

sports

Cornhuskers good scholars as well as athletes

By Ken Havlat

Nebraska, even a hermit knows, has a long football tradition. But what one forgets is the equally long tradition Nebraska athletes have in earning their degrees, said Ursula Walsh, academic counselor for Nebraska's athletic department.

"We make a big deal out of academics," Walsh said. "We make a big deal of being academic all-Big Eight and academic all-American. Look downstairs, (first floor in the South Stadium Office Building) we have one wall dedicated to those athletes who received those honors."

When each prospective student-athlete is on campus for their 48-hour visit, they get a personal visit from Walsh. She tells what is expected of them academically. Then they sit down and map out their academic aspirations, she said.

Four days before the varsity players arrive for football practice, freshman players arrive on campus to attend a study skills workshop. Some of the topics covered in the workshop include learning the SQ3R method of study, reciting, listening techniques, how to write papers, and test preparation.

"If possible, we try to get them pre-registered. This year in particular, registration has been tough," Walsh said.

"They (coaches) make study table mandatory for

football and basketball players," Walsh said. "I also handle baseball, track, and gymnastics. My assistant (Jann Steel) takes care of wrestling, swimming, tennis, and women's sports."

The major reason why athletes don't get their degrees is the lure of pro sports. Those who don't play professionally, however, sometimes return to UNL.

"If players don't get picked by the pros, they will come back here and help out the freshman football programs," Walsh said. "Under NCAA regulations, there is a size limitation on varsity coaching but not on freshman teams. So, we get their coaching services and they get their degree."

Most get degrees

Walsh estimated 96 percent of the football players from last year's team have gotten, or will soon receive, their degrees.

One group that doesn't need to take advantage or need any type of a study hall is the men's gymnastics team.

"When I or Coach (Francis) Allen are out recruiting, we tell them in order to compete in gymnastics for Nebraska, you need to be a student first and an athlete second. The only excuses we allow for missing practices are in case the gymnast is sick or has to take a test when we are practicing," assistant coach Jim Howard said.

For as long as Nebraska has had a gymnastics team, no

member has failed to graduate, Walsh said. Howard attributes that fact to the nature of the sport.

"Gymnastics requires a great deal of discipline," Howard said.

"For gymnasts there is no such thing as professional gymnastics. Kids realize this," Howard said. "They keep this in mind and eventually it leads them to a degree."

Gymnasts practice often

Gymnastic practices often last from three to four hours a day and are held six days a week during the school year. With that type of schedule, some provisions have to be made, Howard said, especially when you have three world-class gymnasts competing for your team.

"With schedules that keep them on the road competing at meets, we try to plan far enough in advance when we know we will be gone. We try to get assignments early so they can see the right person and get the job done."

Howard said gymnasts take classes through correspondence and summer school in order to free their daily schedule.

"Ursula has a lot to do for our schedules. She helps by seeing the professor instead of the coach," Howard said. "She tells that professor we are not looking for special favors, just to try to get them in a different format."

"I like to see our kids do well," Howard said. "We have some very intelligent athletes."

KU football coach optimistic

Jayhawks smile about newcomers, players' zeal

Editor's Note: This is the eighth part in a series pre-viewing Nebraska's 1981 football opponents. The stories will appear in the order Nebraska plays the teams this fall.

By Tom Golden

There are three solid reasons why the Kansas Jayhawks should be a sure bet to improve on last year's 3-3-1 mark and finish within the top division of the Big Eight Conference, Coach Don Fambrough said.

The first is sophomore tailback Kerwin Bell, probably the most heralded running back at Kansas since John Riggins. The 5-9, 185-pound speedster from Huntington Beach, Calif. was named Big Eight offensive newcomer-of-the-year last season as he rushed for a conference freshman record 1,114 yards. Accordingly, he has been named to countless all-Big Eight and all-American squads.

"He's a super," boasts Fambrough. "He's got the makings of a great player, and he's already shown a little of what he can do."

Another reason is sophomore quarterback Frank Seurer, Bell's teammate in high school, who also had an exceptional rookie season. He passed for just under 800 yards and five touchdowns, and then followed that up with an impressive spring.

"There is no telling how good Frank can become," said John Hadl, offensive coordinator. "He has the tools and

the experience of last year. He gained in his confidence and now feels very comfortable with our offense and what we're trying to do. He's a natural leader that our team leans toward."

Enthusiastic players

The third reason for the Jayhawks' optimism is the enthusiasm expressed by KU's players, coaches, and fans.

"I don't know when I've been as excited about starting a football season," Fambrough said, adding the players' enthusiasm is also encouraging. The normally reserved Jayhawk supporters are beginning to feel the excitement too, Fambrough said.

If those aren't enough reasons to satisfy Fambrough, there are still more, such as the return of all-conference punter Bucky Scribner and the appearance of a vastly improved defense, one that Fambrough labels as "the most skilled since I've been here."

Other Jayhawk strong suits include offensive guard David Lawrence, an all-conference candidate last season, and a multi-talented receiving corps that includes wide-receivers Wayne Capers and Russ Bastin and tight-end Jeff Schleicher.

Fambrough believes Capers and Bastin can more than sufficiently replace graduate all-American flanker David Verser, the first jayhawk chosen in the NFL draft last year.

"The loss of Verser can give you sleepless nights. Then

you see Capers and Bastin and you don't worry so much," he said.

Linebackers Kyle McNorton and Chris Toburen should sparkle defensively, Fambrough said.

"They are our leaders both on and off the field," he said. "We need them to be in the lineup."

He will also need senior nose-guard Greg Smith, who was moved over from tackle in the spring to replace all-Big Eight Stan Gardner.

Not all roses

All is not roses in Lawrence this fall, however. "We have some big holes to fill on both the offensive and defensive lines," Fambrough said. "Plus the secondary has to be rebuilt during the spring."

KU lost all-conference safety Joe Tumpich and second team all-conference defensive tackle Jeff Fox to graduation in addition to Verser and Gardner, but Fambrough said solid replacements have been found.

Indeed, Fambrough believes the Jayhawks have enough valid reasons to be considered a top division contender in the Big Eight. But he also realizes the first and second places may be out of reach.

"You have to go with Oklahoma and Nebraska for the top spots in our league but after them you are going to see a real dog fight," he said. "Anything can happen, with a lot of teams fighting it out for the number three spot. I feel we are on the right track of getting there."

Ticket office offers gamble to students

By Jodie Fields

While season tickets to Nebraska football games may be difficult to get, students wishing to see Nebraska play at Oklahoma Nov. 21 do have a chance to get tickets.

The Oklahoma game was the one chosen for the student migration, Helen Ruth Wagner, athletic ticket manager for UNL said.

NCAA prepares new offers

The National Collegiate Athletic Association is preparing to offer recommendations which it hopes will bring peace with the College Football Association, The Associated Press reported Wednesday.

The recommendations would restructure Division I into a group that includes about 80 to 90 schools with similar football programs.

They also would serve to change the method of voting on the NCAA football television contract and halt the proliferation of basketball schools.

The NCAA was scheduled to discuss the changes with Big Eight conference schools Wednesday and with the Southeastern Conference this week in hopes of halting a possible CFA television contract.

Twenty percent of the 3,894 tickets Nebraska gets from Oklahoma will be held for student lottery, Wagner said.

Students bring their student ID cards to the ticket office and draw a number. Students can apply for one to six tickets if they have a student ID and money for each request.

The number they draw from the lottery is stapled to an envelope with the number of tickets requested and money inside. The lower the number, the better chance a student has of receiving tickets.

Wagner said a lottery isn't often necessary. UNL received 1,000 tickets for the Sun Bowl last year but only 100 students applied for tickets.

Tickets for other away games, however, aren't as easy to get, she said.

"Students apply just as everyone else from Jan. 1 to June 15 for away games," Wagner said.

The ticket office received approximately 8,000 requests for tickets for the Iowa game but only received 4,000 tickets, Wagner said. UNL has gotten as many as 12,000 for some games, she said.

The Oklahoma State lottery has not been scheduled yet, but will be in mid-October, Wagner said.

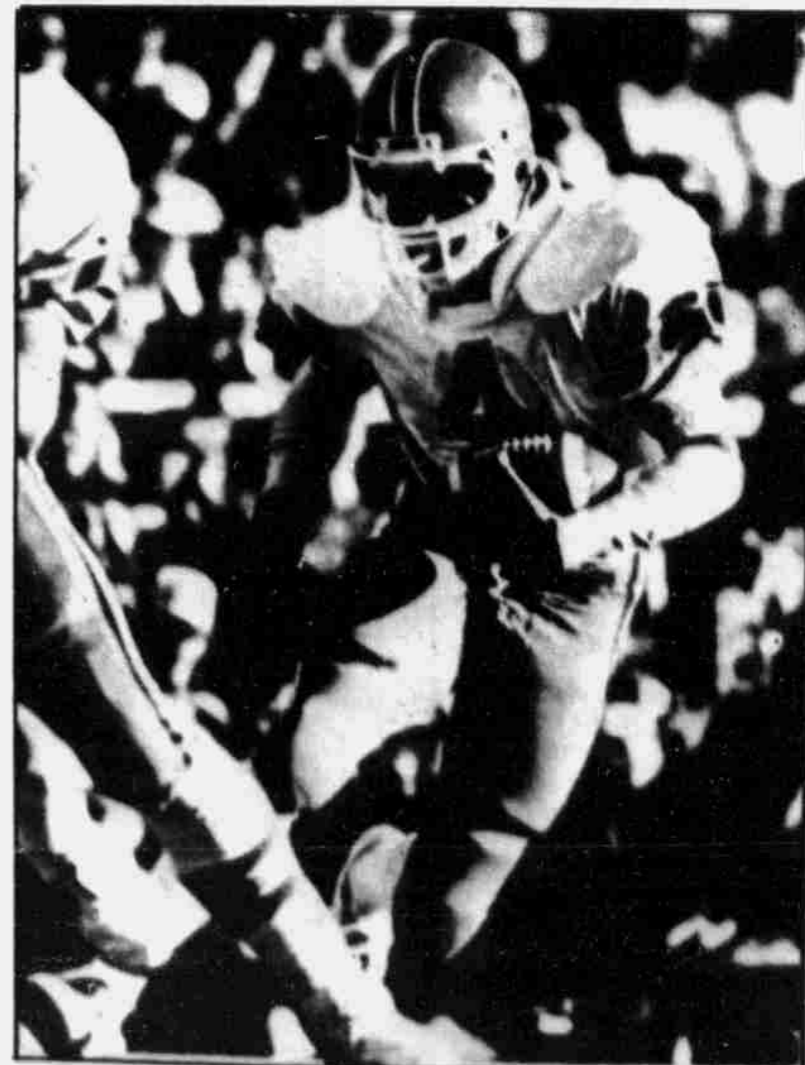


Photo courtesy of Big Eight Service Bureau

Kerwin Bell