

# Allen dreams of Cornhusker championship

Oklahoma is ranked No. 1 in the country, and they should be ranked No. 1. But Nebraska should be ranked No. 1, too.

There should be a two-way tie for No. 1. Neither team has shown

**Bill Allen**



that it deserves to be ranked anywhere lower than the top.

Yes, I'm saying something positive about Big Red. People are always assuming that I don't like the Cornhuskers simply because I write columns about the problems in college athletics.

I do like football, especially good football. And Nebraska is playing great football this year.

I don't always like the Nebraska fans. I am the type of person who would cheer the Huskers on if they were a 6-6 team just the same as I would cheer on the 11-1 teams. I sometimes don't get that feeling from Nebraska fans. The emphasis seems to be on winning. Many times after an early Nebraska loss it seems the whole state adopts the attitude of waiting for next year, instead of the next game.

Nebraska fans expect the Cornhuskers to win, which is fine. But

when they lose, it seems it is always someone else's fault. Rarely do they admit that the Huskers were beaten. There's nothing shameful about the Huskers being beaten by a better team, if they did their best.

Losing is shameful because it implies that you didn't do your best.

This year's Nebraska team is not a loser. They might get beaten on Nov. 21, but they won't lose.

All year long this team has shown character that I haven't seen in my 10 years of following Nebraska football.

They've been down, and they've dug deeper and come back.

They've been ahead, and they've continued to play their game without "rubbing it in."

Offensively, this year's squad is not as explosive or talented as the 1983 team with Mike Rozier, Turner Gill and Irving Fryar. Defensively, they're probably not as good as last year's squad, even though Osborne has said this is his best defensive squad ever.

But as a team, they are probably better than either of those squads.

People look at the final scores this year and maybe wonder about that, but there is a difference this year.

Nebraska is playing a "real" schedule. They didn't fill the non-conference schedule with future "scab" teams. They played future pros.

So far this year the Huskers have

played four teams ranked in the top 20 and beaten them all.

In the case of Oklahoma State, the Huskers beat a team that was gaining increased national attention. The Huskers handled them easily, making a good team look mediocre and making themselves look good enough to be ranked No. 1.

Against South Carolina, Nebraska fell behind late in the game and then pulled it out.

That shows character. It's the sign of a championship-caliber team.

If the Huskers lose on Nov. 21, it will be because they play another great team and were beaten.

And they might get beaten, but they won't lose. This team has shown that they are not losers.

I was really excited about that '83 team and still feel that should have been Osborne's first national-championship team. This year's squad is not as flashy, but they are equally exciting.

The other night I even had this weird dream about the team.

As always, the foundation of the Nebraska offense is the offensive line — the big guys up front who get little of the credit after a game, but consistently win the national trophies when the season is over.

This year's line is no exception. There might not be a Dave Rimginton or a Dean Steinkuhler out there, but a national telecaster said Satur-

day that Osborne may consider this his best line ever.

But, of course, they say that every year.

Anyway, in my dream, Daily Nebraskan sports editor Jeff Apel and I were lined up across the line from big Andy Keeler, the Husker left guard whom I've known for a couple of years.

I have no idea why we were lined up across from Keeler. Apel weighs about 120 pounds, and I'm extremely allergic to pain. Keeler was decked out in full uniform, including pads and helmet.

Steve Taylor was playing quarterback, and Osborne was standing off to the side, looking on.

The ball was snapped, and Keeler flattened Apel and me as if we weren't there. But he was just kidding around. He didn't really want to hurt us.

On the next down, I had a plan. I whispered it to Apel. When the ball was snapped, Apel and I waited for Keeler to get close, then we both rolled over on the ground in opposite directions and Keeler fell flat on his face between us. I got up and jumped over the line and sacked Taylor.

Yes, I sacked him. It is my dream, after all.

Osborne chuckled and told Keeler not to let that happen again.

Keeler was mad. Apel and I lined up across from him again. Keeler's eyes were glazed and his jaw was set.

"Bill," Apel said, "why am I in your dream?"

"Shut up," I said. "I'm trying to think."

"Beginner's luck," Apel said. "The last time you completed a thought, I was still in high school."

And he wonders why he's here. I decided to try to placate Keeler.

"Hey, Andy," I said. "After this friendly little scrimmage, why don't we go out for a beer."

"Great idea," he said. "And you can drink yours through a straw since your jaw will be wired shut. And you better bring someone along to hold the beer for you, because both your arms will be in casts. And after all that beer you better bring a bed pan, because you won't be able to get out of bed. And —"

"Jeff," I said, "I think he's talking to you."

The ball was snapped and I woke up, sweating.

I sure hope Apel woke up, too, because Keeler would have killed him.

Nebraska will play Oklahoma Nov. 21 for the national championship. The way things are shaping up, the winner of that game will play Miami in the Orange Bowl.

Oklahoma's only losses the last two years have been to Miami. There won't be a third.

And we all know about Miami and Nebraska . . .

## Three to sit out

Nebraska football coach Tom Osborne said Thursday that split end Rod Smith and defensive linemen Neil Smith and Lawrence Pete will not play against Kansas State Saturday.

Osborne said Rod Smith and Pete are recovering from injuries suffered in the Huskers' 35-0 victory over Oklahoma State last week. Rod Smith is being sidelined with sore ribs, and Pete is suffering from an ankle injury.

Osborne said defensive tackle Lee Jones is also nursing a sore ankle but will play.

Osborne said Neil Smith has been suspended from Saturday's game because he pleaded guilty on Wednesday to slashing tires on police cars.

## TOYOTA LEADERSHIP AWARD

### THE SPIRIT OF LEADERSHIP.



**JOHN McCORMICK—UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA**

Toyota honors John McCormick, offensive guard of the Cornhuskers, as recipient of the Toyota Leadership Award for outstanding leadership on the playing field, in the classroom and in the community.

John McCormick is awarded the Toyota Leadership Plaque and the University of Nebraska receives a \$1,000 contribution to its general scholarship fund.

As a leader in automotive quality and performance, Toyota proudly recognizes and applauds student leaders like John McCormick for their extra effort on and off the field.

**TOYOTA QUALITY**  
WHO COULD ASK FOR ANYTHING MORE!

TOP OFF  
Your  
Halloween  
Costume

Halloween is just around the corner and it's time to start thinking of costume ideas. Stop in at the House of Wigs with your wildest costume idea and we'll help you top it off with that perfect wig. We have a large assortment of rental wigs at reasonable prices, so visit us to find the wig that expresses the true you in your Halloween Haunting.

**HOUSE OF WIGS**  
1422 "O" Street  
476-1004

