

Oklahoma State football coach works to continue success

By Sta Pospisil
Daily Nebraskan Senior Reporter

Pat Jones will be hailed the savior of Stillwater if the first-year coach can install continuity in the Oklahoma State football program.

Big Eight Previews

Continuity is something the Cowboys lacked during Jimmy Johnson's five seasons as Oklahoma State's coach. Johnson, who was hired in June by Miami to replace Howard Schellenberger, posted records of 7-4, 4-7, 7-5, 4-5-2 and 8-4.

Not since 1976 has Oklahoma State posted consecutive winning seasons. That season, Jim Stanley coached the Cowboys' fifth straight winning team to the Big Eight tri-championship with a 9-3 record and a victory over Brigham Young in the Tangerine Bowl.

Jones' appointment as coach was a step towards continuity. He served as Johnson's defensive coordinator for three seasons, then was OSU's offensive coordinator in 1982 before being named assistant coach last season.

There won't be many new faces in the Cowboys' huddles, either. Seventeen starters return, eight each on offense and defense — plus kicker Larry Roach.

On offense, "we've got more bullets in our gun now than we did before," Jones said.

Rusty Hilger is Oklahoma State's quick-draw artist at quarterback. The senior completed 55 percent of his passes last year for 1,247 yards and 11 touchdowns. He was named outstanding offensive player of the Bluebonnet Bowl after completing 12 of 17 passes in the first half.

Shawn Jones filled in for off-injured running back Ernest Anderson last year.

He was selected to the all-conference team after running for 956 yards and seven touchdowns.

Coach Jones said the Cowboys are considering a split-back offense that would replace the I-formation. If so, any combination of Shawn Jones, Kenny Zachary, Kelly Cook, Arthur Price or Will Timmons could be in the backfield.

Wide receivers Jamie Harris, Malcolm Lewis and Bobby Riley all "can run off and hide with it at times," Jones said.

Holdovers in the offensive line include center David Tucker, guard Ralph Partida and tackle Paul Blair.

"Spring practice gave us a clearer picture of some of the things on defense we can and can't do," Jones said. The Cowboys must replace linebackers John Corker and cornerbacks Roderick Fisher and Chris Rockins.

Safety Adam Hinds led the conference with eight interceptions, and Rod Brown had four as the strongside safety.

Ricky Adams, a junior college transfer, will team with walk-on Matt Monger at linebacker. Monger led Oklahoma State with 150 tackles last year.

Oklahoma State uses a 5-2 defensive alignment, and all five starters in the line return, as do their backups.

Defensive ends James Ham, Warren Thompson, Harry Roberts and Dave Webb started at least one game last season. Tackles Leslie O'Neal and Rodney Harding totaled 21 sacks between them.

Rosch will add to his school record with each field goal he makes this season. A search continues for a punter to replace John Conway and his 42-yard average.

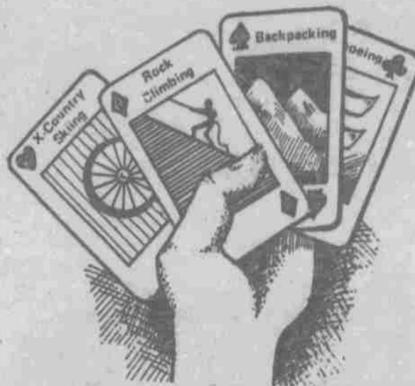
The schedule may be the Cowboys' only roadblock in its potential path to the conference title.

Saturday night, Oklahoma State plays Arizona State in Tempe and travels up the turnpike to Tuisa the following Saturday. Games at Nebraska and Oklahoma bookend the Cowboys' seven-game conference schedule.

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