

Ver Plank says Sooners' wishbone tough to check

By Mark Derowitsch
Senior Reporter

In order to stop Oklahoma's wishbone, a defense must shut down three players.

Unfortunately, Nebraska football graduate assistant George Ver Plank said those three players are the toughest to stop.

"Oklahoma is always tough, quick and powerful," said Ver Plank, who scouted Oklahoma's 16-7 win against Missouri last Saturday. "All we have to do is stop their quarterback, fullback and halfback."

Ver Plank said the Cornhuskers, 10-1 overall and 6-0 in the Big Eight, might see two Oklahoma quarterbacks. The starter has been Charles Thompson and he's backed up by former-starter Jamelle Holieway.

Thompson, a sophomore from Lawton, Okla., has rushed for 795 yards this season — an average of 79.5 yards per game.

Holieway, a senior from Carson, Calif., has gained 167 yards on the ground in a limited role. He was the Sooners' starter last season until a knee injury sidelined him a week before Oklahoma's 17-7 win against Nebraska.

"Thompson played the whole game against Missouri," Ver Plank said. "Holieway watched it from the sidelines. He didn't even take a snap."

Thompson has completed 14 of 41 passes for 153 yards and two touchdowns, while Holieway has 27 com-

pletions.

"They don't have a real sophisticated passing attack," Ver Plank said. "But they throw the ball when they have to."

At halfback, the Sooners are led by freshman Mike Gaddis. Gaddis has rushed for 471 yards on 68 carries and has caught two passes for 50 yards.

"Gaddis is a real good running back and they like to throw the ball to him coming out of the backfield," Ver Plank said.

OPPOSITION PREVIEW

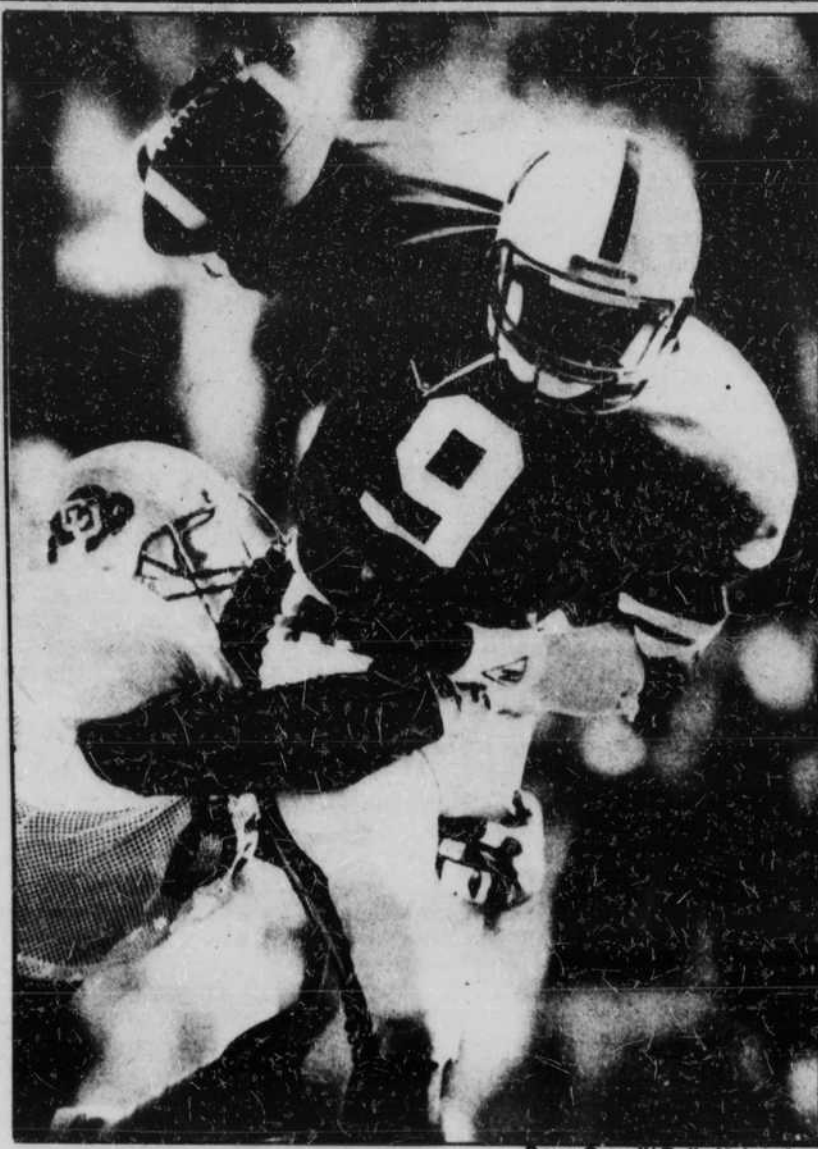
Leon Perry and Rotnei Anderson are Oklahoma's top two fullbacks. Perry, who redshirted last season, has gained 547 yards on 108 carries for the season while Anderson has rushed for 277 yards.

Ver Plank said the biggest part of stopping the wishbone is stopping the fullback trap. He said Husker strong-side linebacker LeRoy Etienne will key in on the fullbacks.

"It's just a matter of getting to the fullback and stopping him," Ver Plank said. "We have one (linebacker) that can keep up with him."

The Sooners' defense, Ver Plank said, is not as strong as it was a year ago. Oklahoma has four newcomers

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Nebraska's Steve Taylor is brought down by a Colorado player during last Saturday's game.

Doug Carroll/Daily Nebraskan

Oranges tempt NU quarterback

By Mark Derowitsch
Senior Reporter

If Oklahoma wins the Big Eight championship Saturday and decides it doesn't want to play Miami (Fla.) again in the Orange Bowl, there's at least one Nebraska player who wouldn't mind taking the Sooners' place.

Nebraska quarterback Steve Taylor said it doesn't matter how he gets to the Orange Bowl, just as long as he gets there.

Last week, Oklahoma coach Barry Switzer said the Sooners would rather not play Miami in the Orange Bowl if they win the Big Eight title. Last season, Miami defeated the Sooners 20-14 for the national title in Miami.

"If they don't want to play Miami, we will," Taylor said.

But to play Miami, Nebraska must first defeat Oklahoma Saturday, and Taylor said he's confident of beating the Sooners. Kickoff for the game is scheduled for 2:40 p.m. at Memorial Stadium in Norman, Okla.

"We'll use the same approach we've been taking for the last four years," Taylor said. "I think it'll come down to the fourth quarter. I think we're ready and I think Oklahoma is ready, too. It'll be a good game."

Taylor, a senior from Fresno, Calif., has an 0-2 record as a starter against the Sooners, but a 30-5 record against all opponents. In addition to the Oklahoma losses, Nebraska has lost to UCLA, Florida State and Colo-

See TAYLOR on 17

Wrestlers vie for Big Eight dual victory

By Steve Sipple
Senior Editor

An injury-plagued Nebraska wrestling team will go after its first Big Eight dual victory in more than a year tonight when it faces Missouri in Columbia, Mo.

The match will begin at 7:30 p.m. in Hearnes Arena.

Nebraska was 0-3-1 in the conference last year, including a 18-13 loss to the Tigers. The Cornhuskers will try to avenge that loss without the help of two starters — 134-pound sophomore Dave Droegemueller and 142-

pound senior Mike Hemann. Droegemueller suffered a twisted ankle and Hemann injured his knee during practice Monday at the Bob Devaney Sports Center, Husker coach Tim Neumann said.

To compensate for those losses, Neumann said he will insert into the Huskers' lineup junior Jim Sanchez at 118 pounds and freshman Darren Droegemueller at 142 pounds. Senior starter Terry Cook will move from 118 pounds to 126 pounds and sophomore starter Jason Kelber will switch from 126 to 134.

Neumann said he's confident San-

chez and the younger Droegemueller will come through for the Huskers, who are ranked No. 18 by Amateur Wrestling News magazine.

He said Sanchez wrestled well last Saturday during the Wyoming Cowboy Open in Laramie, Wyo. Sanchez recorded a 6-2 record at the meet at 118 pounds.

"He really wrestled well," Neumann said. "I feel really confident about Jimmy."

Droegemueller, who's the younger brother of Dave, finished second in Laramie at 142 pounds.

"He did a super job," Neumann

said. Despite last season's upset loss to Missouri, Neumann said revenge won't be on his team's mind tonight.

"It won't, simply because it's such an individual sport," he said. "We'll just see how we match up. If we can win six or seven individual matches, the team score will take care of itself."

Neumann said the dual against unranked Missouri is important because it will help the Huskers prepare for the Big Eight tournament, which will be held March 5 in Ames, Iowa.

"We'll see people that we'll see at the Big Eight tournament," he said.

"There's several people we're trying to get seeded 1st or 2nd at the Big Eight tournament."

Neumann said Nebraska's loss to Missouri last season was misleading since he held out two of his top wrestlers for disciplinary reasons. The Huskers were experiencing attitude problems before the dual, he said. He said he thought that holding the wrestlers out would help his team in the long run.

"This year, everybody's attitude is good and we're coming off a great

See WRESTLE on 16

Valladao will miss OU game

By Nick Hodge
Staff Reporter

Nebraska defensive tackle Ray Valladao will miss the Cornhuskers' game Saturday against Oklahoma because of a knee injury he suffered in Tuesday's practice, Husker coach Tom Osborne said Wednesday.

Osborne said Valladao's injury turned out worse than expected and will require arthroscopic surgery to discover the extent of the injury.

"Valladao apparently hurt himself fairly seriously and they'll (doctors) probably scope him over the weekend. It may be a major deal and it may not," Osborne said.

Valladao, a 6-foot-3, 255-pound junior from Atwater, Calif., had made four tackles while playing at the No. 3 left defensive tackle position for most of the season.

Osborne said he was also concerned about the thigh injury No. 2 center Jeff Anderson suffered in Tuesday's workout. Anderson returned to Wednesday's practice that was held both at Memorial Stadium and the Cook Pavillion, Osborne said. He said Anderson was sore, but should be ready for the game Saturday against the Sooners at Norman, Okla.

Anderson, a 6-foot-4, 270-pound senior from Norfolk, is Nebraska's deep-snapper for extra points, field goals and punts.

NU or OU? Only time will tell

Huskers will evict OU

It was evident three weeks ago when Nebraska defeated Missouri 26-18 at Memorial Stadium — the Cornhuskers really are homeless.

Trailing 6-0 at halftime, the Nebraska fans booed the 7th-ranked Huskers as they were heading into the locker room. At that point, it became clear that "Our House" really did belong to Oklahoma.

Last season, the Sooners evicted Nebraska from "Our House" with a 17-7 victory. On the following Sunday last season, there was even a "For Sale" sign in front of Memorial Stadium. The Sooners apparently bought it.

Now, it's time for the Huskers to establish residency at Memorial Stadium, only this one is located in Norman, Okla.

Since Oklahoma owns "Our House" (a 4-1 record in Lincoln in the 1980s), it's only fitting for the Huskers to take over "Their House."

But in order to take over Norman's Memorial Stadium, the Huskers will have to do some evicting of their own. And the man for the job will be outside linebacker Broderick Thomas.

Thomas calls himself the Sand-

man because he puts people to sleep with his hard hits. He will prematurely tuck in Sooner quarterback Charles Thompson with one of his patented hits. This will force Oklahoma coach Barry Switzer to use one-time star Jamelle Holieway, who hasn't been that effective since his knee injury last season.



Mark Derowitsch

The wishbone is hardly extinct in the land of the Sooners, but Switzer is using the I-formation during some passing situations. It seems the vaunted Sooner option game is suffering through a sub-par season. But then again so is Nebraska's.

One thing the Huskers must stop is the fullback trap. Sophomore Rotnei Anderson rushed for 119

See DEROWITSCH on 16

'Sooner Magic' to rule

It is going to be difficult for even the biggest Oklahoma fans to rejoice after this year's annual thrashing of Nebraska.

While it is obvious the Sooners will continue their dominance over Nebraska, the pressing reality is that Oklahoma will get blown out by Miami in the Orange Bowl. That's right — the Big Eight's top two football teams are not up to par this season.

To borrow an often-heard expression, Oklahoma and Nebraska are down but not out. Both teams are down because they don't have the great players who once roamed the sidelines and imposed fear on the field. But Nebraska and Oklahoma still have enough players to stage an over-publicized, mismatched contest that Oklahoma will win 27-6.

Oklahoma will continue to dominate the Huskers this season for three reasons. The most obvious reason — one that was created by a season-long problem that shows no signs of being corrected — is the presence of Oklahoma fullbacks Rotnei Anderson and Leon Perry.

Anderson and Perry will burn Nebraska by running straight up the middle. Containing the middle has been too much to ask of the Huskers this season, as pleasant memories of opposing quarterbacks, running backs and whoever else wanted to gain massive chunks of yardage up the middle fill Oklahoma fans' dreams.



Jeff Apel

Nebraska's problems in the middle, which are kept from being an absolute disaster by the presence of middle guard Lawrence Pete, will be compounded by the strength of Oklahoma's offensive line. The strength of the Sooners' line lies in center Bob Latham and offensive guard Anthony Phillips, both of whom

See APEL on 16