

Sports

NU aims at ASU streak

By Chuck Green
Senior Editor

Nebraska football coach Tom Osborne will try to accomplish something Saturday that he never has before — to leave Sun Devil Stadium with a win.

When No. 2-ranked Nebraska faces No. 12-ranked Arizona State Saturday in Tempe, Ariz., the Cornhuskers will be trying to improve on a 0-2 record at the stadium.

In 1975, Nebraska lost to Arizona State 17-14 in the Fiesta Bowl, then lost to Michigan 27-23 in the 1986 Sunbelt-Fiesta Bowl. Osborne said at his weekly media luncheon Tuesday that the Huskers will again have their work cut out for them.

"We're very impressed with their football team," Osborne said of the Sun Devils. "They've got a lot of experience there and the players they have back are very good."

Osborne said one of the main concerns he has about playing in Tempe is the heat. The temperature often reaches 100 degrees or more on the field.

During practices last week, the Huskers finished drills by running sprints inside Schulte Field House, where the temperature had been raised to 95 degrees.

"We've tried to take what steps we can in regard to the heat," he said.

"How much good the indoor work we've done with the heat turned up, I just don't know. We'll have to wait and see how much that's benefited us."

Osborne said the Huskers ran more than normal last week in preparation for the expected conditions in Tempe. He said Nebraska players don't normally run that much before a game "because we don't want to have the players leg-weary on the game day." But, he said, the open date allowed for the extra conditioning.

Osborne said the week off also profited Nebraska in terms of injuries.

"I think if we had had to play last Saturday (wingback Dana) Brinson would have been very doubtful and I think (defensive tackle) Lee Jones would have been incapacitated," he said. "I think this Saturday, those players will be alright."

He said he thought quarterbacks Clete Blakeman and Gerri Gdowski, who suffered injuries during practice last week, also would be recovered by Saturday.

Osborne said he wasn't concerned about former Nebraska receivers' coach Gene Huey, who is now an assistant at Arizona State, giving too much information about Nebraska's passing game to the Sun Devil coaches.

"He's a good coach and a good person and is very ethical in everything he would do," Osborne said, "but obviously he works for Arizona State now. I would imagine he wouldn't withhold information. It would be the same if we had hired somebody from Arizona State. I'm sure we would have asked him a few questions this week."

Osborne also addressed the topic of Nebraska's pre-season schedule. Arizona State coach John Cooper said earlier that if he had his way, he'd schedule four "easy" non-conference opponents. He also said that scheduling a team like Nebraska was senseless, because each team would "beat each other up."

"There's two ways to look at that," Osborne said. "If you're looking at a national championship and going to a bowl game, if you can schedule four patsies then you're better off. But it may not make you a whole lot better."

"On the other hand, if you really want to be a great football team and you want to do well in your conference, then maybe playing some tough people early is good," he said.

"I guess from the standpoint of longevity in coaching and national rankings, John is right. But if you're interested in being a good football team, the other way is better."

Huskers bake in sauna preparing for Sun Devils

By Mike Kluck
Staff Reporter

In anticipation of a hot afternoon in Tempe, Ariz., Nebraska has been preparing for its game against Arizona State on Saturday by practicing in what seems like a sauna.

Nebraska football coach Tom Osborne said the Cornhuskers have spent parts of the last two weeks practicing with the heat turned up in Schulte Field House. He said the practices should help the Huskers endure the 100 degree temperatures that will be awaiting them in Tempe.



Osborne

Osborne said he decided to practice in the heat after talking with Nebraska strength and conditioning coach Boyd Epley. He said although Epley emphasized that working in the field-house was mainly psychological, the Huskers "wouldn't do it if (they) didn't think it might do some good."

"If we would have had 85 or 90 degree weather, I wouldn't have been too concerned," Osborne said. "When we're dealing with 70 degrees here then I think we need to do something. So we'll see if it helps."

Epley said he got the idea of a heat chamber from Bill Cramer, Director of Conditioning Research for the U.S. Army. He said Cramer informed him that it would take 10 days for the Nebraska players to adjust to the heat, meaning the Huskers couldn't have used the chamber if they wouldn't have had two weeks to prepare for the Sun Devils.

Epley said he first thought about

having the Nebraska players wear extra clothing, but decided against it because it would have to be done in a gradual process. He said extra clothing also presents the danger of heat exhaustion.

"What we're trying to do is generate climatic heat rather than individual," he said. "We want the climate to be hotter."

Epley said the Huskers will have an advantage against Arizona State because they are well conditioned. He said Nebraska's summer conditioning program will help the Huskers adjust to Arizona's dry heat.

"We really don't have a major concern," Epley said. "It is probably one of these deals where we made a little bigger issue out of it then what we really needed to."

"We will be well prepared physically for the game," he said.

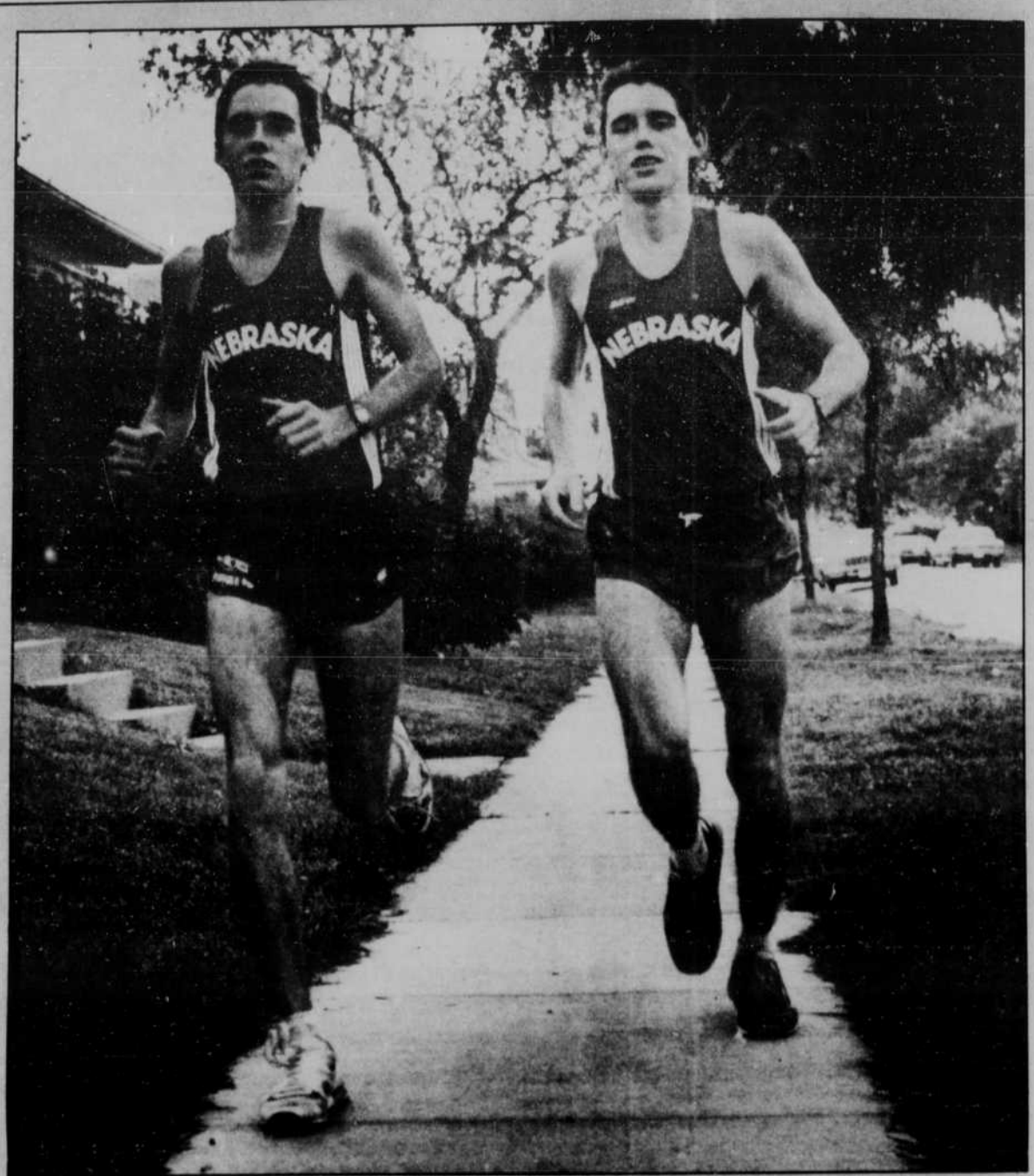
Nebraska reserve quarterback Clete Blakeman said he was not fond of practicing in the chamber.

"It's something you really don't enjoy but then again you have to realize why you're doing it — to get ready for the weather down there," Blakeman said. "If it helps out a little bit, that's why we're doing it."

"(But) I don't think this little bit is going to help us. We're a pretty well conditioned team and I think that really takes care of it for us," Blakeman said.

Starting quarterback Steve Taylor disagreed.

"I think it's going to help out a great deal," Taylor said. "I think we're in good physical condition in order to play under any conditions. We're going to be OK."



Butch Ireland/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska's Frank and Harald Graham.

Runners are double trouble

By Rich Cooper
Staff Reporter

When Nebraska cross country coach Jay Dirksen recruited Frank and Harald Graham, he received a two-for-one deal.

Dirksen said the twin brothers from Nebraska City have been a benefit for the Cornhuskers because they both have a good chance of being included in the top seven runners on this year's team.

"Frank and Harald are going to push to be on the team all year," Dirksen said. "These two guys work very hard and as the season progresses they're going to get better."

Dirksen said the Graham brothers worked so hard when they first came to Nebraska two years ago that they would sneak in extra mileage.

"...I give everybody on the team a maximum amount of mileage to run," Dirksen said, "and I don't want them to go over that mileage."

"But Frank and Harald used to sneak in extra mileage. It hurt them because their bodies couldn't handle it."

Both Grahams agreed that they trained too hard when they first became Huskers.

"The first year here at Nebraska we tried to run with the big boys," Harald said. "We would be running mile repeats and be right with the front runners."

"But as the season progressed, it got harder and harder to do because our bodies couldn't take it. What's so funny is, coach knew we were sneaking because one of us was sick every other week."

Dirksen said he thinks the Grahams' hard work has begun to pay off. He said the brothers, who grew up in Darmstadt, West Germany, and then moved to Nebraska City in 1981, have perfect bodies for running with their long, muscular

legs and little body fat.

The Grahams said they first started running when they were freshmen at Nebraska City High School.

"We actually started out as pole vaulters but our coach used to send us out on runs before practice as a pre-conditioning thing," Frank said. "And we would come back before everybody, even the distance runners, and the rest is history."

During the Grahams' senior year of high school, they finished first and second in the Nebraska State Cross Country Championships. The Grahams were so dominant during their high school careers that Dirksen said he began watching them as juniors.

"I first saw the Graham brothers at the Waverly Invitational their junior year and I thought to myself, 'Boy, these guys are going to be good,'" Dirksen said.

Despite first impressions, Dirksen said, he didn't know if he was going to be able to offer the Graham brothers scholarships because they didn't impress Nebraska track coach Gary Pepin at first.

"In their senior year of High School, I told coach Pepin to go watch these guys. Well, it turned out to be their worst meet of the season," Dirksen said. "Coach Pepin said he didn't think they were that good."

The Grahams said they remember seeing Pepin at the meet.

"The meet was some kind of invitational, and before the race we went over to our coach to get last minute instructions and we found out Pepin was there," Frank said. "Well, that race didn't go over too well because we were so nervous that we went out to fast and just died at the end of the race."

Harald said he and Frank could

have accepted scholarship offers from a Division III school, but turned them down because they were set on going to Nebraska.

"The main reason we came here was because of coach Dirksen," Frank said. "Even in high school he would help us out when he came to see us."

Dirksen said he thinks Frank and Harald are the closest brothers he's ever met. He said the fact that they help each other out gives them an advantage over other runners.

The two brothers are so close that Frank was once disqualified from a high school race because he waited for Harald to catch him at the finish line.

"We wanted to finish together because it was our home town invitational and Harald was behind me," Frank said. "So when I got to the finish line, I stopped and waited for Harald to catch up. Well, because of that, I got disqualified for not trying and Harald won the race. Boy was our coach mad."

Harald said the big difference between high school and college running is the intensity of the races. He said high school competition was so relaxed that he and Frank used to have conversations during the race.

Dirksen said the best thing about the Grahams is their team spirit.

"You never know what those guys are going to do next. They're both crazy, but in a good way," Dirksen said. "These guys love life so much and it seems like they're always doing something fun."

During the summer, the Grahams run a fishing and hunting guide service in Nebraska City. They also publish a hunting and fishing newsletter.

"Running isn't the only thing we love to do, we love to fish, hunt and listen to music," Frank said.