

Sports

Osborne says kicking could be crucial

By Mike Reilley
Senior Reporter

Nebraska's improved kicking game might make the difference in the outcome of the Cornhusker's game against Oklahoma State this Saturday, coach Tom Osborne said Tuesday.

Osborne said that against New Mexico the Huskers' kicking game, particularly the kickoff coverage, was the best he had ever seen at Nebraska. The Lobos couldn't return a kickoff past their own 18-yard line.

"I thought that was just a fabulous job there," he said. "Overall, the kicking game was good and that was encouraging because it could be pivotal in the Oklahoma State game."

The reason for the emphasis on the kicking game: Both teams are evenly matched in all other aspects of the game, Osborne said.

"Both teams have good offenses, defenses and good personnel," he said. "And when that is the case you're usually involved in a close game, and close games are often decided by the kicking game."

But the kickoff coverage wasn't the only improvement the Huskers had against the Lobos, Osborne said. Freshman kicker Chris Drennan's 42-yard field goal in the third quarter broke a Husker streak of four consecutive missed attempts. Also, punter Dan Wingard averaged more than 40 yards a punt.

Osborne said he still is contemplating who and how many kickers he will take to Oklahoma Big Eight rules allow a team to take only 60 players on a travel roster. Wingard definitely will go, Osborne said, but he is unsure whether Drennan or senior Dale Klein will do the placekicking. Both might go, Osborne said, but he said he also wants to take sophomore Doug Welniak for special teams coverage. That would force him to choose between Drennan or Klein.

"Klein has been around a lot of football games," Osborne said. "He has kicked PAT's well, kicks off very well but has had some trouble with field goals. Drennan is one-for-one on field goals, has done reasonably well on PAT's but hasn't been around much football."

Osborne said he will try to decide by Thursday.

New Mexico used a variety of formations that confused the Huskers' defense, Osborne said. The Lobos switched from "a wishbone to the 'run-and-shoot' to no backs with a lot of motion, and also ran some options on top of that," he said.

Osborne said the Cowboys haven't displayed such diversity, at least not on film. Coaching against a team the caliber of Oklahoma State is "easier to coach against than a team like New Mexico."

"The better teams don't feel they have to trick you," he said. "But I have to give New Mexico credit. They came up here and rolled the dice with us."

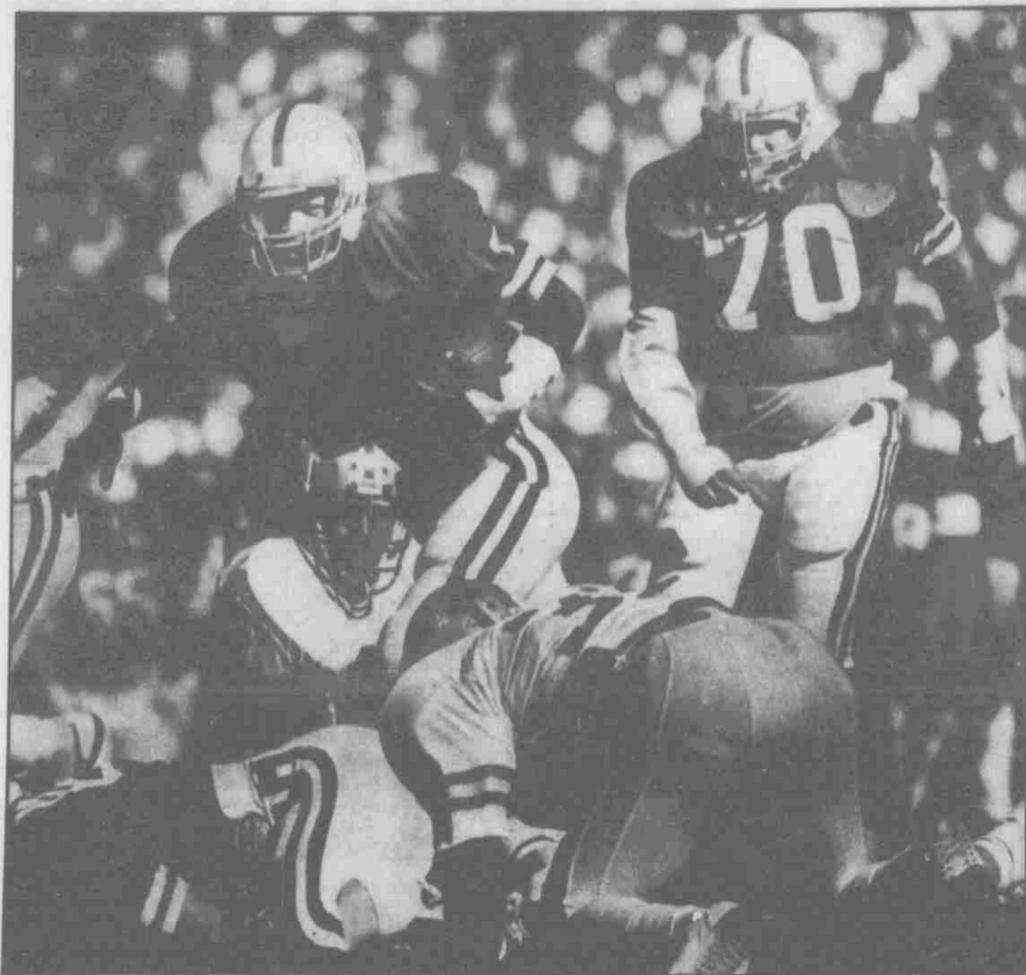
The Cowboys' defense is "by far and away the best defensive unit we've seen this year," Osborne said.

"Their main asset is their quickness," he said. "Their defense is blessed with a fine amount of athletic ability."

Injuries to several key Huskers have left some doubt about who will start at some positions for the game against the Cowboys, Osborne said. I-back Doug DuBose, who injured his knee against Oregon and missed the New Mexico game, will be used sparingly because he isn't 100 percent, he said. Quarterback McCathorn Clayton sprained his ankle in the third quarter against New Mexico and may not play Saturday night.

"He couldn't be anywhere from full speed to not playing at all," Osborne said.

Defensive end Gregg Reeves and middle guard Phil Rogers won't play, Osborne said. Reeves, a starter, dis-



Andrea Hoy/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska quarterback McCathorn Clayton (7) busts through the New Mexico line as left guard Brian Blankenship (70) looks on. Clayton sprained his ankle in the third quarter of the Cornhuskers' 38-7 win over the Lobos and is questionable for Saturday night's game against Oklahoma State.

located his shoulder against New Mexico and may miss the game against Missouri the following week. Rogers, a reserve, still is recovering from a knee

injury. Kicker Craig Schnitzler returned to practice Monday, but he is still having trouble with his sore kicking leg,

Osborne said. Osborne said Schnitzler is "very doubtful" for Saturday's game. "I'd say he needs a week or two of rest," he said.

Jet lag plagues S. African runner

By Tom Kisicki
Staff Reporter

For Leon Havenga, running on the cross country team is but one challenge. Havenga, a UNL freshman from Port Elizabeth, South Africa, said he still is adjusting after his trip from his country to Nebraska.

"I'm tired from traveling," Havenga said, "and I've been training very hard." Havenga said sophomore Jean Verster, of Sasolburg, South Africa had the same problem.

"Jean said when he came here, he struggled the first three months," Havenga said. "I think I'm getting used to it."

Coach Jay Dirksen agreed that the travel can cause a problem.

"It's very hard for a guy to come all the way around the world," Dirksen said. "There is a lot to adjust to, but he has seemed to adjust pretty well."

Dirksen said he is happy to have Havenga on the team.

"Leon is a valuable addition to our team," he said. "He is one of our

stronger kids."

Havenga didn't run in the first two meets because of ineligibility. The NCAA since has declared Havenga eligible, allowing him to run in two meets.

Havenga said he was unhappy with his performance at his first meet.

"It was a competitive field, but I didn't run so well," he said.

Havenga said he was ninth with a mile to go, but felt tired near the end of the race. However, he said there was about 20 seconds difference between the ninth and 25th finishers.

Havenga ran unattached in the Cornhusker Invitational, and finished 10th. The next week, while the rest of the cross country team competed at Kansas, Havenga ran in the Apple Jack 10-K run in Nebraska City. He set a course record and won the race with a time of 31:37.

Havenga said he came to Nebraska mainly because of fellow South African Verster. Even though Havenga and Verster are from different cities, Havenga said, "I knew Jean pretty well. We always saw each other at na-

tionals."

Havenga called the situation in South Africa, a country that was banned from the Olympics because of its apartheid policy, "terrible."

"The bad part is that the blacks are the good sportsmen, and they suffer," he said. "Because of the whites, the blacks suffer."

He said the country's top seven or eight runners are black.

"It's unfair to the racers of the world, because all of the top runners aren't running," Havenga said.

'Battle Creek boys' fulfill dream

Brothers team up on Husker squad

By Steve Thomas
Staff Reporter

Robb Schnitzler's phone was busy. A call to his younger brother, Craig, drew another busy signal. The Schnitzler brothers were on the phone — maybe rehashing Saturday's win, maybe setting time to fish or hunt Sunday, or maybe just to check up on each other.

The telephone call was a local one, and that's high priority for the Schnitzler tandem. Not because the rates are lower, but because Robb and Craig had hoped to play football in college if possible.

"We talked about it quite a bit when we were younger," Craig said. "We wanted to play together in college if possible."

Playing together is commonplace for the Schnitzler brothers. In high school, Robb and Craig were teammates on the football field, the basketball court and the track.

At Battle Creek High School, the brothers played different roles. Robb, a split end for Nebraska, was a tailback and safety. Craig, high school quarterback and linebacker, uses his foot now as a Nebraska punter and kicker.

The jump from high school to college brought many changes to the Schnitzlers, but a winning team was nothing new. The Schnitzlers left a C-1 State Championship in their wake before coming to Nebraska.

For Robb, a small size made him look into smaller state colleges. Kearney State and Wayne State were two schools that got Robb's attention before he decided to walk on at Nebraska.

"It had always been a dream of mine to play for Nebraska," Robb said. "I just wanted to try it. There are a lot of class people in the organization and the coaches treat you with respect."

The football atmosphere on fall afternoons in Lincoln also affected Robb's decision. Robb said he and his brother came to as many games as they could.

"It was just a thrill to be there," Robb said.

Critics who doubted Schnitzler because of his size have been silenced. The 5-9, 170-pound junior has tied down a starting job at split end with his sneaky speed and sure hands.

"There are a lot of great athletes at the receiver position," Robb said. "Things just kind of fell into place last year, and I've been able to play fairly consistently."

Robb, virtually unknown at the time, sent many Nebraska fans thumbing through their player rosters last November with a 50-yard diving reception against Oklahoma. Fans took notice of the new receiver and, more importantly for Robb, so did the coaches.

"That's probably my most memorable catch — just because it was against Oklahoma," Robb said.

Robb said catching passes for a team that lives and dies by the run doesn't bother him.

"When I came to Nebraska, I knew we would have a running offense," Robb said. "You just accept it. But when you get a pass thrown to you, you catch it."

Robb's goals as a football player are team-oriented. Robb said he would love to have things fall into place for a Big Eight championship, but said he tries to avoid looking ahead.

Craig, a sophomore, also is a walk on. Unlike his older brother, Craig didn't shop around before settling on Nebraska.

"When I was a freshman in high school, I set a goal to get good enough to try out for Nebraska," Craig said. "I was always impressed with the

overall program and the coaching staff. It had always been a dream to play here."

Although he admits his brother was a factor in his choice, Craig said he thinks he would have wound up at Nebraska even if Robb had gone elsewhere.

Having a talented brother as a teammate can have positive and negative effects. For Craig, the pros have outweighed the cons.

"It gives me a lot of motivation to work harder," Craig said. "Then again, people sometimes wonder what happened to me because I'm bigger and slower than Robb," he said.

Craig said he receives no special treatment at Nebraska because of Robb, and called himself just "one of many."

Craig, who prefers place-kicking over punting, said accuracy is probably his best asset as a kicker.

Both Robb and Craig had many good things to say about their parents, who never miss a home game and see many on the road as well.

"Our Dad gave us a lot of encouragement — not so much to stay together, but for both of us to give it a shot at a big school," Craig said.