



Coach, 26 seniors leave with win

By Jeff Apel
Staff Reporter

Nebraska assistant coach Cletus Fischer and 26 senior players made their final Memorial Stadium appearances Saturday in Nebraska's 56-6 victory over Kansas.

Fischer, a former Nebraska halfback, joined the 26 seniors by announcing that his 324th career game would be his last at Memorial Stadium.

With his retirement, Fischer ends a coaching career which lasted 26 years under three Corn-

husker coaches.

"It really hasn't hit me yet that this is my last appearance as an assistant coach at Memorial Stadium," Fischer said after the Huskers' victory. "I was hoping we had a great game today, so I'm just happy for the kids."

Offensive guard Brian Blankenship said Nebraska's linemen knew at the beginning of the season that Fischer was planning to retire.

Most of the team wasn't aware until just before the game that Nebraska's offensive line and kickers' coach was retiring, Blankenship said.

"We wanted to go out and have a good game for him," Blankenship said. "It means a lot to me that I am going out with him. . . he's a hell of a coach."

Tom Rathman, senior fullback, said the announcement that Fischer was retiring came as a shock.

"I was completely surprised when I heard that he was going to retire," Rathman said. "It meant a lot for the line, so everybody, including the seniors, just wanted to go out with a win."

Rathman completed his five-year home career with Nebraska by breaking the single-season rushing record for a fullback.

Against the Jayhawks, Rathman carried nine times for 159 yards to give him 852 yards rushing this season.

That mark breaks the old single season rushing record of 717 yards set by fullback Dick Davis in 1967.

"My performance today was a good way to leave," Rathman said. "It is kind of sad because it is a heck of an experience playing in front of 76,000 fans."

Quarterback Travis Turner, a senior from Scottsbluff, said everyone who spends their football careers at Nebraska pays a price in some way.

In his case, Turner said, he paid for his football career when he suffered a knee injury in this year's spring game.

Other seniors, he said, pay the price of playing at Nebraska by contracting an extensive amount of scars.

"I think you need to take a look at the walk-on

guys who stick around," he said. "There is more scars on us than any other senior class of walk-ons I have ever seen. For me, it wasn't tough playing here, but I guess it just depends on what type a person you are and where you're coming from."

Mike Knox, senior linebacker, said ending his five-year career at Memorial Stadium Saturday meant something special.

"I definitely had a good time here, there isn't a time when I regret doing it," Knox said. "Sometimes you have the ups and downs, but the good parts always outweigh the bad."

Charlie McBride, the Huskers' defensive coordinator, said that all 26 seniors deserved special attention.

A personal victory is won, McBride said, when an athlete completes his football career at Nebraska.

"It really adds to their attitude when an athlete completes his football career here," McBride said. "We talked about being able to play a lot of kids today, particularly the seniors — it just happened early."



Clockwise from top: Kansas University's Arnold Fields gets stopped by Dennis Watkins, 27, and Brian Washington, 5, at the Husker's three yard line. Excited fans cheer for the Huskers. Danny Noonan charges for Jayhawk quarterback Mike Norseth. McCathorn Clayton tries to recover a fumble in the first quarter.

Photos by David Creamer and Andrea Hoy