

Columnist picks NU

Kermit the Frog — that loud-mouthed, croaking amphibian — should quit bellyachin' about how it ain't easy being green.

It ain't any picnic forecasting football games, either. Especially when it's Nebraska and Oklahoma.

But it'll be easier this year. That's because Oklahoma has been unusually predictable this year. Never have the Sooners been so consistently . . . uh, adequate.

If "adequate" seems an inappropriate label to pin on a lumbering giant that has won 31 straight conference games, consider the Sooners repeated mediocrity.

They squeaked past Colorado, were out-yarded by Missouri and were just plain lucky to beat Oklahoma State.



Why the lack of luster? Oklahoma is minus its usual dose of big names to make big plays.

On defense, the Sooners tackle well and pursue like any pack of rabid canines. But stats show the Sooners to be less-than-stingy — especially against the pass.

Offensively, Oklahoma has firepower. The 'bone's backs are fast and strong. And they run behind the finest kitchen appliances this side of the Nebraska Furniture Mart.

The Sooners will find a weak spot, then attack it repeatedly. Barry Switzer is the Sam Donaldson of coaching, finding a fault and exploiting it mercilessly.

Nebraska's weak link is the defensive interior. It's soft (Mr. Whipple confused it with Charmin the other day).

Oklahoma, like Colorado, will send its fullback up the gut. Guys like Lawrence Pete, Willie Griffin, Kent Wells and Paul Brungardt will have had finer hours.

Linebacker play could be key. Remember that LeRoy Etienne doesn't do ads for Saran Wrap. Etienne hits like a semi rollin' down I-29, but often fails to wrap up his prey.

The rest of the defense is solid. The secondary is tough and the outside backers are mobile enough to throw a wrench in the bone.

Past years saw Nebraska defensive coaches preaching the gospel of bending without breaking. Early this year, that philosophy was scrapped.

The defense was breaking — as brittle as an old bitty's bones. But Nebraska's defense has shown improvement.

Nebraska's offense is underrated. Perhaps we've been spoiled by the ghosts of the 1983 scoring explosion.

I-back Ken Clark is peaking. At times, his offensive line has been as sharp as a lump of lukewarm Parkay. But they've shown signs of brilliance, too. You can bet Bob Sledge and friends will pack their game faces for Norman.

But this is a game that hinges on variables. One variable is the forward pass. With Charles Thompson, Oklahoma is one-dimensional.

See THOMAS on 10

NU recruiter: Talent is OU magic

By Mark Derowitsch
Senior Reporter

The only magic the Oklahoma football team has is talent, Nebraska on-campus recruiter Dave Gillespie said.

Gillespie, speaking Monday at the Extra Point Luncheon at Dillard's Department Store, said all the talk about "Sooner Magic" is just that — talk.

"There's been a lot of talk about Sooner Magic," Gillespie said. "I don't think there's any magic involved in Oklahoma games. It has to do with players."

Gillespie said nothing matters except the players when Nebraska meets Oklahoma. The two teams will play for the Big Eight championship and an Orange Bowl berth Saturday at 2:40 p.m. at Memorial Stadium in Norman, Okla.

"Throw out the home field, throw out the comparative scores, throw out

the motivation and the injuries," Gillespie said. "When you have two highly-motivated teams on the field, you'll see a great football game. Usually, when those types of teams play, whoever has the best talent wins."

Gillespie said a different emphasis is usually placed on the Oklahoma-Nebraska game. He said the reason for it is because the two teams play for the Big Eight championship almost every year.

"In general, people lose perspective of what football is all about when this game comes up," Gillespie said. "The best football team will win this football game."

If Nebraska, 10-1 overall and 6-0 in the Big Eight, defeats the Sooners, the Cornhuskers will win the Big Eight title for the first time since 1983. Gillespie said that's what the team have been shooting for all season.

"We're in the position we want to be in," Gillespie said. "At the beginning of the year, we wanted to be in a position to win the Big Eight championship."

But Gillespie said the game's outcome won't have any impact on the 1989 recruiting class.

"They don't remember who won the past games," Gillespie said. "They just remember that Nebraska and Oklahoma have been involved in some great games in the past."

As of right now, the Huskers are having a great year recruiting, Gillespie said. He said a lot of the nation's best high school players have included Nebraska on the lists of schools that they are considering.

"We're among the top five schools of more great players than we've ever been before," Gillespie said. "Of course, there's a lot of work until signing date to make sure we get some of these players."

NOTES:

• Former Nebraska reserve quarterback Clete Blakeman was named the 1988 winner of the Bobby Reynolds Memorial Scholarship at the Extra Point Luncheon.

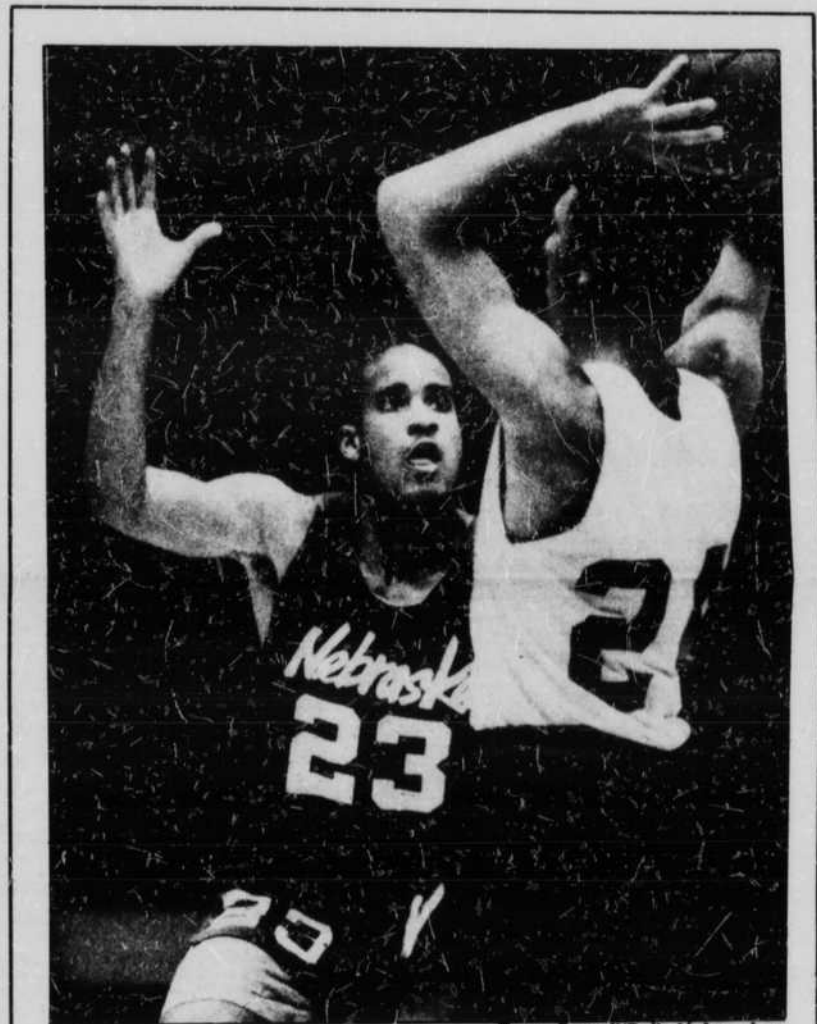
Blakeman, who is a freshman at the UNL College of Law, is the second recipient of the award. Former Husker split end Robb Schnitzler of Battle Creek won the first scholarship in 1987.

The scholarship was established by the family and friends of Reynolds, a former Nebraska All-America performer in 1950. It is awarded to a male athlete who has lettered and who is a student enrolled or accepted for enrollment to graduate college at Nebraska.

Blakeman, who was a back-up to Steve Taylor in 1987 and 1986, scored seven touchdowns and passed for another seven during his Husker career.

W L T		W L T		Football Big Eight Standings
CONFERENCE	6 0 0	Nebraska	10 1 0	
	6 0 0	Oklahoma	9 1 0	
	4 2 0	Oklahoma St	7 2 0	
	3 3 0	Colorado	7 3 0	
	3 3 0	Iowa St	5 5 0	
	1 5 0	Missouri	2 7 1	
	1 5 0	Kansas	1 9 0	
	0 6 0	Kansas St	0 10 0	

John Bruce/Daily Nebraskan



Doug Carroll/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska guard Clifford Scales (23) plays defense during a recent practice at the Bob Devaney Sports Center. Scales' jersey number is the same as his favorite National Basketball Association player — Chicago Bulls' guard Michael Jordan.

Scales awaits season

By Nick Hodge
Staff Reporter

There's no substitute for experience. Just ask Nebraska basketball player Clifford Scales.

Scales, a sophomore guard for coach Danny Nee's Cornhuskers, said he's anxious to get into the thick of the Huskers' schedule because he feels more relaxed and comfortable in a Husker uniform than he felt last season.

"I have that first year of experience under my belt and I feel real good about myself," Scales said.

Scales opened the 1988-89 season last Thursday by scoring 10 points, grabbing a rebound and dishing out five assists in 23 minutes during Nebraska's 104-102 loss to Athletics in Action at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Scales was the lone Husker to

See EXPERIENCE on 10

Osborne says Huskers healthy for Sooners game

By Nick Hodge
Staff Reporter

Barring any serious injuries this week in practice, the Nebraska Cornhuskers appear healthy for their game against Oklahoma, Husker coach Tom Osborne said.

The only Nebraska player to sit out Monday's sweat clothes and helmet workout at Memorial Stadium was running back Ken Clark, Osborne said. Clark has been bothered by an ankle injury throughout much of the season but should be available Saturday, Osborne said.

"It's kind of Ken's normal Monday deal," Osborne said. "I think his ankle's a little sore and I also think he had a charlie horse. I hope he isn't too bad."

Clark, a 5-foot-9 200-pound junior from Omaha, gained 165 yards on 28 attempts and scored the game's only touchdown in the Huskers' 7-0 win against Colorado Saturday at Memorial Stadium. He has rushed for a team-leading 1,330 yards and 12 touchdowns heading into Nebraska's clash with the Sooners at Norman, Okla.

Osborne said he expects Clark to return to practice today or Wednesday.

Osborne said he's pleased by the relatively few number of injuries to the Huskers this year. Except for serious injuries to fullback Sam Schmidt and I-back Terry Rodgers, Nebraska has escaped serious injuries this year, Osborne said.

*Schmidt, a 6-foot-1, 230-pound junior from Wood River, has not

played since he suffered a severe ankle injury in the Huskers' 41-28 loss to UCLA Sept. 10. Schmidt had picked up 38 yards on nine carries and scored a touchdown before his injury.

Rodgers, a 5-foot-7, 170-pound sophomore from National City, Calif., suffered a season-ending knee injury during an Oct. 3 practice. In five games, Rodgers had run the ball 43 times for 259 yards and three touchdowns in a backup role.

'The last two or three weeks have been pretty good for us. They have been pretty physical ballgames.'

— Osborne

Osborne said the Husker injury situation pleases him because Nebraska has had three games in a row that could have resulted in serious injuries.

"The last two or three weeks have been pretty good for us," he said. "They have been pretty physical ball games. The Colorado game was, Missouri was very physical and Iowa State was under pretty bad playing conditions. We're pleased we're in as good a shape as we are."

Nebraska defeated Missouri 26-18 in Lincoln Oct. 29. Snow and 40 mph wind gusts greeted Nebraska at Ames, Iowa when the Huskers beat Iowa State 51-16 Nov. 5.

Pettit says defeating KU is imperative

By Jeff Apel
Senior Reporter

Two seniors will make what could be their final home appearances tonight when the Nebraska volleyball team faces Kansas at the NU Coliseum.

Nebraska volleyball coach Terry Pettit said the match is important because it might be the last time senior setter Lori Endicott and outside hitter Angie Millikin play before a home crowd. The Kansas match is the last regular-season, home match on

Nebraska's schedule, but the Cornhuskers may gain an additional match at the NU Coliseum if regional competition is staged in Lincoln.

Pettit said it is important that a good crowd attend the match so it can show its appreciation for the accomplishments of Endicott and Millikin. Endicott is a pre-season All-America selection who is described by Pettit as the top collegiate setter in the country. Millikin is a four-year letter winner who has been the leader of the "Mad Dogs" — a name given to the

Husker reserves.

The match, which features free admission for all University of Nebraska-Lincoln students who present their I.D.'s, begins at 7:30 p.m.

"It will be an important match for us," Pettit said. "It will be the seniors last match, so I'm sure it will be very important for them."

Millikin said she can't believe her Nebraska volleyball career — one she said went by too fast — is coming to a close.

"When I was a freshman, I thought there was no way I could get through

four years," Millikin said. "Now I can't believe it's almost over. It's kind of sad."

Millikin said Nebraska is expecting a tough match from Kansas. She said Karen Dahlgren-Schonewise, a former Nebraska All-America who is the Jayhawks' assistant coach, creates immediate concerns because of her competitive philosophy.

"With Karen's coaching philosophy, she's not going to let them lay down," Millikin said. "I don't think it's going to be that way."