating four of their next five opponents, losing only to nationally ranked Utah, 57-55.

"Even though we lost to Utah, that could have been our best basketball game of the non-conference season," Iba said. "You never like losing, but I think we gave a fine account of ourselves against Utah."

Although Nebraska lost its next two games on the road against Ball State and Arkansas, they came home to defeat Cal State-Sonoma, 84-49 in the non-conference season finale. The win evened Nebraska's record to 6-6, and it provided the Huskers with some much-needed momentum for the upcoming Big Eight season.

While Nebraska won easily over Sonoma, Iba believes that the fans have not seen the real Husker team yet.

"We showed a lot of character by coming back from those early season losses. The kids have never quit working and I'm sure we're going to improve," Iba said. "We're not as far along as I had hoped we would be. At one time in the season, I thought we were on our way to having a solid team, but we became too inconsistent."

Inconsistent offense

Iba said that many of the team's inconsistencies are in its offensive performance.

"For the most part we've played pretty good defense," Iba said. "I think most of our problems are a result of inconsistent scoring. We've worked quite a bit on improving our shooting and recognizing our shots, and I am sure the team will be ready for the Big Eight season."

Iba isn't sure how Nebraska will fare in the Big Eight race, but he is sure that the conference has established itself.

"It's been a very, very long time since the Big Eight has had this many quality basketball teams," Iba said.

"Right now just about every one of the Big Eight schools is playing well. I don't know how we'll fit into the race. It's hard to say. It depends an awful lot on how much our practices pay off. We're just going to have to play each game one at a time and see how well we do."

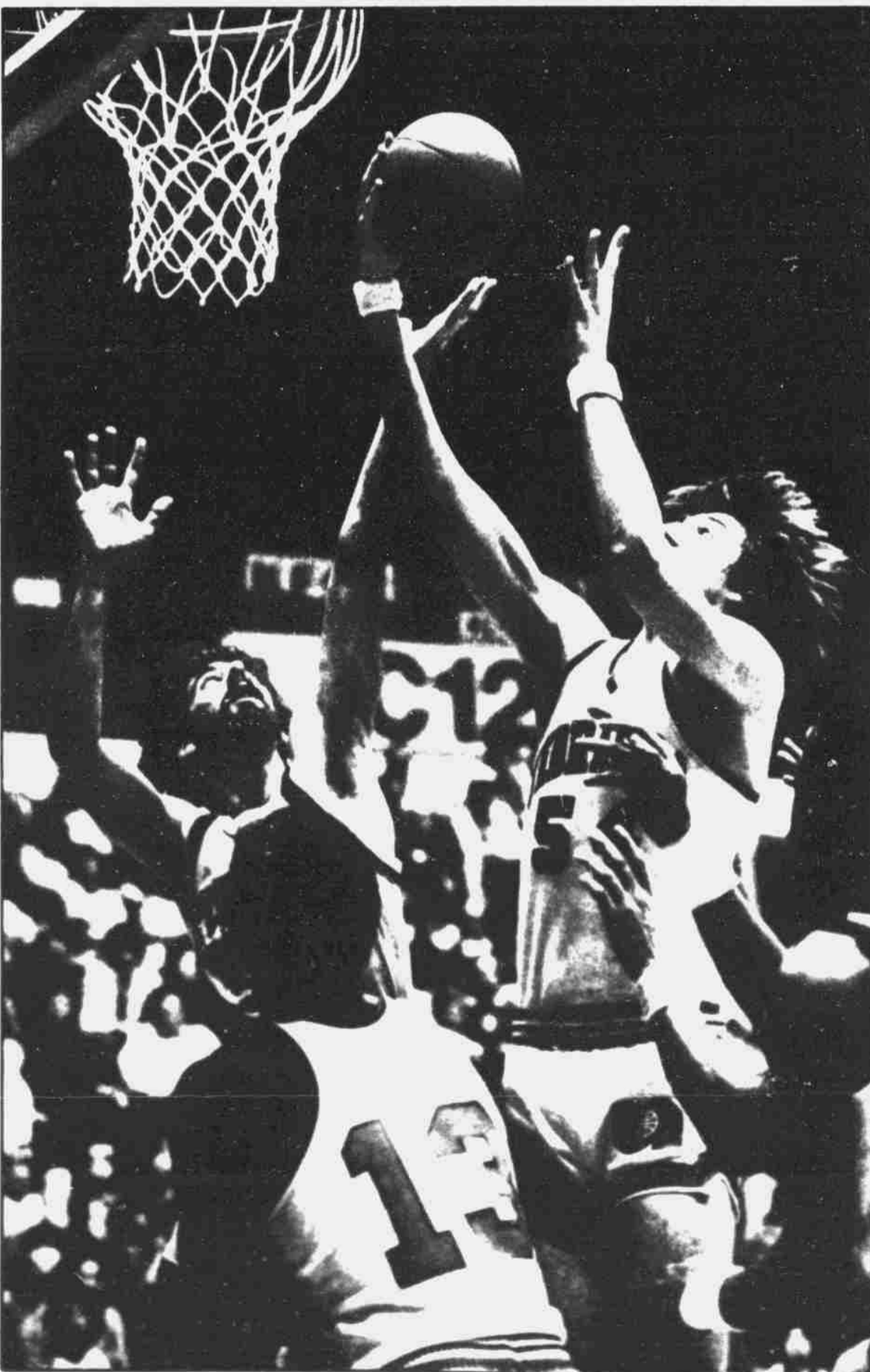


Photo by Mitch Hrdlicka

Nebraska's Lance Berwald (54) takes a rebound away from Nick Lekas (41) of Cal State-Sonoma. Nebraska won the game 84-49.

sports shorts

Nebraska pole vaulters Randy Raymond and Mark Newton were the only Nebraska athletes to place in the top four of the Eastman Invitational track meet at Johnson City, Tenn., Saturday. The two Huskers tied for third place with vaults of 16-0.

The Nebraska ticket office still has tickets for Wednesday's Big Eight season opener with Kansas State. Tickets will be on sale during regular office hours Monday through Wednesday. They will go on sale at 6 p.m. Wednesday at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

The UNL gymnastics team was ranked first in this season's first national poll. Iowa State was second, followed by Oregon and Oklahoma.

The women's gymnastics team will be on the road this weekend. The Huskers will compete at Minnesota Saturday and at Missouri Sunday.

Nebraska's wrestling team has two meets coming up this week. UNL will wrestle at Missouri Friday and at Central Missouri Saturday.