Osborne: Academics, kicking game improving

By Chris Hopfensperger Senior Reporter

Nebraska coach Tom Osborne took some time away from football to talk about academics at Tuesday's weekly press conference.

Osborne said he is pleased with the programs of Roger Grooters, director of academic programs, and Keith Zimmer, athletic/career counselor.

"We feel we have good students here," Osborne said. "I know a lot of people from time to time maintain you can't do well academically and participate in college athletics.

Only two of this year's 156 football players had a grade point average below 2.0 and both were borderline, he said. Twelve players had GPA's above 3.55 and the team average is a

2.72.
"The overall program is really where I would like to see it," Osborne said. "Of course nothing is perfect, but it's coming along pretty well."

Another aspect of the football program that is coming along is the kicking game, Osborne said.

"We've been fairly dominant on both sides of the ball, but the thing that jumps out at me more than any-

thing else is kicking," he said. Nebraska's return teams are averaging 12.5 yards a punt return and 35 yards on kickoffs. The opposition is gaining 16 yards on kickoffs and the punt average is nil.

Osborne said he also is pleased with the Huskers' low number of penalties. In the first three games Nebraska has been flagged for just 60 yards in penalties. That is highly unusual, Osborne said.

"I can't ever remember when we've averaged that few," he said. "We've had a lot of games where we've had well over 60 yards in a half."

Several injuries that have been bothering the Huskers in past weeks are beginning to heal, he said.

-backs Leodis Flowers and Scott Baldwin, and quarterback Mike Grant all have practiced this week and, Osborne said, they all have improved.

"Out of those three, the only one I would say might still be a little bit uncertain as to how well he will be will be Grant," he said. "He can play, there's no question about it. The question is whether he will be fall

"If he can be close to 100 percent

play him a good deal. If he's not we

One player guaranteed to return is wingback Nate Turner. Turner broke his collarbone in the second day of

"Nate Turner will play some," Osborne said. "I think there's still some apprehension (from the trainers). He needs to get hit a couple of

Besides Grant, Osborne said another player who may be questionable is middle guard Paul Brungardt, who woke up with a swollen knee on Sunday after the Minnesota game.

'We're probably in a little better shape physically than we have been at any time this year," Osborne said.

Nebraska leads the Big Eight in yards per pass attempt. In fact, in a rating done by the Big Eight, Husker quarterback Mickey Joseph is first in passing efficiency.

"That's the key thing to me," Osborne said, (is) what happens when you throw it?

"I know I'm a minority of one in the state that believes that's at all important."

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John Bruce/Daily Nebraskan

Osborne says team needs to improve in some areas

Pettit: Fatigue from tournaments

Record

From Staff Reports

Nebraska held a two-hour controlled scrimmage Tuesday in preparation for the Oregon State game this Saturday, Coach Osborne said. I-back Scott Baldwin reinjured his

toe and left practice early. Offensive guard Dave Jensen missed practice with a sore leg.

The Huskers are guarding against any concentration gaps with the possibility of another big scoring gap this week, Osborne said.

"It (the concentration) has been pretty good," he said.

Despite a near-perfect performance against Minnesota Saturday, Osborne said the Huskers could do better in some areas.

"We hope to see the turnovers diminish, the blocking improve, the throwing improve," he said.

Nebraska's first two quarterbacks, Mickey Joseph and Keithen McCant each threw one interception Saturday, though Joseph was 7 for 11 pass-

Quarterback Mike Grant probably will start this Saturday to make up for lost playing time. He was held out of the Northern Illinois and Minnesota games because of a sore knee suffered in the Baylor game.

I-back Leodis Flowers should return for Saturday's game after missing last week. Wingback Nate Turner also practiced the entire scrimmage. Osborne said the Huskers may not have the fortune they enjoyed against

"It may not go as well," Osborne said. "We had a lot of good field position Saturday.

"What we're going to look at is effort and execution."

Al Schaben/Daily Nebraskan

I-back Derek Brown is NU's leading rushing with 192 yards after gaining 120 yards against Minnesota on Saturday.

I-back's first day is full of yards

By Paul Domeier

Senior Reporter

Starting as Nebraska's I-back is something to call home about. So when Derek Brown found out Friday after practice that he would be starting Saturday against Minne-sota, he did.

"At first I was nervous and I had to give a call to my mother," Brown said. "She helps make me

Brown, a freshman from La Habra, Calif., who had to sit out a year because of Proposition 48, relaxed enough to gain 120 yards rushing and score three touchdowns in the Cornhuskers' 56-0 victory over the Golden Gophers.

Nebraska coach Tom Osborne gave Brown plenty of chances to get rid of his butterflies. Brown returned the opening kickoff, had five carries in the first six plays and

ran the ball 13 times in the first

In fact, Brown had a lot of work for a 5-foot-10, 175-pounder, even one so muscular. He had 21 carries and two receptions, hurled himself through the air for one touchdown and even recorded a tackle after an

Yet Brown said playing against the Gophers wasn't as rough as he

expected.
"I thought they'd come out a little more aggressive than they did and be a lot tougher than they were,"

Not bad for a third-string player who became the first freshman to start as I-back for Nebraska since Monte Anthony in 1974.

Brown was starting in place of injured backs Leodis Flowers and Scott Baldwin. Fourth-string I-back George Achola followed Brown over the century mark with 123

"For us to come in and make out 100 yards looks good for (running backs) coach (Frank) Solich,"

Osborne said the Minnesota game doesn't give Nebraska an excessive number of I-backs.

"You don't ever have too many I-backs," Osborne said. "You can lose two or three in a quarter.'

But if Flowers recovers from his injured knee and Baldwin returns from his turf toe as expected for Saturday's game against Oregon State, Brown could find him-

self out of the rotation, having to

wait his turn for playing time.

Brown, Nebraska's leading rusher with 192 yards, said he's not worried about that. Wins come first,

he said, not carries.
"If I don't get any next game, I
don't get any," he said.

contributed to Huskers' loss NCAA Volleyball **Top 20**

1 Nebraska	9-1
2UCLA	10-1
3 Pacific	9-1
4 Texas	11-0
5 Stanford	6-1
6 Cal-Santa	
Barbara	13-1
7 Hawaii	6-2
8 Ohio St.	8-3
9 New Mexico	10-2
10 Penn St.	13-0
11 San Jose St.	6-0
12 Texas Tech	11-0
13 Brigham	
Young	8-2
14 Illinois	6-4
15 Long Beach	SIE
St.	10-2
16 Pepperdine	-8-3
17 Lousiana St.	8-5
18 Pittsburgh	9-2

John Bruce/Daily Nebraskan

19 Kentucky

20 Southern Cal

raska's volleyball team dropped to No. 2 in the American Volleyball Coaches Association Top 20. But in the season's first NCAA poll, which was released Tuesday, the Comhuskers were voted No. 1.

Saturday, the Huskers lost their first match of the year to No. 3-ranked Pacific in the Illinois Invitational, after rallying to beat No. 14-ranked Illinois the night before.

Nebraska coach Terry Pettit called the Illinois match one of the most emotionally draining Nebraska has ever played and the critical match of the tournament.

"Our preparation was pretty much limited to Illinois prior to the tourna-ment," Pettit said. "I really feel that personnel-wise and talent-wise we're in pretty good shape against Pacific, but they were in a situation where they could spend the week preparing

Last week, the team began to feel the fatigue of having played in three tournaments against six top-20 teams, Pettit said, but he doesn't regret scheduling such powerful competition.

"I figured if we could win a majority of the matches against top-10 teams on the road that would be great," he said. "But that wasn't the reason we did it."