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Kicking coach says good boot makes difference

By Tad Stryker

It is one of the more basic parts of football. It can be either a large asset or an extreme liability to a team. It is the kicking game, and the team that fails to master it could end up beating itself, said Coach Cletus Fischer, who is in charge of Cornhusker kicking.

When an upcoming game seems too close to call, often the coaches involved say the kicking game could decide who wins. When coaches say this, they are usually referring to how well the teams are able to punt and cover their kicks, and not necessarily the more obvious factor of field goal kicking, Fischer said.

"Often, the punting and coverage aspects make the difference," Fischer said. "That's the kind of play where you can get 40 yards every time if you do it right.

"It's pretty basic," said kicker Kevin Seibel, who also handled the punting in Nebraska's 31-17 win against Mississippi State in last year's Sun Bowl.

"Of course, if you're kicking poorly, you put your defense in a bind (with bad field position), and if your defense plays poorly, it affects your offense. It's all related," Fischer said.

One of the reasons the Huskers have

been able to reel off six wins in a row is the way they have solidified the relationship of offense, defense and kicking, Fischer said.

"We've been improving in all aspects, including the kicking game," he said.

The Husker kickers agreed with Fischer. Placekickers Eddie Neil and Seibel and punter Grant Campbell all said the Huskers are solid in the less glamorous parts of special teams play.

Wrong side of fence

The Huskers were on the other side of the fence last season when Nebraska's 18-14 upset loss to Florida State was generally credited to the Seminoles' superior kicking game.

But this season the Huskers' kicking has become more dependable, Neil said.

Campbell has a 43.5-yard punting average and has been kicking the ball very high, helping ensure good coverage.

"I'm doing better than I was (earlier in the year)," Campbell said. "My mechanics are better, and our punt coverage has been real good." The junior college transfer from Southfield, Mich., said his success at hitting the "coffin corner," or kicking the ball out-of-bounds inside the 15- or 20yard line, has also been improving.

A case in point is the Missouri game, where Campbell kept the Tigers in poor field position most of the day. Five of Campbell's punts were fair-caught, rolled dead or went out-of-bounds at the 10, 15, 13, 6 and 11-yard lines.

"Grant has punted well," Fischer said. "I think he has more confidence now."

Seibel, a junior from Vermillion, S.D., kicks off, and has done his part to give opponents poor field position, Fischer said.

Seibel has been noted for kicking the ball through the end zone, and even into the Memorial Stadium seats ever since he was a freshman, but lately, he has taken to booting the ball higher but not as far, and the results have been impressive.

No one like him

"I don't think anybody else kicks off like Kevin does," Fischer said. "He'll hang the ball up for over four seconds, almost to the goal line. By the time the other guy catches it our guys are at the 20-yard line." It has often ended with the opposition points.

starting their drive inside their own 15, and the Husker defense has proven itself very tough to drive 85 yards on.

If the Huskers have excelled in the lessnoticeable areas of the kicking game, they have several times come up short in the placekicking sector. Seibel, the regular extra point and field goal kicker last year, has remained consistent on conversions, but not field goals.

Seibel broke a school record earlier this season by kicking his 56th consecutive extra point without a miss, but after making five of seven field goals as a sophomore, he made only three of 10 through the Missouri game, three of his misses coming against the Tigers.

As a result, Neil became the field goal kicker. He is four for five so far this year.

Fischer and his kickers said Mike McElroy, a senior from Grand Island, has been a consistent part of the kicking game. McElroy is the Huskers' center for long snaps on punts, field goals and extra

Osborne hoping injuries heal up before Saturday

By Bob Asmussen

er Gill continues to be a major topic early with a strained knee. as the Nebraska football team prepares

practice because of a sore knee. Osborne said Rimington should be able to practice The status of injured quarterback Turn- today. Guard Tom Carlstrom left practice

One position of particular concern for for Saturday's game with Iowa State. Osborne is tight end. Junior Jamie Will-The sophomore from Fort Worth, iams was injured on the opening kickoff Texas is nursing bruised ribs he suffered of the Oklahoma State game and has not been able to practice this week. "Jamie came out and jogged a little," about the availability of Gill for Saturday's Osborne said. "We hope he'll be able to practice Wednesday." Tight end Mitch Krenk pulled a muscle during Tuesday's practice to add to the "We're running out of tight ends," Osborne was reminded that this would Osborne said he didn't know how ef- be the final home game for several senfective Gill would be by Saturday. Osborne iors. Twenty-two seniors will play their said earlier in the week that if Gill wasn't final game in Memorial Stadium. Osborne able to practice by Wednesday it would said the size of the class is different from "We usually have a few more seniors," "Turner wasn't 100 percent today and Osborne said. "I think last year we had Osborne said he has been pleased Several other injuries have concerned with the current senior crop. He said the talent level of this year's seniors is very

Volleyball team favored

Despite disappointing losses this weekend at the National Invitational Volleyball Tournament, assistant volleyball Coach John Corbelli said Nebraska will do well at the Big Eight Championships in Manhattan,

balanced tournament," said Coach Terry Pettit.

Corbelli said Kansas State will be the toughest competition for the Huskers. Nebraska has beaten Kansas State twice.

Kan., Friday and Saturday.

"We should be able to win the Big Eight," Corbelli said.

"I am really enthusiastic about the conference this year. I am very impressed with the improvements of several of the teams, especially the jobs with Kansas State's and Missouri's programs. I think it should be a

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"Kansas State has given us the best game. We went five games with them," Corbelli said.

Nebraska is the unanimous choice to win its sixth straight conference title in a vote of the Big Eight coaches. Missouri is picked to finish second.

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during last Saturday's game with Oklahoma State. The injury has left a question game. Coach Tom Osborne said Gill appeared to be doing okay at Tuesday's practice.

"Turner did pretty well," Osborne Huskers tight end woes. said. "Turner was better than he was yesterday. He was able to throw the ball Osborne said. some."

be hard for him to be ready for the game other years. against Iowa State.

I don't know if he'll be 100 percent 25, so the number is a surprise." by Saturday," Osborne said.

Osborne.

Senior center Dave Rimington didn't high.

Wrestlers face top squads in weekend season opener

By Kevin Warneke

The UNL wrestling team will get a "baptism into fire" as the Huskers open their season this weekend.

The squad is hosting the AAU Great Plains tournament Friday and Saturday, which Coach Bob Fehrs said is one of the toughest meets in the country all year. Sunday, UNL will host Oklahoma which was tabbed as the No. 1 squad in the nation in a preseason poll.

The AAU meet is open to college and club teams in which the wrestling is all freestyle.

"The reason why the AAU meet is so tough is because of the club teams which are involved," Fehrs said. "These club teams have members who are former national champions. I definitely think it's one of the three toughest meets all year.

"Although the majority of the winners are from the clubs and their members have the advantage because the wrestling is all freestyle, we still have members on our squad who should do fairly well," he said.

Fehrs listed the Hawkeye Club from Iowa, the Badger Club from Wisconsin and the New York Athletic Club as tough opposition for the Cornhuskers.

As an added incentive to do well in the tournament, a team of individuals will be picked after the tournament to represent the United States in a tournament in Tiblisi, Russia.

The task on Sunday when Nebraska hosts Oklahoma will not be easy either.

"Besides the fact that they're rated number one in the preseason poll, they (Oklahoma) could have a total of nine all-Americans on their squad wrestling against us," Fehrs said. "And of those nine, two are returning national champions.

"Although we are obviously the underdog, we feel we should do better than last year," he said. "We should win our share of matches."

Fehrs listed two reasons why this year's team should be better than last year's team, which was the first year that Nebraska had been ranked nationally, climbing as high as 17th near the end of the season. Those two reasons being the new people on the squad and the added experience gained from last year.

"We are really behind the eight ball this workend," Fehrs said. "But we expect to do well."

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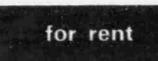
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