

Huskies work toward development

By Paul Domeier
Senior Reporter

The Northern Illinois goal: A bowl game.

Ah, yes, the simple life of the developing football program, where a 9-2 record is reason to rejoice, an invitation to the California Raisin Bowl, a reason to party.

The Nebraska goal: As always, to thrash the hell out of everyone -- politely, of course -- on the way to a national championship.

That's the pressure-filled life of the college football powerhouse, where a 9-2 record is a reason to cry, an invitation to any bowl not on New Year's Day a cause of mass suicide.

Which is better? Northern Illinois coach Jerry Pettibone would prefer the latter.

Pettibone wasn't too happy that his team didn't get a bowl invitation last year, when the Huskies went 9-2, with one of the losses coming at Nebraska.

"We really felt like we were a bowl-quality team," Pettibone said.

He said he understands that last year was part of the process of developing a nationally recognized program. Other steps along the way have been wins over Wisconsin in a 7-4 1988 season and Kansas State last year. The Huskies, he said, are working hard to establish a winning tradition, a la Nebraska.

Pettibone, in his sixth year at Northern Illinois, knows something about winning traditions. An Oklahoma graduate, he served as recruiting coordinator at Oklahoma from 1966-1970 and from 1971-1978, and at Nebraska from 1979-1981. He also coached at Texas A&M in the mid-1980s.

The team is growing toward the top 25, and Pettibone said the team's 28-17 victory over Eastern Illinois Saturday showed part of the development.

In that game, Husky quarterback Stacey Robinson completed 12 of 15 passes for 211 yards, a career high. Before that game Robinson was known as a wishbone quarterback only. He rushed for 1,443 yards and 19 touchdowns in 1989, and rushed 17 times for 67 yards versus Eastern Illinois.

Pettibone said the increased passing wasn't an accident.

"That was just part of the evolution of the offense," he said.

Northern Illinois returns all 11 starters on offense. Nebraska coach Tom Osborne said Northern Illinois will challenge the Husker defense more than Baylor did. The Huskers allowed 164 yards to the Bears in Nebraska's 13-0 victory Saturday.

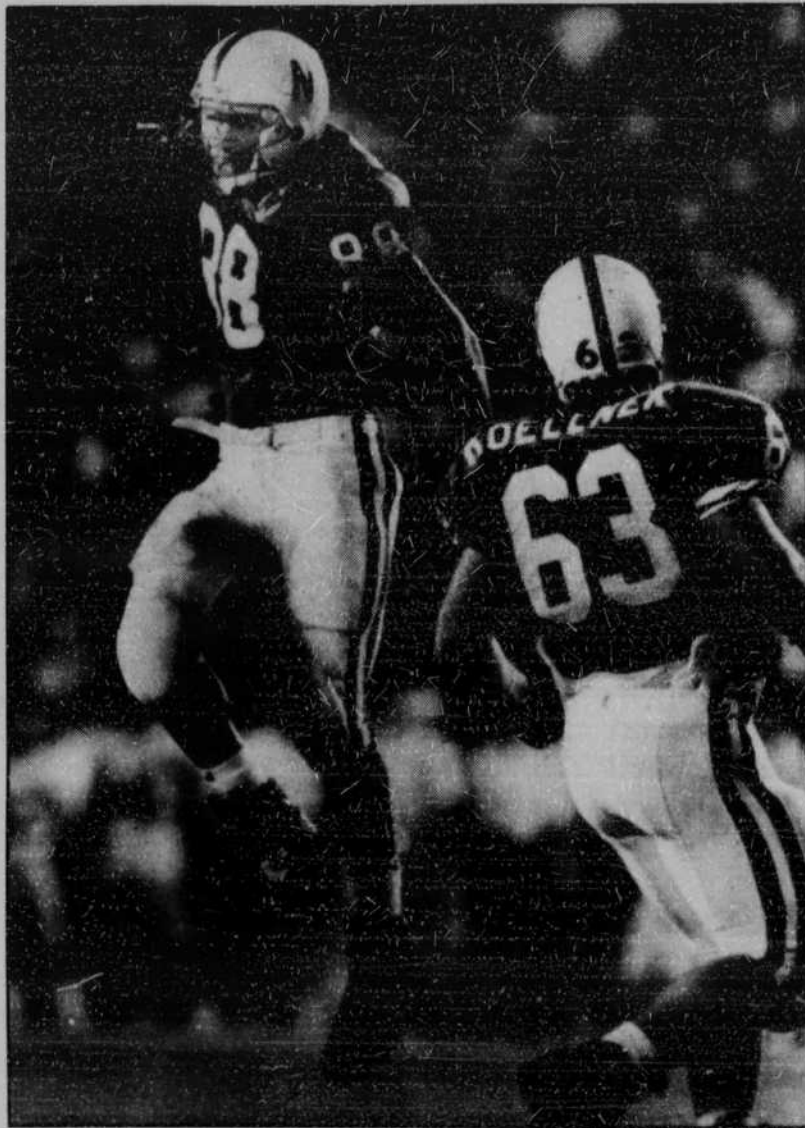
"Like all wishbone teams, they'll keep feeling around and trying different things until they find one point where you come up short," Osborne said. "Hopefully, they won't find it."

Robinson's chief support comes from fullback Adam Dach. Dach rushed for 714 yards last year and had 57 yards on 13 carries against Eastern Illinois.

On defense, the Huskies have seven starters back, but one will not play. Cary Caliendo, the team's star defensive end and the twin of former Husker linebacker Chris Caliendo, dislocated his elbow against Eastern Illinois.

Nebraska's defense took its first step against Baylor to proving that it is one of the best in the country. Pettibone already is a believer.

"Their defense is a lot more impressive to me than ever before," he said.



Al Schaben/Daily Nebraskan

Middle guard Greg Koellner stands by as linebacker Mike Croel celebrates sacking Baylor quarterback Scott Needham on Saturday.

Joseph to start at quarterback

By Paul Domeier
Senior Reporter

Mickey Joseph will start at quarterback Saturday against Northern Illinois in place of injured Mike Grant, Nebraska coach Tom Osborne said Thursday.

Grant, who started in the Cornhuskers' 13-0 win over Baylor Saturday, probably will be available if needed, Osborne said.

Grant, a junior who made his first start Saturday, suffered a bruised left knee with 2:03 left in the first quarter against Baylor and had to leave the game. He returned near the end of the second quarter and played the entire second half, but then missed practice Monday and Tuesday.

"He's all right," Osborne said. "It's more of a bruise than anything else."

Joseph, a junior who lost the battle for the starting spot in fall practice, will be making his first start in the game, which will begin at 1:30 p.m. in Memorial Stadium.

When Joseph replaced Grant Saturday, he led the Huskers to the team's first field goal, sparking the drive with a 14-yard run followed by a 15-yard late-hit penalty.

Osborne also said starting left defensive tackle Joe Sims probably will not play Saturday because of the knee he injured Wednesday. LeAndre Anderson will take Sims' place.

Heisman Trophy talk builds on Illinois campus

Probable starters

Northern Illinois (1-0-0)				Nebraska (1-0-0)										
O	F	E	N	S	E	O	F	E	N	S	E			
Mark Clancy	SE	5-10	167	Sr.	Chris Garrett	TE	6-3	240	Jr.	Tom Punt	LT	6-8	285	Sr.
Chad Bullock	LT	6-5	243	Sr.	Jim Wanek	LG	6-1	245	Sr.	David Edeal	C	6-2	260	Sr.
Mike Westrick	LG	6-2	260	Jr.	Eric Wiegert	RG	6-4	270	Jr.	Brian Boerboom	RT	6-7	285	Jr.
Eric Wenckowski	C	6-3	270	Sr.	Brian Boerboom	RT	6-7	285	Jr.	Jon Bostick	SE	6-2	185	Jr.
Scott Elliot	RG	6-6	285	Sr.	Leodis Flowers	QB	5-11	180	Jr.	Stacey Robinson	QB	6-2	192	Sr.
Eric Fiene	RT	6-4	268	Sr.	Omar Soto	FB	5-11	220	Jr.	Adam Dach	FB	6-0	225	Jr.
Claude Royster	TE	6-4	222	Sr.	Tyrone Hughes	WB	5-9	175	So.	Mike Strasser	LHB	5-9	174	Sr.
Stacey Robinson	QB	6-2	192	Sr.	Gregg Barrios	PK	5-8	170	Sr.	Brett Schroeder	RHB	6-1	197	Jr.
Adam Dach	FB	6-0	225	Jr.	Travis Hill	LB	6-2	225	So.	John Ivanic	PK	5-9	160	Jr.
Mike Strasser	LHB	5-9	174	Sr.	Andre Anderson	LT	6-4	260	Sr.					
Brett Schroeder	RHB	6-1	197	Jr.	Pat Engelbert	MG	6-2	250	Jr.					
John Ivanic	PK	5-9	160	Jr.	Kenny Walker	RT	6-4	240	Sr.					
					Mike Croel	LB	6-3	225	Sr.					
					Mike Petko	LB	6-2	230	Jr.					
					Pat Tyrance	LB	6-2	240	Sr.					
					Bruce Pickens	CB	5-11	190	Sr.					
					Reggie Cooper	SS	6-3	210	Sr.					
					Tyrone Byrd	FS	5-11	165	So.					
					Tahaun Lewis	CB	5-11	170	Sr.					
					Mike Stigge	P	6-1	185	So.					

By John Adkisson
Staff Reporter

A Heisman Trophy candidate from Northern Illinois?

Unlikely as it may seem, such is the case for quarterback Stacey Robinson, who led Northern Illinois to a 9-2 season last year and broke almost every single-season rushing record for quarterbacks in NCAA history.



Robinson

Robinson will lead his team to Lincoln on Saturday to face No. 10-rated Nebraska, but he said he will not be intimidated.

"I expect us to play well there," Robinson said. "We're all excited to come down there and show what we can do." Last year Robinson rushed for 1,443 yards, the highest single-season total ever for a collegiate quarterback. Such impressive statis-

tics have fueled Heisman talk on the Northern Illinois campus.

"The publicity is really rolling in here," he said. "People are really starting to get behind me."

Nebraska fans got a taste of Robinson's ability last year when he led Northern Illinois to a 17-17 halftime tie with the Cornhuskers in Lincoln. Robinson said that last year's performance gives him confidence heading into the rematch.

"It most definitely allows us to be thinking about a win this year," Robinson said. "Last year when we went to the locker room tied, we were on a big high."

Robinson said the crowd noise at Memorial Stadium may present a problem for him. Last year, he was forced to spend a timeout because his receivers couldn't hear the signals.

"When I got down near the end zone, the fans were loud," he said. "I just tried to regroup my team because we'd never played in a stadium that big and that noisy." Northern Illinois didn't get a bowl bid after last year's 9-2 season, and the Huskies' goal for 1990 is to see that they do.

"We got overlooked last season,"

he said. "We're just going to go out this year and accomplish our goal."

Northern Illinois runs a wishbone offense, and Coach Jerry Pettibone has compared Robinson to former Husker Turner Gill. Robinson, known as the "Wishbone Wizard II," said the alignment will present problems for any team who tries to defend it.

"They may try to shut it down for awhile, but eventually me or somebody else is going to get loose," he said.

Northern Illinois opened its season at home against in-state rival Eastern Illinois with a 28-17 win, but trailed at the half. Robinson passed for two touchdowns and ran for another in the victory.

"Everybody was excited to play and we just missed some execution-type stuff," Robinson said. "But once we got rolling, it was all over."

Robinson almost was ineligible for this season because of academic problems. He attended summer school to improve his grades.

"I just did what I had to do this summer," Robinson said. "I'm just glad that it's behind me now and I can concentrate on playing football."

NU junior varsity coach expects close season opener

By Todd Cooper
Staff Reporter

Nebraska's junior varsity season opener with Snow Junior College today will be both close and rewarding, according to Cornhusker JV coach Bill Weber.

"It's a very important game, but it's not a must-win situation," Weber said. "It's important that we learn, whether we win or lose."

"I expect a close ball game."

If it's anything like last year's matchup, Weber will have that tight game. Nebraska and Snow tied 23-23

in 1989, but only after Nebraska rallied in the fourth quarter.

"They were very well-prepared last year," Weber said. "We just couldn't get much going offensively."

Weber said a longer preparation period this year should help put the two teams even in practice time.

"Ten more days will really help us," he said. "We've gotten better each day, with more confidence. It'll be tough, we'll have to make some checks at the line."

Even though the amount of practice time was extended, Weber still has concerns.

"I'm most concerned with our execution, limiting turnovers and penalties, and getting people in the right place at the right time," he said.

He said he thinks Nebraska's offense could catch Snow's defense off-guard.

"We think our option game will give them troubles," he said. "They play in a conference that's primarily a passing conference, but they're known for a strong defense up front. We feel we'll do a little better in the I-formation."

The I-formation could be one of several offensive looks the Huskers

will see from Snow.

"They have a lot of different sets and they run a lot of different plays," Weber said.

But the plays the Huskers want to avoid are the big ones via the air, Weber said.

"We need to make them drive the ball all the way," he said. "We can't give up 30- to 40-yard touchdown passes."

"There will have to be a high level of concentration, but that's the best way the players learn."

The Huskers also will have to learn to make do without some of its schol-

arship recruits, who were redshirted.

"Nobody has really stuck out," Weber said. "Certainly some of our best were redshirted but we have solid football players."

Not having those players around gives the players still active more playing time than they otherwise would have had, Weber said.

"There will be quite a bit of excitement, probably more than a usual freshman game," he said. "It's nice to have that."

Kickoff is at 1 p.m. at Memorial Stadium and admission is free to students with their IDs.