

Contracts with coaches lead to suits

OMAHA, Neb. — A legal dispute between two Omaha companies over promotional agreements with three football coaches, including Nebraska coach Tom Osborne, has surfaced in lawsuits in Douglas County District Court.

Harz Marketing and Promotions Inc. and midAmerican Long Distance Co. filed lawsuits last week in which each alleges that the other hasn't abided by the terms of the contract.

A third lawsuit was filed by midAmerican's former president, Edmund Blankenau, against Gunter Harz, the president of Harz Marketing.

The coaches — Osborne, Iowa coach Hayden Fry and former Minnesota Viking coach Bud Grant — aren't parties to any of the lawsuits.

Their names entered the dispute because of promotional agreements they made with Harz Marketing,

which agreed to arrange for the coaches to appear on behalf of midAmerican.

According to the lawsuits, Harz Marketing had contracts with Osborne, Fry and Grant permitted the company to arrange personal appearances by the coaches on behalf of Harz's clients. The lawsuits don't disclose what Harz had agreed to pay the coaches.

The suit says Gunter, Harz and

Blankenau had an agreement under which Blankenau was to underwrite celebrity golf tournaments in Des Moines, Iowa; Minneapolis; and the Omaha area. The Tom Osborne-midAmerican Senior Classic was played during the Memorial Day weekend at Capehart Golf Course. Blankenau alleges that more than \$300,000 he paid for the tournaments hasn't been accounted for by Harz.

Harz and Blankenau couldn't be

reached for comment, and their attorneys declined to discuss the case.

The disagreement between midAmerican and Harz Marketing centers on midAmerican's payments to Harz for the use of celebrities.

In addition, midAmerican alleges that Harz has incorrectly demanded \$57,000 from midAmerican for payment of fees related to the golf tournaments agreed to between Harz and Blankenau.

Oklahoma State's kicking game to challenge Huskers

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are 240-, 250-pound players who can really run well," he said. "They're good athletes, and many times that causes more problems than a big old 280-pound guy that can't move."

Oklahoma State ranks first in

the nation in punt returns, third in net punting and sixth in kickoff returns. Last season, Nebraska's Rod Smith and Dana Brinson finished first and sixth, respectively, in the country in punt returns; they are among the leaders this season.

Osborne said the kicking game should be a key factor.

"The kicking game very well could decide the ball game," Osborne said. "Their kicking game is probably about as sound as anybody that we've played this year."

"All the way around, they're a very, very good football team."

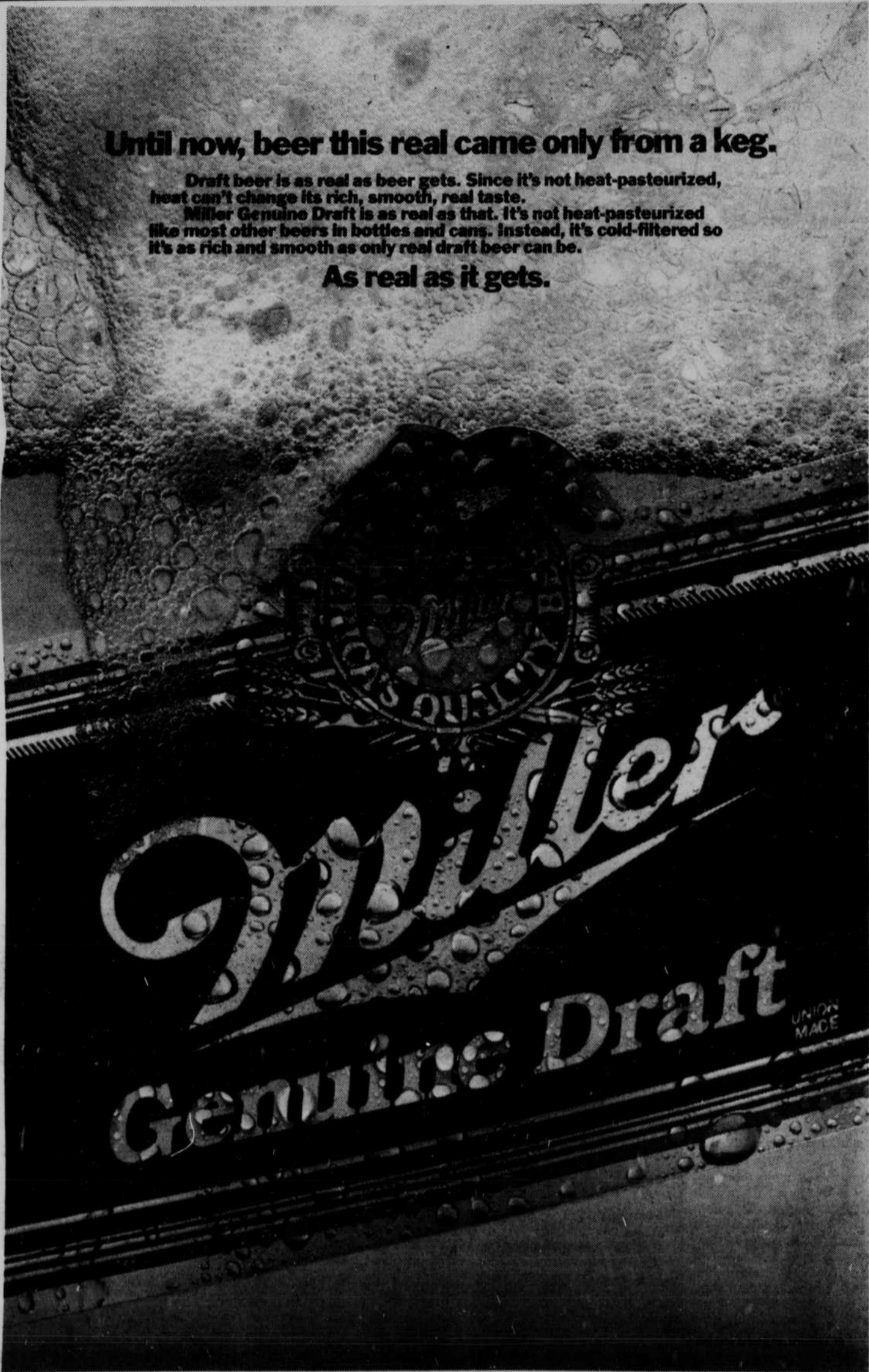
Oklahoma State coach Pat Jones said Nebraska is also a good football team.

"It looks to me like a typical, talented, well-coached Nebraska team," Jones said. "They always look the same to me. This group seems to be no exception. It's a very complete football team — typical Nebraska."

That this will be Oklahoma State's first televised game of the season won't be a factor, Gundy

said. "Once the game gets started, I really won't notice whether the game is on TV or not," he said.

Oklahoma State has no one out with injuries, and the Huskers' lone loss is senior wingback Von Sheppard. Sheppard is expected to be out for the year after suffering a leg injury against South Carolina.



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