

Sports

Nebraska faces toughest defense yet in Wildcats

By Cindy Gardner

Kansas State would like nothing more than to ruin Nebraska's 70th annual Homecoming Saturday and Nebraska Coach Tom Osborne said the Huskers are well aware that this Wildcat team has the potential to do just that.

"I don't think we've had any problems with over-confidence on either side of the ball," Osborne said after Thursday's practice. "We feel we're going to be in a tough ball game."

For the first time since 1970, Kansas State comes into the Nebraska game sporting a winning record. That year the Wildcats were 7-3 when they met the Huskers. Nebraska won the game 51-13. This year, K-State comes to Lincoln with a 3-1-1 record and the hope of ending a string of 13 losses to the Huskers.

"We're going to have to get some breaks if we expect to beat Nebraska," K-State Coach Jim Dickey said after the Wildcats' 7-7 tie against Missouri last Saturday. "But I've been coaching long enough to know there are upsets every week."

In preparing for the upset-minded Wildcats, the Husker

offense has readied for what it considers its toughest defensive test so far this season.

Defense features Singletary

The K-State defensive unit features right tackle Reggie Singletary and the linebacking dual of Dan Ruzich and Will Cokely. Osborne said Singletary is a quick and aggressive down lineman much like Nebraska's Toby Williams.

While names like Singletary, Ruzich and Cokely stand out, Osborne said the Huskers respect the entire Wildcat defense which last week held Missouri to just 10 first downs. Nebraska will concentrate on defensive formations rather than individuals on Saturday, he said.

"I think they've got a lot of good football players on defense and it would be kind of foolish at this point to say 'we're going to try to stay away from him or try to figure out where he is,'" Osborne said.

In Osborne's decade as the Husker's head coach, he said he can recall only one or two games in which he has consciously tried to avoid one player.

"Quarterbacks just aren't brought up that way here," Osborne said. "They look more at spacing and defenses

rather than individuals."

Defense thin

Nebraska's own defense will be a little thin at the cornerback spot in Saturday's game. Starters Neil Harris and Allen Lyday are available along with back up Dave Burke. Cornerback Jim Murphy is still weak after a bout with pneumonia and will miss the Kansas State game as will Jeff Johnson who has a knee injury.

To fill in the void left by Johnson and Murphy, Osborne said safety Pat Larsen has been practicing at the cornerback position. Freshman Gary Schneider also will suit up with the varsity Saturday.

Freshman Charlie Cartwright, another cornerback who has been working with the varsity, may seek a hardship ruling Osborne said. Cartwright has been kept out of practice with a knee injury that hasn't responded to treatment.

The Husker offense is healthy with the exception of wingback Irving Fryar. Fryar is still bothered by an ankle sprain suffered in the Auburn game. Osborne described Fryar as "marginal" after Thursday's practice. He said Fryar should be available for at least some limited playing time Saturday.

Softball team boosted by second-place finish in OSU tournament

By Jack Denker

The Nebraska softball team ended its fall season last weekend with a 12-10 record, winning second place at the Oklahoma State Invitational.

The Huskers won three games at the invitational before losing to the host team in the championship game 3-2.

"We played our best softball all season," Coach Nancy Plantz said of her team's performance at OSU. "We're real confident in ourselves because we ended the season on a good note and we feel good about that."

Plantz, who coached Nebraska to its first Womens College World Series appearance last spring, said this fall season wasn't as successful as she had hoped.

"We would much rather have had a 16-6 record instead of 12-10," Plantz said. "But I think we're going into the spring real optimistic."

Plantz said the Huskers need to improve their hitting before next spring, despite the fact that the Huskers' .235 team batting average was better than last year's.

Shortstop Denise Day was Nebraska's offensive punch this season as she led the team in every hitting category, including a .352 average and 10 RBIs in 22 games. Day also hit safely in every game but three this year.

Newcomers Marty Pump, with a .271 average, and Shelby Mertins, a pleasant surprise according to Plantz, were also proficient at the plate.

"As a team we were a little disappointed in the hitting category," Plantz said. "We didn't get enough power from our first and second hitters. We didn't have people hitting consistently."

Rhonda Revelle was Nebraska's most successful pitcher as she earned a 4-2 individual record with a 0.50 ERA. Two-time 20-plus game winner Sandy Wolterman ended the season with a 6-7 record and 24 strikeouts.

Revelle was also the team's defensive standout as she only committed four errors in 169 fielding attempts. However, Plantz said, the Huskers' 45 errors were a deterrent to the squad's success.

Nebraska scored 50 runs this season for an average of 2.3 runs per game, while their opponents scored 36 runs, which is a 1.6 average. Plantz said the tough level of competition her team played this fall had something to do with the close scores and the team's disappointing overall record.

Huskers lead in 4 categories

Nebraska leads in four categories of the Big Eight team football statistics released this week. The Huskers lead the conference in rushing offense, averaging 408.2 yards per game; total offense, averaging 575.2 yards per game; scoring offense, averaging 43 points per game; and scoring defense, allowing 11 points per game.

The Huskers are third in passing offense, fourth in rushing defense, eighth in passing defense, fifth in total defense and fourth in net punting.



Daily Nebraskan file photo

Nebraska gymnast Phil Cahoy performs on the pommel horse at last year's Big Eight championships in the Bob Devaney Sports Center. Cahoy returns to the team this season and will try to lead the Huskers to their fifth straight NCAA title. Nebraska's season opens Nov. 5 with the Big Eight Invitational in Lincoln.

First gym meet to test Nebraska

By Patty Pryor

Nebraska men's gymnastics Coach Francis Allen is looking at the Big Eight Invitational in November as a good indicator of things to come this season.

"Whoever wins this you know is going to be tough, because the Big Eight usually dominates at nationals, anyway," Allen said. "This'll show who's going to kick booty, and we want to be that kick-booty person."

Teams from Iowa State, Oklahoma, Northern Illinois at DeKalb and Southern Illinois at Carbondale will participate in the meet Nov. 5 and 6.

"We set a scoring record at this meet the last two years, and then ended up breaking it at nationals both times," Allen said, "so we've got a lot of pride riding on this meet."

This year's meet, however, may end that tradition, he said. With the loss of two sure scorers in Jim Hartung and Steve Elliott, the Huskers could face a little stronger competition this season.

"We know we're going to miss those 9.9s (from Hartung and Elliott)," Allen said. "Besides their scoring ability, though, their leadership is really going to be missed."

Allen said he's not yet sure who will comprise the lineup for the Big Eight meet.

"At this point, we have four scores, but I don't really know who our fifth scorer is yet," he said.

Those four "scores" are all-arounders Phil Cahoy, Scott Johnson, Jim Mikus and Chris Riegel.

Allen said the Huskers are "a little more hurting" in floor, high bar and rings. "By hurting, though, I just mean that we don't have guaranteed 9.5s or better in every event."

"We've got some weak spots, but we'll be able to put out a 9.0 in every event, I think," he said.

Allen said the Huskers' toughest competition will come from Oklahoma and Iowa State, although Southern Illinois "could move up fast" with Brian Babcock back on the team, he said.

Looking ahead, Allen said UCLA still poses a considerable threat, with all-arounders Mitch Gaylord, Tim Daggett and Peter Vidmar, last year's NCAA champion. The Huskers meet the Bruins twice before nationals this year.

Nebraska also will go against the U.S.S.R. and Japan in a December meet, which Allen said is going to be "quite a match."

Allen still has a number of seasoned veterans on the squad, too, who will help fill the void left by Hartung and Elliott.

Both Cahoy and Johnson are "bona fide studs" who can do 9.5 or better in every event, he said, and Riegel, although only a freshman, has plenty of experience behind him.

"From the standpoint of maturity, we'll go further this year," he said. "Last year, we started out a barn burner and ended a barn burner, but this year, I think we'll have to go a little slower. They're not going to just give it to us this year."