

NU awaits tough shootout with Cowboys

By Chuck Green
Senior Reporter

Nebraska coach Tom Osborne isn't thrilled about his trip to Stillwater, Okla., on Saturday. He knows what's waiting for his No. 4-ranked Cornhuskers when they get there.

"Of the teams we've played to date, Oklahoma State is probably the best," he said. "We're going to need to play well to get the job done."

The shootout with the Cowboys, scheduled for 1:30 p.m. at Lewis Stadium, will give the Huskers a look at "probably the best quarterback in the Big Eight" in Mike Gundy.

Gundy, a senior from Midwest City, Okla., has completed 65 of 136 passes for 816 yards and four touchdowns this season, and has been inter-

cepted four times.

"He has a world of experience," Osborne said. "Nobody in our conference is as experienced as he is."

Osborne said that while Gundy has taken criticism from fans and the media in Oklahoma for not meeting some expectations, judgment of quarterbacks "depends on a lot of factors."

"The evaluation of quarterbacks is often unfair," he said. "He gets the credit when his team moves the ball, and takes the blame when the team loses. That's just because he handles the ball on every play."

Despite the criticism, Osborne said, Gundy is one of the best players in the conference.

"He has a great arm and is fairly mobile," Osborne said. "He'll give

us a lot of trouble if we're not ready."

Gundy wasn't ready against Kansas State last weekend, as he sat out the first half with a knee injury. But late in the fourth quarter, he came off the bench and directed the game's winning drive when he tossed a touchdown pass to give the Cowboys a 17-13 victory against the Wildcats.

Gundy's efforts against Kansas State were praised by Oklahoma State coach Pat Jones.

"Mike is the leader of this football team," Jones said. "If anybody thinks I am, they are crazy. Mike Gundy is."

Oklahoma State has posted a 2-4 record this season, defeating Wyoming and Kansas State. But the poor showing through the first half of the season shouldn't be considered in

Saturday's game, Osborne said.

"Defensively, they've switched to a Miami-style 4-3, and they've become more acclimated to it," he said. "On offense, I'm sure they'll run a balanced attack at us."

Osborne said the problems suffered by the Cowboys are due primarily to heavy graduation losses of last year's starters.

Oklahoma State's problems will be compounded by the loss of starting tailback Gerald Hudson, who is expected to miss the game with a knee injury. Hudson has rushed for 547 yards and one touchdown on 95 carries.

"You can't lose a Heisman Trophy winner (tailback Barry Sanders), (wide receiver) Hart Lee Dykes and two or three other guys who went to

the pros and not have an impact," Osborne said. "It does make a difference."

One thing that hasn't made a difference to Oklahoma State's program, Osborne said, is the NCAA sanctions placed on them last year for recruiting violations. The sanctions will keep the Cowboys off TV for this season and next.

"I don't think the probation has made an impact on them or Oklahoma yet," he said. "That usually takes a couple of years, when you start getting low in numbers because of recruiting."

Much of Oklahoma State's success this season, as in past seasons, has come through the air. The Cow-

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Al Schaben/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska quarterback Mickey Joseph



Al Schaben/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska quarterback Mike Grant

Battle for quarterback to continue

A battle that will not be settled until next fall is in full-blown progress.



Jeff Apel

Nebraska reserve quarterbacks Mickey Joseph and Mike Grant are locked in a war that will not end until Cornhusker coach Tom Osborne begins peace negotiations next fall. The battle erupted last spring, temporarily silenced, then heated back up again when Grant was un-redshirted.

At the beginning of the season, it appeared peace would last throughout the year as Grant announced he would redshirt. He stuck to that decision through Nebraska's season-opening contest against Northern Illinois, then turned down a chance to play against Utah.

Grant stood firm on his decision to

redshirt. Firm, that is, until Nebraska faced Minnesota Sept. 23.

That was the day that Osborne made what has been one of the most controversial decisions in his 16-year coaching career. Yes, that was the day Osborne ordered Grant on to the field late in the Huskers' 48-0 win against the Golden Gophers.

Osborne's reasoning behind his decision was sound, even if his timing was not. He said he doubted if starting quarterback Gerry Gdowski could stay healthy all season and if he could continue to play as well as he had been.

Grant, Osborne said, could be the difference in a big game. With his exceptional scrambling ability and his rocket arm, Osborne said, Grant could be the man that could lead Nebraska.

Osborne was obviously thinking about the Colorado match-up on Nov. 4, as it does not make any difference who leads the Cornhuskers until then. That's how bad this year's schedule is.

In addition to facing Northern Illinois, Utah and Minnesota, Nebraska

has faced Oregon State, Kansas State and Missouri this season. The Huskers will square off against Oklahoma State Saturday, and will face Iowa State before matching up against Colorado.

The schedule is what makes Osborne's decision to un-redshirt Grant so difficult to accept. None of the teams Nebraska has faced this season are football powerhouses, and asking an athlete to forfeit an entire year for one game is too much.

Osborne un-redshirted a second player this season, but his situation was understandable. Split end Jon Bostick was pulled out of a redshirt season earlier this year after two Husker reserves, Chip Bahe and Tim McCoy, were slowed by injuries. Nebraska's top split end, Morgan Gregory, is notorious for dropping the football, so Osborne had no choice but to pull Bostick out of his redshirt season.

Redshirt or not, Osborne's decision to play Grant has set off a furious battle between the sophomore from Valrico, Fla., and Joseph. Neither

player has a significant advantage over the other, as the two quarterbacks have compiled similar statistics while seeing equal playing time.

Grant does have a slight advantage, as his stats are slightly better. That's a good sign for Nebraska fans, who watched and dreamed about the future as Grant guided last year's junior varsity to an undefeated season.

Grant's most impressive statistic is his 7.2 yards-per-carry rushing average. He also has completed more than 63 percent of his passes while throwing for 98 yards.

Joseph, meanwhile, has gained 109 yards rushing and thrown for 69. He has thrown two touchdown passes -- the same number as Grant -- and scored once rushing, which is one more than his counterpart has tallied.

But forget all of those stats. This war, which erupted because of inexperience, will not be settled until next fall when an experienced quarterback is named.

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Tempo vital for NU-Hawaii game

By Darran Fowler
Senior Reporter

Tempo will be the key element in this weekend's volleyball matches between top-ranked Hawaii and fourth-ranked Nebraska.



Nebraska setter Val Novak, who calls the signals for the Cornhuskers' offensive attack and is responsible for establishing the tempo of every game, said she intends to set both matches against the Rainbow Wahines at a quick pace.

"If we control the tempo of the match we have a great chance of winning," Novak said.

Nebraska's first chance at the Rainbow Wahines is tonight at 7:30 at the NU Coliseum. That game will be broadcast by KRNU (90.3 FM).

A second match is slated for an 8 p.m. start Saturday and will be televised live by NETV.

Nebraska, which puts a 13-match home winning streak on the line, and Hawaii, which has the nation's longest winning streak of 31 matches, are the only remaining undefeated teams in Division I volleyball. Nebraska is 14-0 and Hawaii 16-0.

The matches are free for University of Nebraska-Lincoln students who show their student IDs.

In trying to maintain the tempo, Novak said Nebraska still will employ the same offensive strategies that it has utilized through 14 matches.

After playing 51 games, Novak has 740 assists and leads the team in service aces with 33, including 14 consecutive matches with at least one ace.

Novak's average of 14.51 assists per game leads the nation. Hawaii setter Cheri Boyer is second, averaging 13.98 a game.

"Novak has a big role in every match," Nebraska coach Terry Pettit said. "She always plays an important role."

Novak's efforts contribute to Nebraska's leading the country in kills, averaging 17.98 a game. Hawaii is second with a 17.70 mark.

Nebraska senior middle blocker Virginia Stahr leads the country in hitting percentage with a .503 average and Hawaii outside hitter Tee Williams-Sanders leads the country with a 5.62 kill-per-game average.

Pettit said serving and defensive specialist Becky Bolli also could play a big role this weekend.

"I think Becky Bolli needs to have a good weekend to offset Hawaii's depth on their bench," he said.

At practices this week the Huskers

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