

Sports

Big game sparks NU-OU war of words

By Tim Hartmann
Senior Reporter

On Saturday 365 days worth of questions will be answered in three hours on the football field.

At 2:30 p.m., 9-0, No. 1-ranked Nebraska and Oklahoma, 10-0 and ranked No. 2, will play in Memorial Stadium. The game will be televised nationally by CBS.

At stake is the No. 1 ranking in the country, the Big Eight Championship, a trip to the Orange Bowl and a victory in the war of the words.

"It's kind of been like ever since that game last year (a 20-17 Oklahoma victory) it's been 360 days worth of talking so far," Oklahoma linebacker Dante Jones said. "At the end of the week, the talking is going to stop. It comes down to whoever plays best."

On Oklahoma's bulletin board are several quotes from Nebraska players, including this one from quarterback

Steve Taylor: "The flat-out truth is, Oklahoma can't play with us. They are not good enough. Let me tell you, it might not even be close. And I mean that."

Taylor said the quote is accurate. "I did say that," Taylor said. "I don't regret it. That's the way I feel. I don't want people to take it out of context and think that I'm being too arrogant or too cocky, but I feel that we're a much better team than Oklahoma is."

Oklahoma senior halfback Patrick Collins said Taylor is wrong.

"We know we are the better team and so do they," Collins said.

Nebraska defensive end Broderick Thomas said Oklahoma players are threatening Taylor. He said the Sooners will pay for that on the field.

"They're sending death threats to Steve," Thomas said. "It's going to be fun. We're going to see who's a man and who's not."

Other questions to be answered Saturday include: Can Oklahoma, which leads the country in total defense, stop Nebraska, the nation's total offense leader? Can Nebraska, the second-best team in the nation in stopping the run, contain Oklahoma's wishbone? The Sooners lead the nation in rushing with an average of 429.8 yards a game.

Thomas said the Huskers have the top defense in the country. He said the only reason the Sooners are ahead of them in total defense is because they have played an easier schedule.

"We're just waiting on Saturday, and we'll show them the best team in America," Thomas said.

Oklahoma will be without starting quarterback Jamelle Holieway, who tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his knee. Fullback Lydell Carr is doubtful for the game because of a

knee strain.

Nebraska coach Tom Osborne said the most important question Saturday might be how Holieway's replacement, freshman Charles Thompson, performs.

Thompson has rushed for 605 yards on 105 carries this season. He also has completed 11 of 28 passes for 207 yards and seven touchdowns.

Nebraska wingback Dana Brinson is questionable because of a back spasm. Husker defensive tackle Neil Smith has been slowed by a sprained ankle, but is expected to play.

Osborne said Oklahoma is a powerful team. He said he was impressed by the Sooners' defense, which has given up an average of 7.5 points and 205.4 total yards per game.

"You've got to be somewhat concerned about moving the ball," Osborne said. "I think that will be a big factor in the ball game—whether or not we're able to crack their de-

fense at all."

Oklahoma coach Barry Switzer said Nebraska, which has averaged 43.6 points per game this season, is also an excellent team.

"It is a typical Tom Osborne-coached team," Switzer said. "Steve Taylor has had a great season, and his ability to throw makes the running game even more dangerous. Defensively they may be faster than in the past, and they are, as always, a physical, dominating unit. I think whoever wins the fourth quarter will probably win the game."

Switzer said his team is looking forward to the game, which has been dubbed "The Game of the Century II." The original "Game of the Century" was a 35-31 Nebraska victory over Oklahoma in 1971.

"I think we all look forward to being a part of a game like this," Switzer said. "That's why our players come to Oklahoma."

Husker quarterback recalls '71 game; predicts Nebraska victory over OU

By Mark Derowitsch
Senior Reporter

It was hailed as "The Game of the Century." On Thanksgiving Day, 1971, No. 1-ranked Nebraska defeated No. 2-ranked Oklahoma 35-31 to give the Cornhuskers an Orange Bowl berth.

Then-Nebraska quarterback Jerry Tagge led the Huskers to the victory by engineering a 74-yard drive late in the fourth quarter at Owen Field in Norman, Okla.

Tagge said his first memory of the Nebraska-Oklahoma game is a first-quarter punt return by Johnny Rodgers. Rodgers gave the Huskers a 7-0 lead when he returned a punt 72 yards for a touchdown.

"It was the beginning of the game and it was an exciting play," Tagge said.

Tagge, now sales manager at Business Interiors and Design, Inc., in Omaha, said Nebraska was a fast-



Tagge

starting team.

"We came out very cold," Tagge said. "But that day, we just kept getting better as the game progressed. By the fourth quarter, our confidence was very strong."

The Sooners rallied to a 31-28 lead with 7:10 left in the game. But Nebraska running back Jeff Kinney capped what proved to be the game's winning drive when he scored on a 2-yard run with 1:38 remaining.

Tagge said the Huskers had been confident of their chances of beating Oklahoma.

"It was a big game, but we thought we had the talent to win," Tagge said. "In a game of that magnitude, where the game's played at is thrown out."

The win gave Nebraska the right to face Alabama in the 1972 Orange Bowl. Tagge said the Huskers did not take Alabama lightly.

"At that point in time, we had one more thing to prove," Tagge said. "But we didn't think Alabama was as strong as Oklahoma was."

Tagge said he remembers the media hype surrounding the Oklahoma game.

"It's come to a point where Ne-

braska-Oklahoma is the game," Tagge said. "The total preparation is: 'Can we beat Oklahoma?'"

"When we started out, it wasn't bad. But it got bigger and bigger."

But the hype was fun, he said, because "The Game of the Century" ended in the Huskers' first national championship.

Tagge said the 1987 Nebraska-Oklahoma game is similar to 1971's because the teams are ranked No. 1 and 2.

"It kind of matches it stride for stride," Tagge said. "It was set up so perfectly, but the injuries to (Sooner fullback Lydell) Carr and (quarterback Jamelle) Holieway has taken some of the sting out of it. But this game is for the national championship."

Tagge said it's hard to compare this year's team with the one in 1971.

"During our time, we were a very good team," Tagge said. "We had a lot of weapons on offense. But the ability of the athletes now is different."

Tagge said he thinks the Huskers will defeat Oklahoma 35-15 Saturday.

Thomas says he knows who will win

By Tim Hartmann
Senior Reporter

Since Tom Osborne became Nebraska football coach in 1973, Oklahoma has defeated the Cornhuskers 11 of 15 times the two teams have played.

Eight of the games in the series have been decided by a touchdown or less, with Oklahoma winning five of those contests. They include:

- In 1979 Nebraska led the Sooners 7-3 at halftime, but ended up losing 17-14.

- In 1980 Nebraska was ahead 17-14 in the fourth quarter, but lost 21-17 when Buster Rhymes scored on a 1-yard touchdown run with 56 seconds left.

- Last season the Huskers were ahead 17-7 in the fourth quarter, but ended up losing when Oklahoma scored three times in the final 11 minutes to win 20-17.

It might seem Oklahoma has a magical hold on Nebraska, but defensive end Broderick Thomas said there will be no fourth-quarter heroics by Oklahoma this year.

The No. 1-ranked Huskers will face No. 2-ranked Oklahoma in a nationally televised game Saturday at 2:30 p.m. at Memorial Stadium.

"Houdini is not around in our house," Thomas said. "There's not

going to be any fourth-quarter magic around here next week.

"We're going to take care of business."

Nebraska enters the game as a four-point favorite, but Thomas said there is "no comparison" between the two teams.

Thomas said Oklahoma is good, but Nebraska is a step beyond that. The Huskers have the best defense in

'Houdini is not around in our house. There's not going to be any fourth-quarter magic around here next week. We're going to take care of business.'

—Thomas

the country along with a potent offense, he said.

Thomas has played in two Oklahoma-Nebraska games, and the Huskers lost both. The Sooners defeated Nebraska 20-17 last season when Tim Lasher kicked a 31-yard field goal with six seconds remain-

ing. Oklahoma defeated the Huskers 27-7 in 1985.

Thomas said he plans to end Oklahoma's winning streak this season.

"I don't think about losing because it's not going to happen," Thomas said. "You only think about those things when it's a possibility."

Oklahoma embarrassed Nebraska the last two seasons, Thomas said, and that has caused him to focus on this game. He said he has been so anxious to play the Sooners that he could barely eat this week.

Thomas said he is looking forward to facing Oklahoma All-America tight end Keith Jackson.

Jackson said earlier this week that Thomas has a "big mouth" and should "shut up." He also said he blocks tougher defensive ends in practice.

"I really think he meant that as a joke," Thomas said. "He doesn't really mean that. I think he'd rather go against two of his defensive ends rather than go against me."

"He'll be here Saturday, and we'll see who does the shutting up."

Thomas has 54 tackles this season, which is second on the team to linebacker Steve Forch's 58. Thomas also has five quarterback sacks, two

See THOMAS on 7



Ward Williams/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska's Pete Manning battles Czechoslovakia's Jan Svoboda, as Jeff Rekeweg and Vlastimil Havlik look on. Nebraska lost the exhibition game 69-66.

Czechs' victory spoiled as cash, clothes taken

By Kent Endacott
Staff Reporter

Thieves broke into the Czechoslovakia Nationals' locker room while the team was defeating the Nebraska basketball team 69-66 Thursday night in an exhibition game at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Lt. Ken Cauble of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Police said two warm-up suits, a warm-up jacket and an estimated \$200 in cash were stolen.

The game was also marred as Nebraska struggled from the field by hitting 25 of 77 shots.

Nebraska basketball coach Danny Nee said he was disappointed with his team's play.

"We're raw material right now and it's gonna take a while to blend them together," Nee said.

Czech coach Pavel Petera said the Huskers were the worst U.S. college team he has faced in his 10-team American tour.

"They play very tough on defense," Petera said. "Offensively, they are the poorest because they have no outside shooting and only an inside game. It is very hard for a team like that to play against a zone defense when they only go inside."

"These kids have the ability, but to put the chemistry together is difficult," Nee said. "We're just an inexperienced basketball team."

Peter Manning led both teams with 19 points and eight rebounds.