

Sports

New Nebraska pitching coach plans to build top-notch staff

By Jeff Apel
First Down Editor

A two-month wait for Cornhusker baseball coach John Sanders ended recently with the announcement that Tom Pratt had been named pitching coach-recruiting coordinator at Nebraska.

Pratt, a former assistant coach at Arizona State University in Tempe, Ariz., succeeds Mike Evans, who resigned his position as the Husker's pitching coach following the Cornhuskers' 35-25 season last year.

Sanders said he chose Pratt from 75 other applications because of the former minor league pitcher's experience and his strong coaching background.

Prior to serving as the Sun Devil's pitching coach last year, Pratt was the baseball coach at Bradshaw Mountain High School in Dewey, Ariz., from 1981-85. During his tenure, Pratt was twice selected as the B-West division coach of the year and was also chosen to coach the Arizona coaches association North-South all-star game in 1984.

Pratt also spent a year as the assistant baseball coach at Yavapai Community College in Prescott, Ariz., prior to beginning his baseball coaching career as an assistant varsity baseball coach at Arizona's Westwood High School.

Sanders said Pratt comes to Nebraska highly recommended by Arizona State baseball coach Jim Brock and Jerry Kindall, the baseball coach of the national-champion Arizona Wildcats.

"We look at Tom as not only an asset

to our program but the entire athletic program," Sanders said. "He comes as a real people-oriented person — he will handle adversity."

Pratt said one of the main reasons he initially chose to leave Arizona State for Nebraska is because he hopes to use his four-year minor league pitching experience to build a top pitching program at Nebraska.

During his minor-league career with the California Angels and the Kansas City Royals, Pratt said he faced such current major leaguers as Gorman Thomas of the Milwaukee Brewers, Bill Buckner of the Boston Red Sox and Darrell Porter of the Texas Rangers.

Those experiences, Pratt said, will help him in his quest to build a top-notch pitching program at Nebraska.

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— Sanders

"The kids need to be taught by someone who has been around it all," Pratt said. "I want to tell them about bus rides and what it's like to be a part of a professional baseball organization."

Pratt said he is looking forward to the challenge of trying to build a nationally ranked baseball program in a predominantly cold-weather state.

While he was at Arizona State, Pratt said the Sun Devils used their geographical climate to their advantage during the recruiting process.

But at Nebraska, Pratt said the Husker baseball program will try to take advantage of the university's image created by the Husker football program.

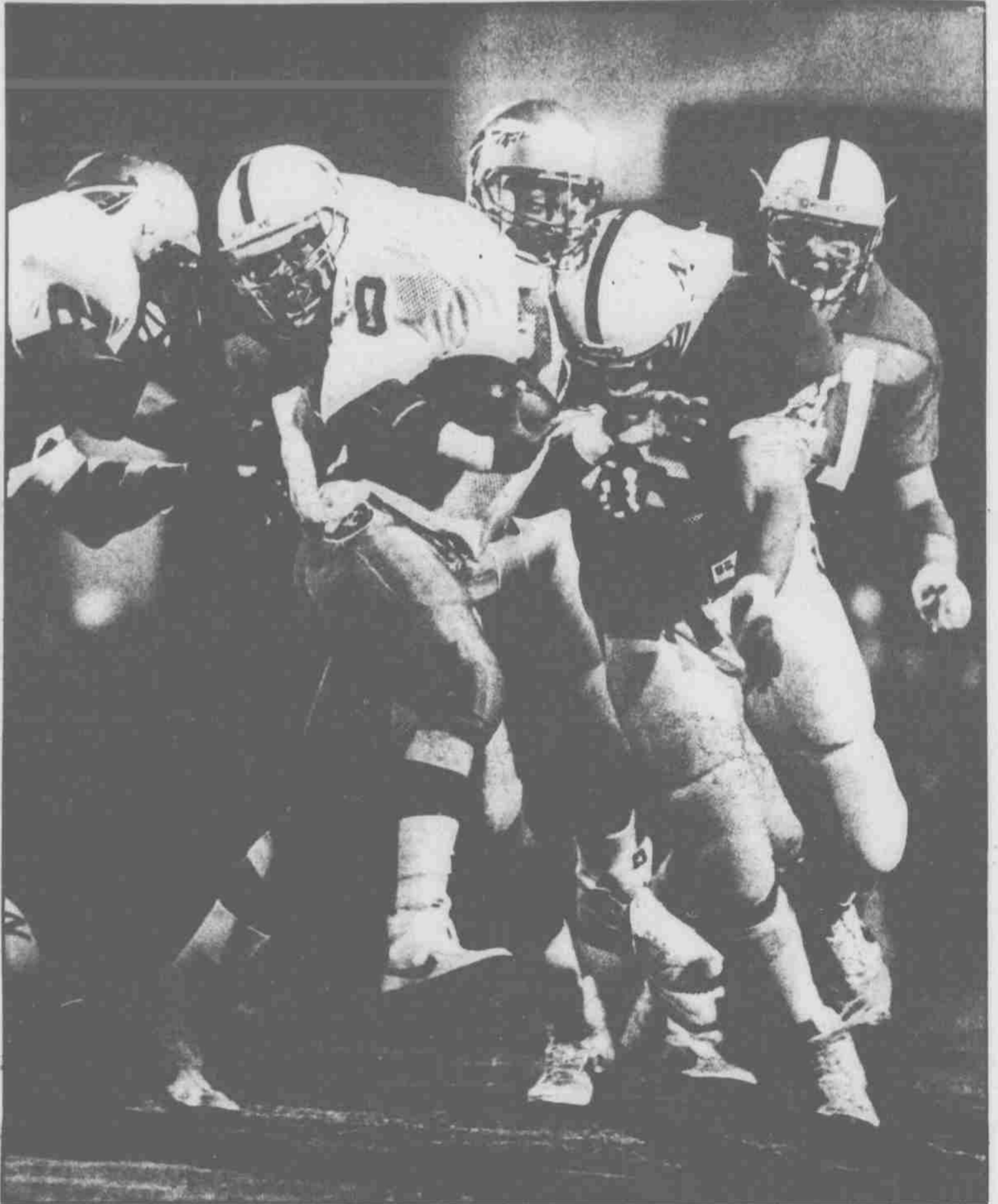
"This is not a typical Midwest school," Pratt said. "We get a lot more exposure than most Midwest schools because of the football program."

Pratt said when he and Sanders begin to recruit for the 1988 baseball season, he expects to see an increase in the talent level of the Cornhuskers' recruits since Nebraska will be expanding its recruiting base.

After drawing a list of names from baseball coaches and professional scouts throughout the country, Pratt said the Huskers will check with the individual to see if he is interested in becoming a Cornhusker.

If an individual wants to come to Nebraska, Pratt said, he and Sanders will let the recruiting process snowball.

"Recruiting is a tremendous amount of hard work. It requires a tremendous amount of research," Pratt said. "But I'm excited about it because I feel there is a tremendous amount of potential."



Andrea Hoy/Daily Nebraskan

Florida State tailback Keith Ross, 20, is stopped for no gain on fourth-and-one by Nebraska in the second quarter of Saturday's 34-17 Cornhusker victory.

NCAA call to decide NU's fate

By Bob Asmussen
Night News Editor

Nebraska officials will join in a conference call today with the National Collegiate Athletic Association Committee on Eligibility Appeals to decide the university's request not to suspend 60 Nebraska players from at least one game.

Nebraska football coach Tom Osborne said at practice Monday that he would be joined in the call by Nebraska faculty representative James O'Hanlon, university attorney Richard Wood and Lincoln attorney Fred Kauffman.

"I don't know how it works," Osborne said of the conference call. "It may be relatively brief or it might be a long

time. They're supposed to let you know in 24 hours."

Osborne said he will still be going to Maine late in September to meet with the NCAA.

"I don't exactly know what we're dealing with now," Osborne said. "With Doug (DuBose) being injured, I don't know what we're going to meet about."

The team practiced on the grass field at Ed Weir track Monday. Osborne said the practice went well and the team has few injured players.

Osborne said the team will scrimmage on Friday or Saturday. The team's next game is Sept. 20 at Illinois. Osborne said the team will try and work on the Illinois' attack in the

scrimmage.

"I've just read a few things indicating they're trying to emphasize the running game more," Osborne said.

After Saturday's game, Nebraska players talked about showing more emotion on the field. Osborne said the players had thought in the past that they weren't allowed to show emotion on the field.

"In the past what I've come down on is anything that could lead to a penalty, like taunting," Osborne said. "I don't mind the players showing emotion if it's positive. I've never tried to discourage positive support. I guess I've tried to discourage any displays that were individualistic."

The Sweet 16

Rank Team Points

1.	Oklahoma	74
2.	Nebraska	73
3.	Miami	71
4.	Michigan	66
5.	Alabama	64
6.	Penn State	56
7.	Tennessee	47
8.	Texas A&M	39
9.	LSU	28
10.	Auburn	22
11.	Florida	19
12.	Arizona	17
13.	Baylor	15
14.	Ohio State	14
15.	Florida State	13
16.	Washington	12

Rookie announcer comfortable with starting role

By Bob Asmussen
Night News Editor

There were 10 new starters in Nebraska's lineup Saturday against Florida State. There was one new announcer in the starting lineup for ABC television's coverage of the game.

Tim Brant has replaced Arkansas Athletic Director Frank Broyles on ABC's No. 1 college football broadcast team. He joins Keith Jackson as ABC's first team without a former coach. Brant said ABC has a new philosophy in regards to game coverage.

"ABC wants to put two professional announcers in the booth," Brant said before Saturday's game. "They want people who can handle any situation that might come up."

Former coaching greats Bud Wilkinson, Duffy Daugherty and Ara Parseghian preceded Broyles as ABC color commentators.

"One guy asked me if I was in awe of my new position because of the people that have had this job in the past," Brant said. "I told him 'I was the most penalized player in ABC football history. We all get our experience somewhere.'"

Brant said he is glad to have the opportunity

to announce for ABC's No. 1 college football broadcast team.

"I think Frank was very good," Brant said. "It's just the nature of the business. One day you're at the top and the next day you're looking for work."

Brant has spent the past four seasons preparing for his new job by being the sideline reporter for college football games. Brant said his work as sideline announcer will help him in the broadcast booth.

"I think it gives me an advantage sitting in the chair," Brant said. "I've had to deal with some difficult situations on the sidelines. It was a very good learning experience."

Brant said he enjoyed being sideline reporter for ABC.

"I had fun doing it," Brant said. "My pride was that I never missed a coach. I almost had to tackle (Ohio State coach) Earle Bruce one time. It wasn't that he was trying to avoid me, it's just that in the heat of the action he forgot about me."

Maybe Bruce should have been worried to know that Brant almost had to tackle him. Brant played linebacker and was defensive co-captain

for Jerry Claiborne's Maryland Terrapins in the early '70s.

"I used to hide behind Randy White and let him make the play and then pile on to get the assist," Brant said.

Brant said his career at Maryland helps him as a broadcaster.

"I think I can offer the insight of an athlete and the experience of a journalist," Brant said.

As the new guy in the booth, Brant said, he will be closely scrutinized. He said people will be looking for him to mess up.

"I'm under a microscope," Brant said. "Not from ABC, they've made their decision about me, but from the television critics and from other media. A fear factor comes into my mind at all times. I want to be ready for anything that might come up."

Brant said he thought the NCAA made a poor decision in suspending 60 Nebraska players for one game. He said he didn't think the punishment fit the crime.

"I think it's appalling," Brant said. "I feel a tremendous empathy for the players. They're the ones who will really suffer."

A forfeit of the game by Nebraska would have meant problems for ABC, Brant said. The game was nationally televised in prime time.

"I don't think cancelling the game was ever really a viable alternative," Brant said. "Had there been sixty players suspended, ABC would have had to take a hard look at the game."

Brant said he didn't know how the appeal by Nebraska on the ruling would work out.

"It's hard to tell," Brant said. "Tennessee and Texas apparently have the same situation. The NCAA has pretty much committed itself to the suspensions."

Brant said he thought the fact that the game was on national television helped Nebraska to get a stay of the penalty.

"It may not have been the major reason for the stay, but I think it was one of the reasons," he said.

Nebraska might not have gotten the stay if NCAA Executive Director Walter Byers hadn't interceded on its behalf, Brant said.

"One question I have is 'What if Walter Byers is out of the country and can't be reached?'" Brant said.