

# Huskers can take the heat

## Arizona coach says he expects tough test

By Tim Hartmann  
Senior Reporter

If Nebraska football coach Tom Osborne listened to Arizona State coach John Cooper, he wouldn't have his players running in Schulte Field House with the heat turned up every day.

The Cornhuskers have been ending practices by running in the heated field house to prepare for the hot temperatures they will have to face in Saturday's game at Arizona State.

Cooper said the heat won't play a role in the game, even though the starting time is set for 12:30 p.m. PST.

"I don't think that it will be a factor," Cooper said. "It's cooling off down here. Today (Monday) it was only 105 degrees, but last week it was getting up to 112 to 113 degrees."

Cooper said he also does not expect a sold-out Sun Devil Stadium crowd to affect the Huskers.

"Nebraska has played in front of over 150 consecutive (home) sell-outs, so our crowd will be no factor at all," he said.

Cooper, who is now in his third season at Arizona State, has compiled a 20-5-1 record with the Sun Devils. Before coaching at Arizona State, he coached at Tulsa for eight seasons, where he compiled a 57-31 record.

Arizona State finished with a 10-1-1 record last season, including a 22-15 victory over Michigan in the Rose Bowl. Cooper was named coach-of-the-year by several publications, including The Sporting News and The Associated Press.

The Rose Bowl appearance was the first for Arizona State since they joined the Pacific-Ten Conference eight years ago. Cooper said he wants to return to the Rose

Bowl this year, and he thinks the Sun Devils have a chance to do that.

"We've got a shot," Cooper said. "We're the only team with a chance to repeat in the conference, which says something. UCLA has best talent in the conference, and you guys (Nebraska) have already beat them."

Cooper said he expects a tough test from the Huskers.

"We're very impressed with the Nebraska program," he said. "Bob Devaney and Tom Osborne have done a tremendous job with their redshirt program, their walk-on program, their strength program, their academic program - you could go on and on. They are a model program for other schools."

Cooper said Nebraska's 56-12 victory over Utah State and the Huskers 42-33 win over UCLA were impressive. He said Arizona State played poorly in its 21-7 victory over Illinois and 31-12 defeat of Pacific.

"We're very disappointed in our play so far," he said. "We played awful in the first half against Illinois, and we played awful the last three quarters against Pacific."

"We need improvement all over, special teams play in particular. We have not performed well there at all, and our offensive line has not given our quarterback time to pass."

Nebraska is known for running the ball, but against UCLA, quarterback Steve Taylor passed for five touchdowns. Cooper said Taylor's performance was tremendous.

"Five touchdowns - that's a career for some quarterbacks," he said.

Cooper said Arizona State is not as blessed at quarterback. Jeff Van Raaphorst, who threw for 2,181 yards and 17 touchdowns last sea-

son, graduated and left the Sun Devils inexperienced at that position, he said.

"Nebraska has a Heisman Trophy candidate, and we're still looking for a quarterback," he said.

Junior Daniel Ford, who has just 18 passes last season, has played "decent," Cooper said, and will start against the Huskers.

In the latest polls, Nebraska was ranked No. 2, while Arizona State was ranked No. 12.

"In a big of national recognition it's a term of game for both teams," Cooper said.

Cooper said the game will be very important in Nebraska's national championship hopes. He said the Huskers are a strong national championship contender.

The Huskers have had two weeks to prepare for Arizona State because the Utah State game scheduled for Sept. 19 was moved up to Sept. 5. Cooper said he is not sure if the layoff will work to Nebraska's advantage.

"It probably will give some of the players a chance to heal, but some coaches don't like to stop playing when they are on a roll like Nebraska is on," he said. "It's debatable whether it will help them or not."

Cooper also down played the advantage Arizona State will possess by having Gene Huey, an assistant coach at Nebraska for ten years, on their sideline. Huey is now the Sun Devils receivers coach.

"He knows a lot about Nebraska, but we all do - we've studied their films and we know what they will do," he said. "Successful programs like Nebraska don't change what they are doing. Where Gene will help us is in knowing their personnel - the size, strength, and ability of some of the players."

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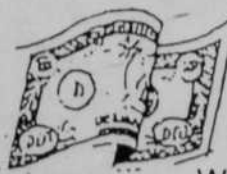
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