

Former Omahan finds fame as Atlanta Braves catcher

By Bob Asmussen

Atlanta Braves catcher Bruce Benedict is in some fine company. Bob Gibson, Richie Ashburn, Grover Cleveland Alexander, Wahoo Sam Crawford and Bob Cerv are Nebraskans who have had some measure of success in major league baseball.

You can now add Benedict's name to that list. The former Omahan is in his fourth season as the Braves' No. 1 catcher. "I'm proud to be from Nebraska," Benedict said. "I try to promote the fact that I am from Nebraska. To be honest I'm kind of surprised that I'm the only player from the state in the big leagues."

Gibson is now the Braves pitching coach for Manager Joe Torre. Benedict said that he and Gibson have a good relationship. "Bob and I get along real well," Benedict said. "We relate to each other

pretty well because we're from the same place. I always kid him that there's two players from Nebraska in the majors and we're both on the same team."

Following his junior year at UNO, Benedict was drafted and signed by the Braves. He went to Kingsport, Tenn., one of the Braves rookie league teams. During that same summer he spent time in Greenwood, S.C. He finished the season at the Braves AA team in Savannah, Ga. He spent the entire 1977 season in Savannah.

In 1978 Benedict moved up to the Braves AAA team in Richmond, Va. He stayed there until being called up by Atlanta Aug. 16. His first game as an Atlanta Brave was Aug. 18 in St. Louis. Benedict remembers his first trip to the plate.

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Preseason magazines tab Huskers, Sooners as Big Eight leaders

By Larry Sparks

Football fans trying to pass the time until the 1982 college kickoff probably haven't had trouble finding reading material this summer. The market has been flooded once again with collegiate football publications, all offering their own advice on what teams to put your money on this season.

Generally, the magazines follow a simple format — a short summary of each team, a preseason all-American and all-conference team, a national top 20 and a prediction of conference race results.

If this year's magazines are right on their predictions, it could be a banner season for Nebraska. The Cornhuskers are a near unanimous favorite to retain their Big Eight champion and are picked by many of the publications to battle for the national crown. Center Dave Rimington also is on about everybody's pre-season all-American team.

JMJ Enterprises of Syracuse, N.Y., came out with three publications this summer — Pigskin Preview, Game Plan College Football and Goal Post College Football. All three magazines tab the Huskers as the Big Eight champion and Oklahoma as runner-up, although their polls differ after that point. Pigskin Preview calls UNL I-backs Roger Craig and Mike Rozier "one of the most potent one-two punches the Big Eight has ever felt."

Game Plan picks Nebraska to finish third in the nation behind Pittsburgh and Alabama while Goal Post picks Pittsburgh to win top honors, followed by North Carolina, Alabama and Nebraska. Pigskin Preview also picks Nebraska fourth, behind Alabama, Southern Methodist and Pittsburgh.

Rimington is the only Husker on Goal Post's all-American list, although Rimington, Craig, Rozier, guard Mike Mandelko, defensive end Tony Felici and linebacker Steve Damkroger are on the all-Midlands team. Pigskin Preview has Rimington on their all-American team while Game Plan lists Rimington and tight end Jamie Williams.

Sports Quarterly Pro and College Football Roundup, published by Lopez Publications of New York, also picks Nebraska and Oklahoma to finish first and second in the Big Eight. The magazine points out that UNL has the fewest returning starters of any Big Eight team "but those even dozen players include some of the brightest lights ever to shine in western football horizons."

Sports Quarterly picks Pittsburgh to claim the national title with Alabama second and Nebraska third. Oklahoma, in eighth place, is the only other Big Eight team in the national poll.

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