

# Offensive unit performs well Wednesday

By Nick Hodge  
Senior Reporter

Nebraska's top offensive units turned in their best performances of the spring during a scrimmage Wednesday afternoon at Memorial Stadium.

Nebraska coach Tom Osborne said the offense's improvement can be traced to the fact that the Cornhuskers have not added anything new to their game plan for a week.

"Offensively, I think we executed well," Osborne said. "Maybe the best they have this year."

The No. 1 offense scored on its

first possession of the scrimmage on senior quarterback Gerry Gdowski's 11-yard touchdown run. Reserve wingback Mark Dowse then scored on a 7-yard run, and the final touchdown by the top units came with sophomore fullback Lance Lewis' 15-yard run.

Osborne said part of the offense's success was a combination of an improved offensive line and the absence of three top-unit defensive players. Defensive tackle Kent Wells, middle guard Mike Murray and inside linebacker Chris Caliendo all missed the scrimmage because they were on a class field trip.

While the offense has been concentrating on repetition, Osborne said the defense had continued to add new facets to its game plan.

"Defensively, right now, we're doing a lot of things -- looking at a lot of things," Osborne said. "That may have caused a little bit of a confusion factor."

"I think that may have caused a little bit of a learning problem."

Osborne said the Huskers are at that time during spring practice when injuries and lack of motivation tend to hinder the team's overall consistency.

"We're just kind of at a bad point in spring ball," Osborne said. "It's kind of the low point. It seems like in the middle of the third week, it still seems like a long time until the end. Next week, I think things start to look up because you start looking forward to the spring game. You start getting a few more guys healthy and a little more excited."

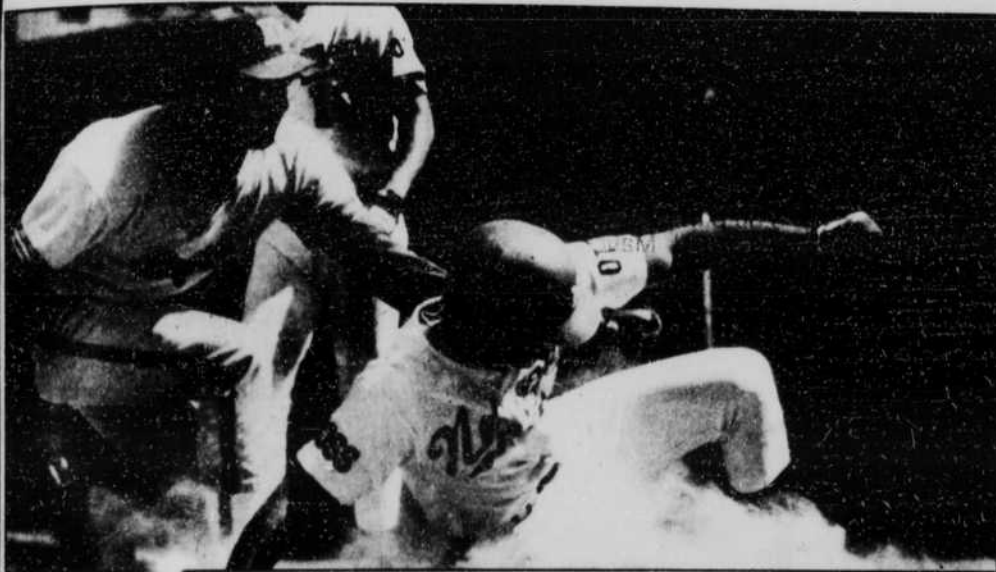
The Huskers opened spring practice April 3. The annual Red-White game on April 29 will conclude spring practice.

Osborne said he's pleased with how players have responded as final preparations continue.

"This is always a hard time, but I think they have done pretty well," Osborne said. "They've hung with it. Gave a pretty good effort."

Osborne said that trainers have decided to hold sophomore wingback Nate Turner out of the remainder of spring practice workouts because of a nagging quadriceps injury. Turner was battling senior Morgan Gregory for the top wingback position.

"I understand right now that Nate Turner is done for the spring," Osborne said. "I don't think he's hurt real badly, but he's got that pulled quadriceps and they just think he shouldn't try it again."



William Lauer/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska's Ken Sirak slides under the tag of Kearney State's Kyle Mabus.

## KSC pitching decides NU game

By Steve Sipple  
Staff Reporter

Kearney State scored nine runs Wednesday in a baseball game against Nebraska -- and lost by 12.

The Antelopes' offense showed up, but their pitchers walked 16 batters, including eight in the first two innings, in a 21-9 loss before 189 fans at Buck Beltzer Field.

"We really thought we could play with them," said Kearney State coach Guy Murray, whose team dropped to 14-24.

"Hell, we scored nine runs. That ought to be enough."

It was apparent that nine runs might not be enough after two innings, when Nebraska, 20-17, had parlayed eight walks and seven hits into 12 runs. Kearney State starter Paul Feist, whose record fell to 0-7, and Antelope reliever Kyle Mabus combined to walk five straight batters in the bottom of the first inning, helping Nebraska to a 7-2 lead.

Nebraska's Charlie Colon hit a two-run single and Ken Sirak added a run-scoring base hit during the inning, in which Feist failed to

get an out. Feist gave up four runs and four walks before Mabus entered.

Mabus completed two innings, giving up eight runs on seven hits and four walks. Mabus surrendered a two-run triple to Ken Ramos, who was 3-for-3 Wednesday, and a run-scoring triple to Shawn Buchanan in the second inning.

Nebraska coach John Sanders has seen pitching problems like Kearney State's before -- not too long ago, in fact. On March 21, the University of Nebraska at Omaha gave up 18 walks in a 14-1 Nebraska win.

"Things like that can happen when your pitchers have a bad day," said Sanders, whose team raised its home record to 15-5. "But you got to give our hitters credit. They showed discipline. That was good."

Nebraska finished with 13 hits, including freshman Frankie Jernigan's fifth home run of the season -- a three-run shot that gave Nebraska an 18-6 fourth-inning lead.

Jernigan's tied with Bobby Benjamin for the Huskers' home run lead.

Nebraska freshman left-hander Jason Abramavicius, 2-0, went three innings, giving up three runs on four hits.

## Next six games to be important for rank status of softball team

By Darran Fowler  
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska softball team has played 45 games this season, but none were as important as the next six will be for the Huskers.

In a period of four days, unranked Nebraska, 24-21, will play 10th-ranked Creighton, 17th-ranked Iowa State and top-ranked Oklahoma State.

"There is no doubt about it," Nebraska coach Ron Wolforth said. "This is the biggest weekend we will have all year. I think right now that these six games are the six most important that we will play the entire year, because if we do well we'll be ranked and more than likely get an at-large bid if we don't win the Big Eight (tournament)."

Nebraska opens its challenge today when it faces 32-12 Creighton in a doubleheader at the Nebraska Softball Complex. The games, which feature free admission for all University of Nebraska-Lincoln students who present their IDs, begin at 5:30 p.m.

The Huskers, 4-0 in the Big Eight, will play a pair of single games Saturday and Sunday against conference foes Iowa State and Oklahoma State at Jayhawk Field in Lawrence, Kan. Nebraska plays Oklahoma State, which is 33-2 and 2-0, at noon both days, followed by games with Iowa State, which is 26-11-1 and 0-2, at 2 p.m.

Wolforth said the games are especially important because the National Collegiate Division I Softball Committee's power ratings come out Monday. He said the games that fall directly on the weekend of the ratings have the biggest impact on the voters.

He also said if Nebraska cracks the top 20 this weekend, it will be one of the 20 teams selected for a regional berth for the College World Series.

"I think this is really crucial," he said, "because if we don't have a good showing then people will tend to forget how well we did against (19th-ranked) Florida State and (14th-ranked) Arizona State. If we do well, then

they'll say that's just the beginning of how well they're doing."

He said Nebraska cannot afford to lose more than two of the six games.

"Realistically we need to win four of six," Wolforth said. "I think that would be my goal. In my mind if we go 4-2, we'll be ranked in the top 15 and that's real important because there's only one ranking left."

Wolforth said he has not counted out winning the conference tournament, which would automatically put the Huskers in regionals. By beating Iowa State, Nebraska could be placed in a bracket opposite Oklahoma State in the tournament pairings.

He also said Nebraska will not have any problems getting psyched for rivals Oklahoma State and Creighton.

"To me the two key ballgames will be how we do against Iowa State," Wolforth said. "I think they're two clutch games because I think we're a slightly better ball club and we're playing better right now. Iowa State is a pure hitting ball club. They attack the ball and they play average defense."

He said beating Creighton will mean less pressure for Nebraska.

"To me, it starts with (tonight)," Wolforth said. "because if we win both then we only have to win two of the four that's left. Now if we go 0-2 or we split, the pressure builds and builds, and the harder it will become."

He said Nebraska and Oklahoma State are pretty even.

"I think out of those three ball clubs Oklahoma State has the best pitchers," Wolforth said. "I think Nebraska and Oklahoma State are the two best defensive teams. If you take a look at the entire year Nebraska is the least offensive as far as hitting of the three. If we hit like we're capable of hitting I think we're the second best hitting team."

Nebraska's chances of winning at least four games rests largely on two things, Wolforth said.

"We're gonna have to have decent pitching and swing the bats," he said.

## Knox will be waiting

# Columnist predicts larger-than-usual men as NFL picks

When the National Football League draft takes place Sunday and Monday, former Nebraska running back Tyreese Knox will be waiting for the phone to ring.



Knox, a hard-nosed runner who never got a fair chance throughout his Nebraska career, said he wants to fulfill a life-long dream by being selected in this year's draft. He said he will watch the draft with particular interest because it could determine his future.

Knox said he wants his future to be in football.

"It's just a situation where I don't want to work a 9 to 5 or an 8 to 4 job," Knox said. "I want to be able to set my own work schedule."

Knox said he is confident entering

the draft, which will be televised by ESPN. He said he has talked to the Atlanta Falcons and the Seattle Seahawks, two teams that could use a 5-foot-10, 215-pound back who averaged more than six yards per carry in his Nebraska career.

Knox said NFL scouts have told him that he could be selected anywhere from the seventh to the 12th round. But look for that prediction to fall by the wayside, as Knox will be the surprise pick of the draft.

That's right, the Chicago Bears will look past Nebraska's mistakes and draft Knox in the third round. The reason: There's a new move in the NFL to employ big, physical backs, and Knox fits that description perfectly.

With his muscular frame and his 4.5 speed in the 40, Knox could have the same type of impact next season as Lekey Woods, a former University of Nevada-Las Vegas back who pulverized would-be tacklers while playing for the Cincinnati Bengals last season.

"Everybody is getting a little big-

ger, so I think (my size) will be an advantage," Knox said. "There's a lot of big backs in the NFL."

***'It's just a situation where I don't want to work a 9 to 5 or an 8 to 4 job. I want to be able to set my own work schedule.'***

--Knox

Knox will be the second Nebraska player taken, trailing only All-American Broderick Thomas. Thomas will be drafted by Tampa Bay as the sixth pick in the first round, and will be joined by linebacker LeRoy Etienne, who will be selected by the Buccaneers in the seventh round.

The additional Nebraska players who will be drafted include wingback

Dana Brinson, who will be taken by Pittsburgh in the fifth round, cornerback Charles Fryar, who will be selected by the New York Giants in the sixth round, and middle guard Lawrence Pete, who will join Knox as a steal when he is selected by Detroit in the eighth round.

The mystery player from Nebraska's senior class is safety Tim Jackson, who impressed scouts with his tremendous athletic ability. Jackson is similar to UCLA quarterback Troy Aikman -- he could be selected in the early rounds or be ignored until later.

Aikman's status was made uncertain when the Dallas Cowboys' ownership changed hands. Dallas coach Jimmy Johnson wants to draft the quarterback he coached in college, Miami's Steve Walsh, while NFL scouts have tabbed Aikman as a franchise player.

When the draft begins on Sunday morning, look for the Cowboys to draft Aikman, and for Walsh to be selected as the second pick by Green Bay.

The third pick overall will be Oklahoma State running back Barry Sanders, who should help fill the void created when Billy Sims retired. Kansas City will then select Michigan State offensive tackle Tony Mandarich, followed by Atlanta's selection of Alabama linebacker Derrick Thomas, Tampa Bay's selection of Thomas and Pittsburgh's selection of Miami fullback Cleveland Gary.

The remaining players who will be selected among the first 10 are cornerback Deion Sanders by San Diego, defensive back Louis Oliver by Miami and wide receiver Derek Hill by Phoenix.

The one player who will not be selected in the first round is Oklahoma State wide receiver Hari Lee Dykes, who earned a professional-level salary throughout his collegiate career. Although it may sound like wishful thinking, it would be fantastic if NFL owners united and refused to give Dykes a chance.

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