

sports

Osborne reminds fans that 22 men make a team

By Larry Sparks

Pat Dye and Tom Osborne found themselves in similar situations when they met before the Auburn-Nebraska football game Saturday. Both found themselves with an unsettled quarterback situation and both were at a loss to explain why the fans pay so much attention to only one position on the team.

"You need 22 players to win and what happens at those positions is really as important (as the quarterback)," Osborne said at Monday's Extra Point luncheon.

Osborne then outlined a plan for Saturday's Colorado game to help take attention off the quarterbacks and place it on the offensive tackles.

"I thought maybe this week the east stands could be for (Dan) Hurley, the west stands could be for (Scott) Raridon; the north stands could be for (Randy) Theiss and the south stands for (Jeff) Kwapick," Osborne said. "Whenever your guy is in the game you cheer and when he's not, you boo."

"It would totally confuse Colorado and

it might give our quarterbacks a chance to play," he said.

Osborne said the Husker quarterbacks currently lack the ability to audible at the line of scrimmage like Jeff Quinn did last year. He said learning how to audible "takes time" and the situation will get better.

Osborne had praise for NU's defensive play against Auburn Saturday, especially the ends. He added, however, that the conditions were good for the defense because the wet field slowed down the opponenets and helped cause fumbles.

"But we felt we forced four or five of the fumbles," he said. "Everybody on defense played well."

The kicking game was another area of improvement, Osborne said, pointing out punter Grant Campbell's average of 50.2 yards despite the windy conditions.

Osborne said the offense played better than most people thought, adding that Auburn is a "very good defensive football team".

"They (Auburn) played harder than anyone we've faced," he said. "Usually, we just stopped ourselves."

"On that kind of surface, our backs really couldn't maneuver to make the big plays. We had to go straight at them. It was the kind of game where, if you made four or five yards a crack, you would score but you were going to take 10 to 12 plays doing it. When handling a wet football, sometimes in 10 or 12 plays, you're going to have a bad play," he said.

Defensive tackles Henry Waechter and Toby Williams both suffered injuries in the 17-3 win against Auburn, Osborne said. Waechter re-sprained an ankle and Williams injured his leg. Osborne also said the status of linebacker Steve McWhirter, who suffered a knee injury in the Iowa game, is still doubtful. Quarterback Nate Mason is out for the season and is scheduled to undergo ankle surgery today.

Osborne said he hopes the fans aren't expecting Nebraska to run away with this week's game against the Buffaloes. CU has a good offense and an improved defense, he said.

"I honestly don't know what's going to happen. We still have some unsettled things," he said. "If we have the injuries which we may have on defense, it could be a very interesting ball game."



Photo by Mark Billingsley

Auburn running back Lionel James (6) tries to escape Husker cornerback Allen Lyday (18). Nebraska defeated the Tigers 17-3 Saturday at Memorial Stadium.

Gill starts against Colorado

Turner Gill will start at quarterback Saturday against Colorado, Coach Tom Osborne said Monday.

Osborne said Mark Mauer will play in the second quarter and then "we'll play it by ear afterward. They'll probably both play about half the game."

The move is not a demotion for Mauer, Osborne said.

"I told Mark I'd like to see how Turner does as a starter," he said.

Steve McWhirter, who was originally expected to play this Saturday, did not

practice Monday. Osborne said he probably will not play against Colorado.

The Huskers' defensive tackle situation remained a bit shaky as Henry Waechter and Toby Williams were at less than full speed Monday.

Waechter re-sprained his ankle near the end of the Huskers' 17-3 win over Auburn, but "it's looking better than it did last week at this time," Osborne said.

Williams has a deep thigh bruise. He "couldn't do much" in practice, Osborne said. "He'll probably play, but I don't know."

Country's 'best football fans' may be disqualified

The best college football fans in the country, huh? Nebraskans have long called themselves that. But the crowd's performance Saturday did little to back up the self-proclaimed title.

Actually, Nebraska's claim to that honor has been questionable the past few years, but the booing directed at the coaches and players as they left for halftime of the 17-3 win against Auburn Saturday removed all doubt. The incident was uncalled for and an embarrassment to the state, the university and the football program. It's no wonder Husker fans have become the most disliked in the Big Eight.

Larry sparks

Florida State Coach Bobby Bowden had praise for Nebraska fans both times he was in Lincoln and it is hoped he was talking about the majority of the fans. But anyone who has followed the Huskers lately would have to believe he wasn't talking about all of them.

The problems have been building up over the years, especially in the student section. Various objects have been directed at visiting teams as they enter the field, all under the excuse of "they do it to us." What ever happened to the phrase "two wrongs don't make a right"?

Oranges have also become a popular item to throw at the visiting team or anyone in particular, especially when the Big Eight season rolls around. This "display of spirit" caused last year's Oklahoma game to be delayed for almost 10 minutes while the field was cleared.

An official was hit with an orange in that game, yet the fans showed little concern, choosing instead to say "he deserved it." Has anyone ever stopped to think how much force can be behind an object thrown from 76 rows up in the stands? With the large number of cheerleaders, photographers and other people standing on the sidelines, an injury is bound to happen.

Still, Saturday's jeering was the worst display seen around here in many years. After all, it was only a year ago we made fun of Oklahoma fans for booing their team in its loss to Stanford.

Certainly, those who follow the team and support the entire university by way of taxes have a right to their opinion, but surely there is a better way to express it than by booing the team.

How many people in the stands can honestly say they can play better than any particular athlete on the field? For that matter, how many in the stands can coach better than any members of the Husker staff? It's a lot easier to see which play should have been run when the play is already over.

Husker fan obsessed and proud of it

By Bob Asmussen

There are those who are loyal to the Nebraska Cornhuskers and there are those who are obsessed with them. Grand Island's Charlie Winkler fits the latter category.

"My son was getting married on a Saturday," Winkler said. "I told him he was a good son and I loved him very much but I wouldn't be able to come because Nebraska had a scrimmage. He changed his wedding to Friday."

Winkler is devoted. He has missed only two Saturday scrimmages in the 30 years he has followed the team. He usually misses no more than one away game a year. He is so devoted that when he dies, he jokes that he wants his ashes dropped over Memorial Stadium on a football Saturday.

"I've died there a thousand times," Winkler said. "One more time isn't going to hurt."

"My wife's not a football fan," Winkler said. "When she gets mad at me she tells me she's going to have my ashes dropped over Oklahoma's stadium. I don't think I could stand the thought of having Barry Switzer spit on me every day."

Winkler shares many of his experiences in a just-released book. The book is appropriately titled *My Big Red Obsession*. Many of Winkler's stories and anecdotes can be found in the book.

Winkler started following the team in the 1930's. He said the reason was because a player from his hometown of Ravenna, Neb., was on the team.

"Hubert Boswell was the reason I started following the

team," Winkler said. "He was a fine football player during the 30's."

There has to be a great deal of dedication toward the team for 76,423 people to sit in the rain to watch two 1-2 football teams. It's too bad a few people who call themselves fans had to make such a poor showing. C'mon folks, we can do better.

Winkler started attending the games in the late 1940's after World War II. He was a fan when Bill Jennings was coach and Nebraska lost more games than it won. He said this year's troubles are mild in comparison to those days.

"This year's team will come back," Winkler said. "I've never lost sight of the fact that we're playing good teams. We lost to a real fine team in Penn State. Iowa's also got a pretty good team."

"The fair weather fans have thrown the towel in," Winkler said. "They think that just because Nebraska walks on the field it can't get beat. The 30 scholarship limit has evened thing out."

He said this team will go the rest of the season undefeated.

Winkler said he is a natural fan. He said his obsession seems built in.

"I didn't get to go to Nebraska because of the depression," he said. "Many people follow the team. I've just followed it more than most."

Poor practices this fall didn't really bother him, Winkler said.

"The 1971 team looked pitiful in practice before the season," Winkler said. "They went on to a 13-0 season."

Winkler said many people think his obsession with the Huskers is crazy. However, he said his experiences following the Huskers over the years have been special.

"I wouldn't trade following this team for all the money in the world," he said.