

Water polo a sport for the in-shape swimmer

By Lauri Hoppie

Meet Joe Student, a kid with a quest:
"Hello, Rec Department? I like to swim. No. not laps. Yeah, swim. Got any sports for me?"
Doo-doo, doo-doo, doo-doo, doo-doo... enter the water polo zone.

Water polo — a sport many Nebraskans are not familiar with. It requires good swimming skills and a well-trained body, according to Mike Morosin, coach of the UNL water polo club.

Morosin said the club is made for all people who enjoy swimming but want to do more than just swim. The only criteria Morosin sets for those who want to join the club, is that they be a "pretty good swimmer" and understand "basic swimming skills."

Many Nebraskans don't know what water polo is for two main reasons, Morosin said. Nebraska's swimming season is short, and many small towns do not have the funds to support swimming programs in their schools, he said.

Water polo teams consist of seven people per team. The game closely resembles soccer, with a few different rules: no player's feet can touch the bottom of the pool, players can only pass the ball with one hand and they must keep the ball moving by dribbling it between their hands while swimming.

Morosin said the four, seven-minute quarters can easily tire the out-of-shape player. The play action is fast, often resembling basketball's fast break and zone defense.

"It's a contact sport," Morosin said. "People don't think it is, but it is very contact-oriented."
The UNL water polo club began last year.

"Last year, we had a lot of deadbeats who didn't want to do any of the work," Morosin said. By work, Morosin meant fixing up the Coliseum pool, where the club works out, as well as the regular swimming workouts.

Things have changed this year, though. "I stuck by my guns and got rid of a lot of people that weren't team-oriented," he said. "The guys are willing to listen this year."

Right now, the club has eight members, some of whom swim on Nebraska's varsity swimming team. Morosin said two members could have signed water polo scholarships with other schools.

Intercollegiate competition is split into A, B and C divisions. The division a team is placed into depends on how good the team is — A being the best or highest division.

Although it is possible to have coeducational teams in the club setting, Morosin said he would like to get a women's team together if there is enough interest.

Although the club "basically trained last year," Morosin is looking into the possibility of having the team travel to out-of-state tournaments and host their own tournament in Lincoln.

Most water polo tournaments begin in October or November. Morosin said he encourages everyone interested to come to workouts on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Coliseum pool.

UNO game canceled; freshmen play Monday

Today's scheduled freshman football game against UNO was canceled, but the freshmen will see action Monday afternoon at 12:30 p.m. against William Jewell College junior varsity of Liberty, Mo.

UNO coach Sandy Buda called freshman coach Dan Young last Sunday to explain the team was unable to play because of injuries suffered to linemen on both the varsity and junior varsity teams.

Young said Buda told him they could possibly play here later in the season, but Young needed a game now. Williams Jewell had expressed interest in playing Nebraska earlier, and were able to fit the game in their schedule.

Nebraska has not played since Sept. 9 when they defeated Nebraska.

"We can only practice for so long," Young said. Williams Jewell's varsity team is currently ranked number one in the NAIA, finished second last year and was third the previous two years.

In the freshman's last game, Young said the defense played well most of the game, but the offense was a little shaky at the beginning, fumbling twice on their first four plays.

"They (fumbles) just fuel the fire and the other team starts thinking about upset," Young said. But he said the tenseness from the first game should be gone Monday.

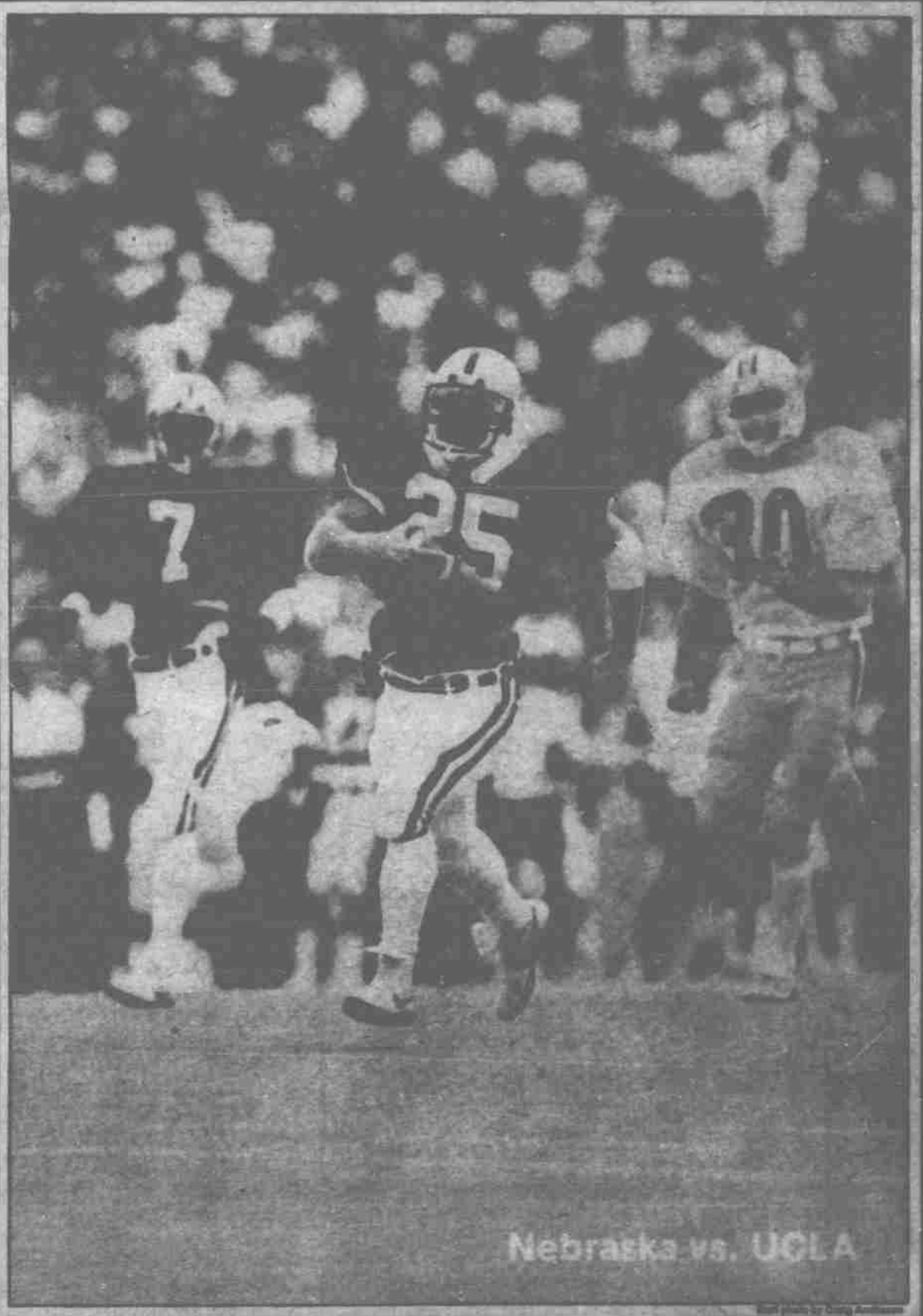
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