



Andrea Hoy/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska freshman defensive line coach Tony Davis watches a Cornhusker practice.

'Tough Tony' back at NU

By Steve Sipple
Staff Reporter

Nebraska freshman defensive line coach Tony Davis says he coaches as he used to run as a Cornhusker fullback from 1971 to '75 — tough.

Davis earned the nickname "Tough Tony" during his playing days at Nebraska because of the punishment he inflicted on several defenders. He rushed for 2,495 yards during his career, including 1,008 as a sophomore.

Davis, who is now in his first season as a Husker coach, is instilling that same toughness in the defensive players he coaches.

"He's still that type of person," Nebraska freshman coach Shane Thorell said. "For defensive linemen, that's the type of player they need to be. There in the trenches, it's pretty physical. Tony lets them know what it takes to get the job done and lets them know when they don't get their job done."

Davis agreed.

"It might be that I'm tough," Davis said. "I tell my players two things — number one, they'd better hit, and number two, they'd better hustle. If they don't give me hustle and they don't hit, they won't play."

"They know if they don't meet my expectations, they'll meet my wrath," he said. "But I love them.

They're my own."

Though Davis makes his players work, Thorell said, he keeps a good rapport with them.

"If you don't know him, you might think he's hard on them," he said. "But (the players) like him. He jokes around a lot with them."

Davis, who was named Most Valuable Player in the 1974 Cotton Bowl and 1975 Sugar Bowl, said that coaching defensive players after being involved with offense for 22 years isn't difficult because of his attitude toward football.

"My attitude is kind of a defensive attitude to start with," he said. "I wasn't a big, fast guy, but I liked hitting. I want my kids to play like that. It's kind of natural for me to coach defense, really."

Davis said he plans to coach the Nebraska freshmen this season and next, and then get a major college coaching job "as soon as possible." He said being able to put his Nebraska experience on a resume will help.

"What do you think?" Davis asked. "If you have on your resume that you coached at Nebraska, that's about as good as you get."

Davis was a fourth-round draft choice of the National Football League's Cincinnati Bengals in 1976 and earned team MVP honors the following year. He played for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers from 1979 to 1982, then finished his professional football career with

the now-defunct United States Football League's Boston Breakers.

Davis started a roofing business after retiring from football. He then became the offensive coordinator at Brandon High School in Brandon, Fla. — the largest high school in the United States at that time. He arrived at Nebraska during the fall of 1986.

Davis, who is working on his master's degree in physical education, said he's enjoyed his coaching career at Nebraska so far. He said he particularly enjoys watching his defensive linemen learn Nebraska's defensive techniques.

"I like watching kids improve over time," he said. "Over time, and after repetition after repetition after repetition, you start seeing results — just small things that combine to make the whole picture. Then, to see the look in their eyes when it all comes together, that's fun."

"That's what it's all about." Davis said his main objective is to prepare his defensive linemen for varsity football.

"I want them to be able to step in this spring and have the adjustment be not so severe, to where the players can handle it," Davis said. My coaching technique is exactly what (varsity defensive coordinator) coach (Charlie) McBride teaches. I want them to know what he expects of them."

Rogers in now a Bruin; Brown gridiron thrills

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — My alarm went off — I had forgotten to reset it for the weekend. I rolled over and eyed the clock with a bleary stare: 5:40 a.m. I groaned, then recalled that today was game day — my first game as a Brown University Bruin. A shiver of excitement ran up my spine. My pulse quickened. I turned off my alarm, rolled back over and went back to sleep.

Actually, today's game was Brown's second game of the season. I fully intended to go to last week's game against Yale in New Haven, but my 'vette — Chevette, this is, circa



Jim Rogers

1977 — had begun making oblique protestations after the 1,200-mile trip from Lincoln to Providence. Prudence suggested that I not attempt the two-hour trip down I-95 until I had my car examined. So I waited until this week for my first game.

I woke again later at a more civilized hour and in a better frame of mind. "Ah, college football," I thought to myself, "with what can I compare thee?" Another half hour in the sack immediately suggested itself as an answer, but I contemptuously dismissed it. "No time to lose, no time to lose," I said to myself, and was immediately pleased with my discipline.

I poked around at some problems in mathematical economics until about 12:30, then thought it would be best to leave for the stadium (which is within easy walking distance of the campus.) It was a beautiful fall day; brisk and clear, with the sun glowing in the heavens like a burning marshmallow tossed into the sky at a Camp-fire Girls' picnic.

As I neared the arena, however, my enjoyment of the day was cut short: Where was everybody? Did I mistakenly believe it was a home game? Anxiety began chewing at my insides like a wolf does its own leg when caught in the jaws of a trap. I recalled the bustle of activity prior to games at Nebraska: rivers of red flowing into Memorial Stadium like a giant blood transfusion; hawkers of assorted wares; scalpers everywhere; stumbling drunks from the class of '47 with 80-percent breath. Here the tension could be cut with the dull side of a butter knife.

I suppose that I should have known that football isn't taken as seriously here. After all, students get into games free with a flash of their I.D. and everyone else gets in for \$3. That at least explained why there were no scalpers around, but certainly most of the people on the street shouldn't be going the opposite direction from me. Finally, one block from the stadium — 15 minutes before kickoff — I joined a crowd of about three that seemed to be going to the game. I entered, looked around, and my mouth fell open: There were more hairs on my chest than there were

people in the stands.

When the game started, the arena was about one-fourth full — but it would be about half that if I didn't count the players.

The second game of the season is when all Ivy League teams play non-conference opponents. They used to schedule "honor losses" against teams like Army and Navy. As a result, it was called "bloody Saturday" by the press because almost all the teams lost. (Well, what do you expect? No Ivy League team offers sports scholarships, and tuition is about \$13,000 a year.) But you can't chalk up honor in the victory column, so in the spirit of the old college try they've begun scheduling easier foes. Brown's opponent this day was the University of Rhode Island.

As the game began and proceeded, the stadium crowd slowly grew, although it wasn't close to a sellout. Even then, all the attention wasn't captured by the events on the field. Perhaps the hottest topic of conversation was whether Columbia would surpass Northwestern's record for most losses in a row. If they lost today (they did, 38-7 to Lafayette), then a loss next week would equal Northwestern's record.

At the end of the first half, Brown led Rhode Island by one touchdown, 14-7. Halftime featured Brown's band; it was ridiculous — they can't march. I'm not talking a crooked line here and there, I mean they can't march at all. The band runs onto the field as a mass (trying to make it look cute, but they already used up that reaction when they did the same thing for the pregame "show") playing something unrecognizable, then they run to new positions and play something else. (I really couldn't discern any non-random distribution of notes, so I'm loathe to call the sounds they made by the august term "music.") A fan sitting close by informed me that USA Today had called the band's performances "organized chaos." I think I agree . . . all except for the organized part.

Well, in the second half Brown added a field goal. A safety gave Rhode Island nine points, and a late touchdown pass left them with a score of 15. So Brown won, 17-15. Yeaah.

I left the stadium broken-hearted: I had hoped Brown football would be methadone to my heroin-like addiction to Nebraska football. Boy, was I wrong.

With a nostalgic lump in my throat and a melancholy song in my heart, I started my dejected trek back to the campus. My head hung low; I glanced up only to ensure that I didn't run into anything. Then something caught my eye and I did a double take. Could it be? I spied a "Nebraska Cornhuskers" T-shirt. I made an excited bee-line over to the man wearing it, who was with his wife. Both were Omaha natives and, like me, were on their way home to watch the Nebraska-Arizona State game. Oh what a joy!

My thirst was at least momentarily slacked by the chance meeting. But I have a feeling it's gonna be a long fall.

Rogers, a former Daily Nebraskan editorial page editor, is now a graduate student at Brown University.

Letters

NU fans 'classy'

The University of Nebraska football fans are the best. The University of Oklahoma football fans are the worst. These observations come from observing the crowds while attending games at NU and OU, where Kansas State was the opponent.

During the 1984 and '86 seasons, fans at Memorial Stadium were supportive of their NU teams and showed respect to the K-State team by applauding their losing efforts as the team left the field. On the other hand, OU fans at Owen Field bordered on being total and complete a--holes. During the entire game, OU fans shouted obscenities at both KSU players and OU players. What kind of support is this?

The bottom line is that fans in Nebraska are a classy act. With this kind of support it is no wonder why Nebraska led the Big Eight in 1986 total attendance (456,187) and average per home game (76,031).

Go big red.

Tim Ries
K-Stater for Nebraska

Kudos to team

Congratulations to the Nebraska Big Red volleyball team on a great tournament win (Daily Nebraskan, Sept. 28). What an exciting season, with lots more to come! Go Big Red!

Let's hope the DN volleyball coverage continues to improve and expand.

Mike Bonner