

# Sports

## Osborne: Improvement still needed

By Tim Hartmann  
Senior Reporter

Nebraska football coach Tom Osborne said reports of his displeasure with his team following a 35-28 victory over Arizona State have been exaggerated.

"I've read things indicating we're unhappy with certain areas of our team," Osborne said. "I was really pleased with that win on both sides of the ball. I thought the effort was good. I thought it was a tough situation to play in and I thought we played a good team."

"I'm glad it's behind us and I'm glad we won it, and I don't know if I'd want to go down and play them again every week. We think they're a good team."

Osborne said he would still like to see some improvement shown by the 3-0 Cornhuskers in Saturday's game against South Carolina in Memorial Stadium. Kickoff for the game is scheduled for 3:07 p.m. to accommodate national television coverage from ESPN (Cablevision channel 23).

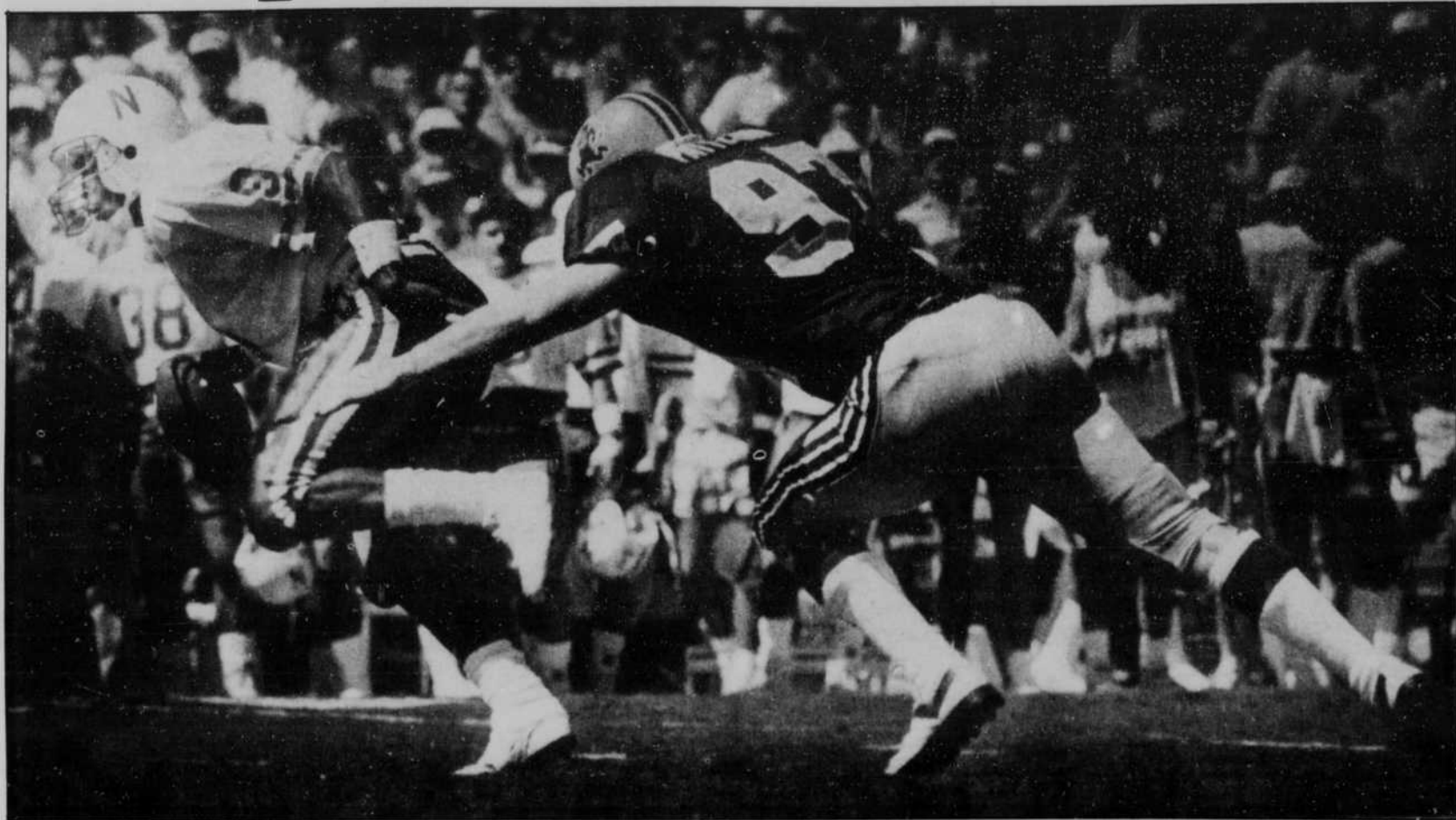
"Obviously, in order to have a great football team, you have to keep getting better, and there are some things that we need to improve on," he said. "Offensively, we have to take better care of the ball. We probably are averaging around four turnovers a game, and we'd like to cut that at least in half or better."

"Defensively, I thought we played a very good first half of football. We came out a little flat in the third quarter and kind of stood around through a long drive . . . overall, I think the defense played pretty well against a good team, although I think we can play better."

Osborne said South Carolina will test Nebraska's defense.

"They have all the ingredients, I think, to have a great offensive football team," Osborne said.

Sophomore quarterback Todd El-



Andy Mrozinski/State Press

Nebraska quarterback Steve Taylor avoids Shawn Patterson's grasp during the Cornhuskers' 35-28 victory over Arizona State.

lis has led the Gamecocks to a 2-1 record so far this season. Ellis has passed for 880 yards and three touchdowns while completing 76 of 131 passes.

Ellis' main target this season has been wingback Sterling Sharpe, who has caught 24 passes for 305 yards. Harold Green, who scored three touchdowns against Nebraska last season in a 27-24 Husker victory, leads the team in rushing with 272 yards.

South Carolina employs the Run and Shoot offense, which involves a

lot of short, roll-out passes. Osborne said South Carolina runs the offense very well.

"In order to have a good Run and Shoot offense, you have to have a good quarterback, which they do in Todd Ellis, some fine receivers and at least one good running back, and they've got an excellent running back," he said.

South Carolina hired Joe Lee Dunn as its defensive coordinator this season. Osborne said that is why the Gamecocks blitz "somewhere in the vicinity of 50 percent of the time."

"The last time we played a team that blitzed as much as South Carolina was when we played New Mexico about three years ago (Nebraska won 38-7), and that was when Joe Lee Dunn was there," Osborne said.

"Joe Lee Dunn coming in has changed their scheme around and they have really not given up much defensively," he said.

South Carolina has given up 22 points, including one touchdown, in 24-3 and 31-6 wins over Appalachian State and Western Carolina, and a 13-6 loss to Georgia.

The Gamecocks finished with 374 yards of total offense in their loss to Georgia, but failed to score a touchdown. South Carolina coach Joe Morrison said his team must improve that if they want to defeat Nebraska.

"We played hard and with a lot of heart against Georgia," Morrison said. "We just didn't take advantage of our opportunities to put points on the board. We will need to turn in a tremendous effort both offensively and defensively against Nebraska on Saturday."

## Gymnast Johnson says he's in best shape ever

By Rich Cooper  
Staff Reporter

Although he's considered the elder statesman on the U.S. gymnastics team, former Nebraska gymnast Scott Johnson said he doesn't feel old. Johnson, 26, said he feels he's in the best shape of his life.

"I feel great right now, my joints and ankles feel loose, and I've been able to have some good workouts," Johnson said. "I don't feel old at all, and the reason I feel good is when I feel tired and burned out, I don't push myself as hard in workouts."

"So, I've been able to pace myself, and that has led to my consistency this year."

Johnson is the No. 1 gymnast in the nation after winning the all-around title by more than a point at the U.S. Gymnastics Championships in June. He set a Pan American Games record last August by capturing four gold and four silver medals in Indianapolis.

Johnson also finished first at the U.S. team trials for the World Championships which will be in Rotterdam, Netherlands, Oct. 18-25.

"This is a dream come true for me, I've worked very hard to get to where I'm at right now, and I'm having a lot of fun," Johnson said.

Johnson said that although he's having a good time, this will be his last year in gymnastics. After the 1988 Olympic games, he said, he plans to work for the McDonalds Food Corporation in either management or sports marketing. Johnson now is manager of the McDonalds at

10th Street and Cornhusker Highway. "This is it for me. After the 1988 Olympics I'm going to have a normal life," Johnson said. "I want to have a family and a normal job."

"I don't want to live in the gym for the rest of my life. I love gymnastics, but there are other things just as important in my life."

Johnson's arrival at Nebraska in 1979 was overshadowed by fellow freshmen Phil Cahoy, who was perceived as being the top freshman gymnast in the country.

Johnson said he came to Nebraska because he wanted to be with the best.

"My mom and dad wanted me to go to a school where I would be the best gymnast on the team," Johnson said. "But I knew that if I came to Nebraska I would get better because of the coaches and the personnel."

Nebraskamen's gymnastics coach Francis Allen said he recruited Johnson because he had hidden talent. Allen said he put Johnson under the instruction of Nebraska assistant gymnastics coach Jim Howard to bring out that talent.

Howard said Johnson had some bad habits when he became a Cornhusker.

"When Scott first came to here, he didn't have as many skills like the high-caliber gymnasts such as Jim Hartung and Cahoy," Howard said. "Francis didn't have the time to work one-on-one with him, so I was appointed the job."

"It took a lot of time to get him to the same level as Hartung and Cahoy because he was very hyperactive and impatient."

Howard said one thing that kept Johnson going was his motivation to be as good as Hartung and Cahoy. He said at times the coach-gymnast rela-

tionship wasn't too great.

"Scott was very impatient, and sometimes he would get mad at me because he thought I was holding him back," Howard said. "But to reach the high-caliber level, it takes a lot of time and patience, and I had to be careful because he really could have hurt himself."

"What helped was the fact that he was working and competing in the same gym as Hartung and Cahoy, which also helped him to learn a lot."

Johnson said his early years at Nebraska helped him because he became good friends with Hartung.

"Jim really did a lot for me, and I give him some credit for helping me get to where I am today," Johnson said. "It would be great if he was still competing."

Johnson said Howard remains his primary coach.

"Howard knows how to train me. He knows what my weak points are and what I have to do to get in shape," Johnson said. "The best thing Howard does is he gives me confidence. I depend on Howard because ever since I first came to Nebraska he's trained me, and I feel comfortable now."

Johnson's progress at Nebraska was hindered by an injury-plagued junior season.

But during his senior season in 1983, Johnson put everything together as he won three individual titles — the floor exercise, parallel bars and high bar — while leading Nebraska to its fifth consecutive NCAA national championship.

Johnson reached the high point of his career in 1984 when he earned a spot on the U.S. Olympic Team that later won the gold medal.

Although the Russians boycotted

the 1984 Olympics, Johnson said he thinks the United States still deserved the gold medal.

"If we would have had the chance, we still would have won the gold medal. We were the best at that time," Johnson said. "The team was very tight, we all were in the best shape of our lives, and we were competing in our own back yard."

Johnson said things got tough after the 1984 Olympics. He said his motivation wasn't as high as before the Olympics and it was hard to get in a good training routine.

Things continued to worsen for Johnson as he finished 15th in the all-around competition of the 1986 U.S.

have to do a certain amount of routines in each practice."

Johnson said the most difficult aspect of being in gymnastics now is that none of his old teammates are around.

"When I first came back into the gym last year it was hard because I only knew one or two gymnasts," Johnson said. "But now I feel comfortable, and everybody in the gym supports each other."

Johnson said the person he misses most is Hartung, who retired last year. He said he's tried to talk Hartung into coming out of his retirement.

"It would be great if Jim came back," Johnson said. "He probably is

**'I want to have a family and a normal job. I don't want to live in the gym for the rest of my life. I love gymnastics, but there are other things just as important in my life.'**

—Johnson

Gymnastics Championships.

"I was very disappointed with my finish at the U.S. Championships," Johnson said. "But the one positive thing that came out of it was it motivated me to be the best."

"I realized that I had to change my training habits and Coach Howard knew that."

Howard said Johnson didn't train enough after the 1984 Olympics. He said he expected Johnson to be able to step in and perform at a high-caliber level.

"After the Olympics, Scott got married, took a honeymoon, and he stopped concentrating on gymnastics," Howard said. "But after 1986, I think he realized that I couldn't coach him if he wasn't in the gym."

"He found out that to perform well you have to practice hard and that you

the best gymnast to ever compete at Nebraska, and if he could come back for the 1988 Olympics it would be a big boost to the team.

"I think that he would have no problem getting back into shape, either."

Johnson said the United States will have a lot of pressure to repeat during the 1988 Olympics. He said anything is possible.

Johnson said the upcoming World Championships in October is the meet he's concentrating on the most. He said the U.S. team has to prove itself in the meet after finishing ninth in 1985.

"We had an awful meet at the last World Championships," Johnson said. "But we have a good strong young team and we could finish as high as third if we perform."