

Bowden says Seminoles face rigorous schedule

Editor's Note: this is the second part in a series preview Nebraska's 1981 football opponents. The stories will run in the order that Nebraska plays the teams this fall.
By Scott Ahlstrand

The Florida State Seminoles will be hard pressed to equal last year's 10-2 record, according to Coach Bobby Bowden.

Bowden's troops have gone 21-3 the last two years, but many experts feel that the Seminoles have the toughest schedule in college football.

"We have a killer schedule this year," Bowden said. "We have five games in a row on the road against Nebraska, Ohio State, Notre Dame, Pittsburgh and LSU. How well we do in that portion of our schedule will either make or break our season. If we come through it well, we

could have a very fine season."

Of Florida State's 11 foes, Bowden believes Nebraska will be one of the toughest.

"I've told the players that there are two teams on our schedule that will be very tough to beat. Nebraska is one of them," Bowden said. "We have to play the Cornhuskers in Lincoln and anyone who saw us beat them last year knows that their defense pretty much manhandled us physically. Our offense consisted of turnovers and field goals.

Although the Seminoles have gone through their spring practices and are currently in their fall drills, Bowden hasn't got a feeling about this year's team yet.

"We're in a rebuilding year, but we have a lot of talent," Bowden said. "I'm just unsure about how well we'll do. I can't get a feel or a sense for how well they'll perform."

One of the strengths for Florida State is the return of senior quarterback Rick Stockstill. Stockstill started every game for the Seminoles last season, completing 60 percent of his passes for 1,377 yards and 15 touchdowns.

Punter Ron Stark will also contribute heavily to the Seminoles' chances. Stark, an all-around athlete who finished eighth in the decathlon in the NCAA Track Championships, was Florida State's only All-American last year. He finished the season with a 45.1 yard average and was named to several pre-season All-American teams.

Other seniors who should aid the offense are: fullback Mike Whiting, tight end Sam Childers and tackle Tom Brannon.

The defense was hard hit by graduation, as only three starters from last year remain. Bowden expects all three of them to be leaders. They are end Jarvis Coursey, tackle Garry Futch and cornerback James Harris.

Florida State's schedule and inexperience appear to be its greatest difficulties.

"We have a lot of inexperience on this year's team," Bowden said. "There's no doubt about it, we are not the same team as we were last year. We've lost eight starters on defense and six on offense. The inexperience could really show during our five-game road trip. All of those teams are really physical. It could kill us to have to take that physical pounding Saturday after Saturday."

This summer some of Florida State's players ran into trouble both academically and with the law. Absent from the team will be big play wide receiver Hardis Johnson and safety Gary Henry. Johnson, a sophomore, caught 24 passes last season, nine of them for touchdowns. While Henry, a three year letterman, was expected to start this year.

"We've had more than our share of trouble with the law," Bowden said. "It's an embarrassment to the university and those involved have been disciplined. We've put it behind us, but we're going to miss those bodies. I don't think it will affect our team's morale. We've got a very positive group of players."

The Seminoles were predicted to finish in the top 15 by most of the national polls, but Bowden puts little faith in those predictions.

"There's a lot of speculation involved in the polls," Bowden said. "Sometimes they're pretty accurate, but if you ask ten polls to name the number one team you can get ten different answers. I'd just as soon put my faith in our players."

Mason ready to battle for No. 1 spot

By Pat Beecham

As the battle for the No. 1 quarterback continues, Nate Mason continues to look on the situation with a bright attitude.

"Right now I'm just trying to be the best quarterback I can be," Mason said.

The 6-0, 190-pound junior from Greenville, Texas, has been alternating with Mark Mauer on the No. 1 unit, but even if he doesn't get the nod as the starting quarterback, Mason said it won't be the end of the world.

"It'll be pretty tough to go through a whole season with just one quarterback," Mason said. "I want to be able to come in and help if I'm not the number one quarterback."

Mason said Mauer has been a little more consistent and has an extra year under his belt, but he still expects the competition for the quarterbacking job to be intense right up to the Huskers' first game.

"It'll be a dogfight right up to the Iowa game," Mason said. "We could even be alternating during the Iowa game."

"One of the bad points is the team needs to know who's going to lead them in a game," Mason said. "One of the good points is that it brings out the best in the quarterbacks."

Even though they are battling for the same position, Mason said he and Mauer still help each other out.

"Me and Mark are good friends," Mason said. "We were both on the second team last year and we spent a lot of time around each other. If I don't understand something he'll explain it to me or if he needs help with something, I'll help him out."

Mason said all the attention that has been focused on the quarterback situation this year hasn't bothered him that much.

"Quarterback is an important position," Mason said. "When you have a good quarterback leave, a lot of people are going to look at that position to see who the next quarterback is going to be."

Mason said he continued his workouts during the summer, working on his passing and trying to put on a little weight.

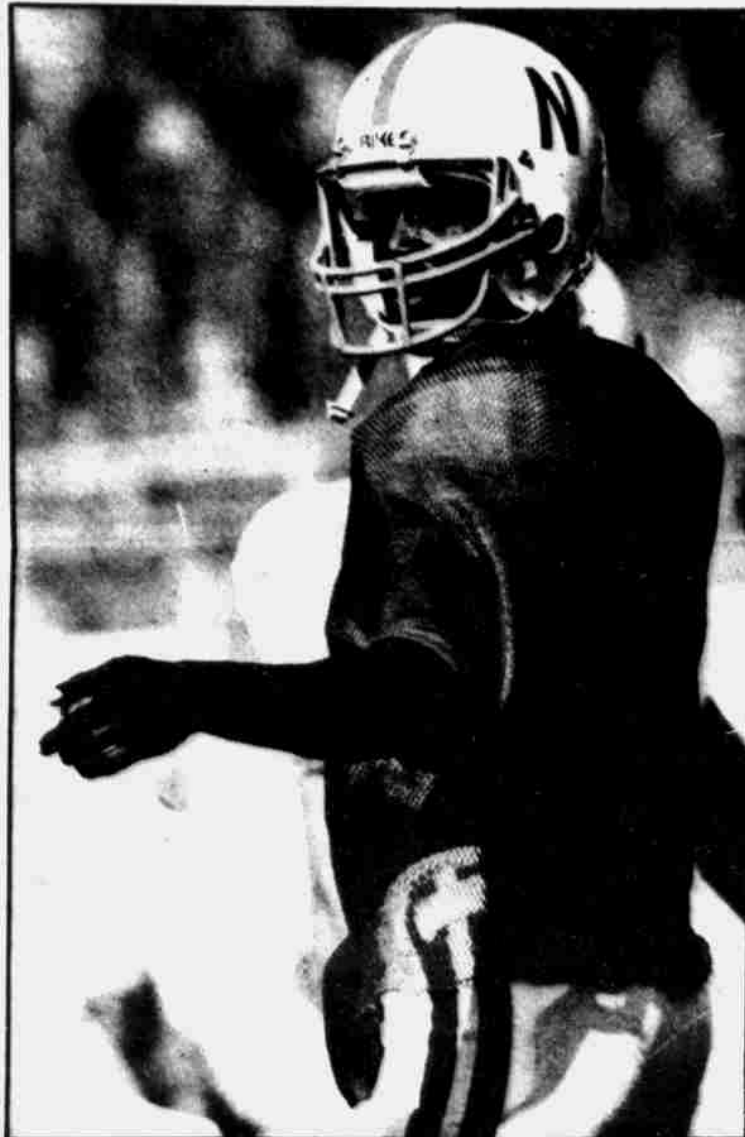
"I worked out at home and came back here about mid-July," Mason said. "I did a lot of throwing and lifting to get a little bigger."

Mason said he is pleased with his play in practice so far this year but added there are still some things he knows he has to work on.

"I ran well and had a pretty good scrimmage Saturday," Mason said. "But I've got to work on staying more in the pocket and looking at all three of my receivers."

Although there was a lot of talk about Mason transferring this summer he said that is all behind him now.

"Part of the reason I went home this summer was to find out what I wanted to do," Mason said. "I did a lot of thinking and now I know what I want to do."



Daily Nebraskan photo

Nate Mason

sports shorts

The Nebraska soccer club began practice Monday and is practicing daily at the field behind Mabel Lee Hall. Students interested in becoming a member of the club are encouraged to attend.

Tryouts for the UNL baseball team will be held Monday at 3 p.m. at Buck Beltzer Field. Students interested in walking on should attend. A permission slip from a doctor is required.

Sports Illustrated has released its college football top 20. The magazine's picks are: 1. Michigan, 2. Texas, 3. USC, 4. Oklahoma, 5. Notre Dame, 6. Penn State, 7. Nebraska, 8. Alabama, 9. UCLA, 10. North Carolina, 11. Georgia, 12. Pittsburgh, 13. Florida, 14. Ohio State, 15. Washington, 16. Mississippi State, 17. Stanford, 18. BYU, 19. LSU, 20. Baylor.

Student football tickets for new students and those who did not purchase them in the spring are on sale through Friday at the outside windows of the Athletic Ticket Office, South Stadium 117.

Anyone interested in being the student manager for the women's swimming and diving team should contact Coach Ray Huppert at 472-6466.

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