

Columnists square off in bowl prediction

49ers to embarrass Broncos | Destined Elway needs bowl win

The Denver Broncos are to the 1980s what the Minnesota Vikings were to the 1970s: losers.

Losers, at least, when winning counted the most.

The Vikings went to four Super Bowls that decade, and lost all four. Not even passing phenomenon Fran Tarkenton, Minnesota's quarterback at the time, could help them. It was like a hex.



Chuck Green

In the '80s, the Broncos (a team I've always hated, mostly because it's from Denver) have played twice on Super Sunday.

Denver also played Dallas in Super Bowl XII in 1977.

Bronco players spent all three of those nights kicking lockers, swearing and shaking their heads in wonderment, trying to find the answers to three thrashings.

Well, get those locker doors ready, boys. This Sunday night won't be any different. There's gonna be some kickin' on and off the field.

Too bad the Broncos won't do any of the on-field kicking. Unless, of course, you count punts, which is what they'll be doing after 90 percent of their third downs.

There's a simple fact about this game: The San Francisco 49ers, Denver's far-superior opponent for Super Bowl XXIV, are an unstoppable force.

Joe Montana, San Francisco's quarterback, has aged like a fine wine since graduating from Notre Dame in 1977; he just keeps getting better and better.

Former Cornhuskers Roger Craig and Tom

"Yes, Tom Osborne, I can catch a pass" Rathman give the 49ers a formidable running attack if they need it. But they won't.

Oh, they'll use it, but just for kicks.

San Francisco's plethora of speedy, fleet-footed receivers, led by All-Universe wide-out Jerry Rice, will shred Denver's overrated defensive secondary. Montana will have his four touchdown passes.

And then he'll retire to the locker room for halftime, to rest up for more fun in the second half.

Denver won't have it's half-cocked, half-crazy fans hurling snowballs, bottles and obscenities at the other team's players, coaching staff and fans inside the Louisiana Superdome. Scratch one advantage.

Then there's the disadvantage of who Denver is playing. The 49ers looked as good as a professional football team could look against the Rams two weeks ago. Los Angeles quarterback Jim Everett is as good or better than Denver's John Elway, and he did nothing against San Francisco's defense.

Just like Elway will do Sunday.

San Francisco must stop Elway's passing as well as his running. Elway is well-known for his ability to scramble out of trouble and find an open receiver coming back for the ball. When necessary, he can turn upfield for yardage, too.

But when comparing quarterbacks, there is no comparison. Montana is the cream of the National Football League. There is no one better.

If there is, he certainly isn't on the Denver roster.

The bottom line of the game is that San Francisco is the NFL's best team this year, and indeed of the '80s. Their fourth Super Bowl win Sunday will prove it.

Prediction: San Francisco 34, Denver 17.

Green is a senior news-editorial major and is a Daily Nebraskan senior sports reporter and columnist.

Going into Sunday's battle, the Denver Broncos have nothing to lose.

Except their third Super Bowl in four years. Denver fans know it -- some actually came out and said they hoped the Broncos would lose to Cleveland in the American Football Conference Championship, thus saving them further humiliation.

Coach Dan Reeves and his Broncos know it -- two serious Super Bowl slaughters in '87



Michael Deeds

and '88 have to be skull-drilling the team psychologically.

But most important, John-boy knows it.

Elway put on his most spectacular performance of the season two Sundays ago when he crushed loud-mouthed Frank Minnifield and the rest of the Browns.

He completed 20 of 36 passes for 385 yards and three touchdowns. Yet Elway was ranked ninth among AFC passers this season.

That says something. That says need. John Elway doesn't want this win.

He needs it.

Super Bowl XXIV already is won in the overconfident 49er fans' eyes. The spread is at least 10. San Francisco is loaded with weapons -- Nebraska's Roger Craig and Tom Rathman, and sticky-fingered Ronnie Lott.

And most importantly, Elway's antithesis, Joe Montana.

Granted, Montana is phenomenal. He is undoubtedly the most concentrated quarterback in the National Football League. But he isn't the best.

He isn't John Elway. Both teams know that.

And Denver will not lose again. Rookie Bobby Humphrey is perhaps the only player on the roster who does not grasp the gravity of the situation, but his performance thus far has been great anyway. Receivers Vance Johnson and Ricky Nattiel will run rings around show-off Ronnie Lott, who tends to get overrated.

But ultimately, it will come down to John Elway versus the San Francisco 49ers.

If Reeves lets Elway play his game, Denver will beat the 49ers. Denver's defense must play an adequate line game, which they have the capacity to do. Denver's offensive line has to give Elway a little time when he needs it, which they can do.

And Elway has to put on even a better show than he did against Cleveland -- which he WILL do.

Elway is simply a better quarterback than Montana. Elway is sheer athlete, instinct, speed. He throws harder. He runs faster. He senses receivers. And he hits them with cannon shots.

Grandpa Montana makes up for his lack of foot speed and arm strength by working harder for what he gets, and it's been a long season. Maintaining that concentration is going to be a difficult task.

Elway has to let himself go Sunday, but at the same time maintain a higher level of concentration. He has to watch and avoid Lott. He has to go deep more, run more.

He has to be John Elway.

San Francisco fans will see that this underground power is more than a Nintendo game.

Granted, the Broncos defense won't stop Montana completely. But the 49ers won't even touch Elway.

Elway comes through under pressure, and Sunday his destiny will arrive.

Denver will not blow it again. Twice is bad. But three times is a charm.

Prediction: Denver 38, San Francisco 35

Deeds is a senior news-editorial major and the Daily Nebraskan arts and entertainment editor and columnist.

NU's Huppert shooting for win No. 100 this weekend

By Jeff Apel
Senior Editor

Nebraska women's swimming coach Ray Huppert is taking a low-key approach toward his upcoming membership in an exclusive club.

Huppert said he isn't overly excited about becoming the second swimming coach in school history to earn 100 victories. He will get a chance to accomplish that feat when his 19th-ranked team faces Missouri and Southern Illinois this weekend.

Huppert, whose 14-year coaching mark is 98-50, will try to inch closer to his milestone when Nebraska faces Missouri at 7 tonight in Columbia, Mo. He will then try for victory No. 100 when the Cornhuskers square off against Southern Illinois on Saturday at noon in Carbondale, Ill.

The Nebraska men's team also will face Missouri tonight and will compete against Southern Illinois on Sunday. Nine Huskers will skip the

Missouri meet in favor of traveling to Dallas to compete in The Dallas Morning News Invitational today and Saturday.

Huppert said he can't worry about joining Nebraska men's coach Cal Bentz in the 100-victory club. Bentz became the first coach in the history of Nebraska swimming to reach 100 wins when his team defeated Creighton and Iowa State last weekend.

"I'd trade any or all of my individual honors for Big Eight titles and top-15 finishes at the NCAA meet," Huppert said. "We can't focus on other people and other teams. We have to focus on ourselves."

Huppert said Nebraska can't afford to be distracted against Missouri and Southern Illinois because both teams will present challenges. Missouri, 3-6, is led by freshman Alex Kay, an England native who is eighth in the Big Eight in the 500-yard freestyle category with a time of 5:06.97 minutes.

"A couple years ago, our kids might have been able to go into the Missouri meet with the idea that it was going to be easy," Huppert said. "That's not the case anymore. Missouri is a much-improved team."

Huppert said he also is wary of Southern Illinois. Wary, he said, because the Salukis handed then-heavily favored Nebraska a 152.5-140.5 loss two years ago in Carbondale.

"This year's team is very similar to the one that beat us two years ago," Huppert said. "Some of our kids remember that loss. We can't let those kind of things creep up on us."

Bentz said the Nebraska men also can't afford to allow Missouri or Southern Illinois to creep up on them. He said he is concerned about Missouri even though the Huskers have won 24 of their last 25 duals against Big Eight foes and have claimed 10-consecutive conference titles.

Bentz said Nebraska, 4-1, will need

top performances from everyone in order to beat Missouri. He said individual performances are critical because the Huskers' top swimmers will not face the Tigers.

Bentz said the Dallas meet should help Nebraska because of the competition it provides. In addition to the Huskers, the teams competing are

Texas, Michigan, Southern Methodist and UCLA.

Several top swimmers who have used up their collegiate eligibility also will compete.

"This meet will help them swim some faster times and compete with some of the top swimmers in the nation," Bentz said.

in brief SPORTS

U.S. team anticipating Endicott's return

Lori Endicott, a former Nebraska setter who is a member of the U.S. national team, is nearly recovered from an injury which ended her first professional season prematurely.

Endicott's rookie season with the team ended when she broke two bones in her left hand while executing a block. The injury forced Endicott to undergo surgery and required her to have a pin placed in her finger.

She is expected to return to practice any day now, a spokesperson for the team office said.

Terry Liskevych, the coach of the national team, said he was sorry to see Endicott get hurt.

"She was making nice strides, particularly defensively, when she got hurt," Liskevych said. "Our No. 1 job is to get her healthy."

Liskevych said he has been impressed by Endicott, who capped off her Nebraska career in 1988 by earning All-America honors.

"Lori is a good athlete, technically sound and has become a better leader," Liskevych said. "She's not flashy, but is consistent and works very hard on the floor."

Kansas coach blamed for office bloop

The royal sports bloop of the week goes to our ever-prestigious Big Eight office, which erroneously attributed some rather interesting statements to Kansas coach Roy Williams.

It seems the office picked up a copy of one of the local papers and proceeded to take note of several enticing comments Williams had supposedly made about Kentucky.

According to a release sent to all Big Eight media outlets, Williams vowed that there was "no way" he would go to Lexington, Ky., to face the Wildcats next season. He even went so far as to say he would "get sick" or "find another job" before the Jayhawks would face Kentucky next season.

Williams comments were enticing, as was evidenced by the barrage of phone calls he received inquiring about them. After telling reporter after reporter that he didn't make them, Williams searched for their source.

He found it, but not exactly where he expected. The comments which sent the Bluegrass faithful into an emotional rage were part of a parody column which was not supposed to be taken seriously. Sorry about that one, Roy.

Missouri coach Norm Stewart must know how Williams feels, because he sure wants to avoid running into a similar situation.

When asked what he will do now that his team is ranked No. 1, Stewart replied he has already taken a step.

"We had a staff meeting and I told the coaches, 'Hey, maybe we better put in a play.'"

Switch

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tired, miss a few shots and we'd go."

But Kansas State ran to a 15-point lead before they got tired. When the

10 Huskers tired out the seven main Lady Cats, it was too late.

Beck even joked that she was bringing in a voodoo doctor to put a spell on the Sports Center so both the men's and women's teams could regain home dominance.

More seriously, she said she does

sense a negative atmosphere from the stands.

"People say, 'Well, you don't have any consistency,'" she said. "No, we're running three different people at the point, and I don't know how how you think you're gaining consistency doing that."

Scrooge

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competition against Iowa State with a score of 37.35. She placed second in the vault, first on the balance beam and second in the floor exercise.

Clemons won the uneven bars title with a 9.75 score. That performance helped her finish third in the all-around with a score of 36.95.

Walton said he was surprised by Clemons' performance in the uneven bars. Surprised, he said, because collegiate judges are using a new code of points which requires gymnasts to perform tougher routines in order to earn high scores.

"Jane won the event with a new routine and a new code of points," Walton said. "I think she has a good shot at making the bar finals at the NCAA's."

Nee said. "He can score from the outside, and he can score on the drive."

On the inside the Cyclones rely on Victor Alexander, a 6-foot-9, 265-pound junior. Alexander averages 22.1 points and 9.1 rebounds per contest.

Creighton coach Tony Barone said the Cyclone star is one of the most underrated post players in the country.

"He's like one of those Energizer batteries you see in the commercials," Barone said. "He just keeps going

Walton said he expects to see improvement from a pair of freshmen who made their collegiate debuts last weekend. He said C.C. Ocel and Shane Foster had minor difficulties against Iowa State.

Walton said Nebraska's newest team member is Karla Cash, a freshman walkon from Willmar, Minn. Cash's floor exercise routine against Iowa State was judged as an exhibition.

and going."

Alexander's presence should give Nebraska some type of an advantage, as he is Iowa State's tallest player. That should help King, a 7-2 center who set a team record with seven blocked shots against Oklahoma State last Saturday. King leads the Huskers in scoring with an average of 17.8 points per game.

"Rich is coming along as a basketball player," Nee said.

Nee

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one), all on the road.

The home losses were a two-point defeat by Iowa and a double-overtime loss to Creighton.

Nee said his squad has trouble matching up with Iowa State.

"Terry Woods causes problems with his acceleration and his speed,"