

Next NU battle not 'just game' anymore

By Todd Cooper
Senior Reporter

Forget about all the "just another game" comments that have echoed throughout Memorial Stadium and the South Stadium locker room for the past three months.

After Friday, there isn't "just another" football game for No. 11 Nebraska until next year.

And there isn't one bigger than Friday's matchup with No. 19 Oklahoma, outside linebacker Travis Hill said. Kickoff is at 12:30 p.m. in front of an ABC television audience.

"This is the biggest game we'll play," Hill said. "This is bigger than Colorado or any of them. This is for the Big Eight Championship."

Even the less-than-flamboyant Will Shields, Nebraska's left offensive guard, said he has been caught up, ever so slightly, in the magnitude of Friday's game.

"I just feel it's about time for us to win the Big Eight championship," Shields said.

But Hill and Shields said the Huskers are approaching it calmly, without regard for the history of this heated rivalry. Oklahoma leads the 71-game series, 39-29-3, including a 45-10 romp last year in Norman, Okla.

"I'm not much for the history of the Oklahoma-Nebraska matchup," said Shields, who was the first-ever Husker recruit out of Oklahoma.

Shields, a native of Lawton, Okla., said he especially recalls the Oklahoma fans' comments during the thrashing.

"After Oklahoma was up by so many points, they started yelling, 'You should have stayed here,' and all that," Shields said. "I just thought it was kind of funny."

But Shields said revenge isn't on the Huskers' minds this year.

"It's more or less just, 'Don't go out and perform like you did last year,'" Shields said. "All that stuff happened last year. This year's different — this game is just the next game down the road — the last step toward the Big Eight Championship. If you make it anything more than that, you lose sight of what you're doing."

Shields said Nebraska's offense hasn't lost its focus since an "inconsistent" performance against Washington Sept. 21. The Huskers led 21-9 before Washington rattled off four touchdowns in the last 17 minutes of play to win 36-21.

"We've made some great improvements since then," Shields said.

"There's been a big change — and the change is more or less attitude-wise. We've realized that we can't just play good for a series and then slack off."

Nebraska gained 308 total yards against Washington, the No. 1 defense in the nation. Since then, the Huskers have averaged 483 yards per game, including a 593-yard performance against Kansas' defense (then ranked 14th).

Still, Shields said Nebraska could have a tough time against Oklahoma's 10-ranked defense. The Sooners are ranked fourth against the run, giving up an average of just 89 yards per game.

"We've got to get their defensive line moving back rather than sideways," Shields said.

Shields said Oklahoma's defense won't try to trick the Huskers.

"They line up and basically say, 'If you think you can run on us, go ahead and try,'" Shields said.

Hill said Oklahoma's offense is the same.

"It's typical Oklahoma — a lot of option, but you have to be aware of the pass," Hill said. "With them, it's basically a balanced attack but they will try and run at you hard."

Sooner 1-back Mike Gaddis, the nation's No. 9 rusher with 1,177 yards on 199 carries, will be one of those running at the Huskers hard, Hill said. But Hill said the Blackshirts proved their ability to stop the run against Colorado. The Huskers gave up 112 yards on 40 carries to the Buffaloes.

"Colorado, basically, tried to power us," Hill said. "And we stopped it. So we knew right then and there that we were a strong defensive team."

"And it's going to show up Friday against Oklahoma."

Hill, who recorded a career-high 11 tackles against Oklahoma last year, said he isn't concerned with Sooner quarterback Cale Gundy's scrambling and passing ability. Gundy has averaged 128 yards of total offense this year, ranking him seventh in the conference.

"He's good and he throws a lot," Hill said, "but he's still young and he still makes mistakes. It's up to us to capitalize off of those mistakes."

More than anything, Shields said, Nebraska wants to capitalize on its opportunity Friday.

"We want to go to Miami (and the Orange Bowl)," Shields said. "I mean, if you work that hard during the summer and all of the season, you just naturally want to win the Big Eight. It's a reward for all that hard work."

Oklahoma (8-2)						Nebraska (8-1-1)					
Ted Long	ZB	5-10	186	Sr.		Jon Bostick	SE	6-2	190	Sr.	
Joey Mickey	TE	6-5	269	Jr.		Lance Lundberg	LT	6-4	305	So.	
Brian Brauning	LT	6-5	279	Sr.		Erik Wiegert	LG	6-5	300	Sr.	
Paul Moriarty	LG	6-5	287	Jr.		Jim Scott	C	6-2	260	Jr.	
Randy Wallace	C	6-3	278	Sr.		Will Shields	RG	6-1	295	Jr.	
Jeff Resler	RG	6-2	260	Fr.		Brian Boerboom	RT	6-7	310	Sr.	
Brandon Houston	RT	6-5	285	Sr.		Wm. Washington	TE	6-2	260	Jr.	
Corey Warren	SE	5-11	203	So.		Keithen McCant	QB	6-2	200	Sr.	
Mike McKinley	FB	6-0	226	Sr.		Lance Lewis	FB	6-0	225	Jr.	
Cale Gundy	QB	6-0	189	So.		Derek Brown	IB	5-9	180	So.	
Mike Gaddis	TB	6-2	225	Sr.		Nate Turner	WB	6-2	220	Sr.	
Scott Blanton	PK	6-1	210	Fr.		Byron Bennett	PK	6-1	185	So.	
OFFENSE						DEFENSE					
Chris Wilson	WLB	6-1	230	Sr.		Travis Hill	LOL	6-2	235	Jr.	
Trey Tippins	LE	6-3	235	Jr.		Kevin Ramaekers	LT	6-4	270	Jr.	
Stacey Dillard	RT	6-5	287	Sr.		Pat Engelbert	MG	6-2	265	Sr.	
Proctor Land	RT	6-4	256	Sr.		John Parrella	RT	6-5	290	Jr.	
Reggie Barnes	RE	6-1	218	Jr.		David White	ROL	6-2	240	Jr.	
Joe Bowden	SLB	6-1	230	Sr.		Mike Petko	SSL	6-3	230	Sr.	
Ricky Wren	NG	6-1	263	Fr.		Mike Anderson	WSL	6-2	230	So.	
Darnell Walker	LC	5-8	166	Jr.		Curtis Cotton	LC	6-1	210	Sr.	
Terry Ray	FS	6-1	187	Sr.		Tyrone Letette	RC	5-10	180	Jr.	
Jason Belser	SS	5-9	184	Sr.		Steve Carmer	SS	6-2	210	Jr.	
Charles Franks	RC	5-9	179	Sr.		Tyrone Byrd	FS	6-0	175	Jr.	
Brad Reddell	P	6-2	195	Jr.		Mike Stigge	P	6-2	190	Jr.	

Scott Maurer/DN

Gibbs afraid of pendulum swing

By Chuck Green
Senior Editor

Oklahoma football Coach Gary Gibbs still has nightmares about the last time he brought a team to Lincoln.

It was 1989, and the Sooners were blasted by Nebraska 42-25.

"We didn't have anything really to play for, because we were on (NCAA) probation, and the game got out of hand," Gibbs said.



Gibbs

Last season's game also got out of hand, only this time it was in Oklahoma's favor. The Sooners exploded for 35 points in the second and third quarters while holding the Cornhuskers to a season-low 229 yards of total offense.

This season, Gibbs said, the momentum is once again Nebraska's.

"They've been an outstanding football team throughout the season, and you kind of get the feeling that they're just waiting to explode," he said.

The game is scheduled to begin Friday at 12:30 p.m. in Memorial Stadium, and will be nationally televised by ABC.

Gibbs said the Sooners have no easy task ahead of them in trying to stop Nebraska's offense, which leads the country in rushing and is second in total offense.

Oklahoma will counter with its fifth-ranked rushing defense.

"We usually don't have a lot of problems figuring out what Nebraska is going to do offensively," Gibbs said. "They run pretty much the same plays every year. It's stopping those plays that gives us problems."

Offensively, Oklahoma has more talent than last year's team that scored 45 points on the Huskers. Mike Gaddis is back at tailback from a severe knee injury that kept him from playing much of last year and the first two

games this season.

Gaddis has rushed for 1,177 yards and 13 touchdowns this season.

But the Oklahoma offense is led by sophomore quarterback Cale Gundy, who has completed 86 of 158 passes for 1,188 yards and eight touchdowns this season.

Defensively, the Sooners' are not only strong against the run, but rank eighth in pass efficiency defense and have given up just 93 yards passing per game.

Oklahoma's secondary is led by Charles Franks and Jason Belser, each of whom have intercepted five passes this season.

Gibbs said he hopes his team can play its game of the year against Nebraska.

"It will be our toughest game of the year, no doubt about it," Gibbs said. "Nebraska is Nebraska, just like always. They have the horses, and we have to find a way to stop them."

"Playing (in Lincoln), won't be the easiest thing in the world."

NU to face Grambling in tournament

By Chris Hopfensperger
Senior Editor

It's too early for Nebraska women's basketball coach Angela Beck to know a lot about the competition in this weekend's tournament.

She still is worried about her Cornhuskers.

On Friday, Nebraska takes on the Lady Tigers of Grambling State in the first round of the CableVision Classic at 5 p.m. at the Bob Devaney Sports Center. Oral Roberts meets Rice at 7 p.m. in the other first-round game.

The consolation game Saturday will start at 1 p.m., with the championships game to follow at about 3 p.m.

Beck said that concentrating on Nebraska before dwelling on the opponents is the key to her coaching philosophy this year.

"We've got so many things to do ourselves," Beck said. "I don't know what type of teams they'll be."

"We've just got to get back to business to prepare for them."

Beck said Grambling will be tough despite the loss of 6-foot-4 center Tarcha Hollis, a three-time All-American.

Grambling, which captured second place in the Southwestern Athletic Conference last year, is picked to finish second again this season.

The Lady Tigers will be led by senior Karman Paul. Paul averaged 16 points and 5.8 rebounds a game last year as a guard. This season, sophomore Arlene Locklin will take the guard position.

As a freshman, Locklin scored 6.8 points and contributed 3.6 assists per game last year.

NU women's CableVision Classic schedule

At Bob Devaney Sports Center. Students admitted free with ID

Friday:
5 p.m. Nebraska vs. Grambling
7 p.m. Oral Roberts vs. Rice

Saturday:
1 p.m. Consolation
3 p.m. Championship

Brian Shellito/DN

Beck said she anticipated a "helter-skelterish" game from Grambling.

The Lady Tigers, who played Paul Quinn College on Monday night, had to put off their season opener. Saturday's game against Southern University-New Orleans was cancelled.

Beck said Rice is the favorite to win the tournament.

Last weekend the Owls won the Rice Marriott Holiday Classic, beating New Mexico State and Sam Houston State.

There are several areas Nebraska needs to work on after Friday's 75-73 win over Creighton, Beck said.

"I was disappointed in a lot of things we didn't do well," she said.

Offensively, Beck said, the Huskers need to be more consistent and more determined.

Nebraska didn't get the "bloody buckets" against the Bluejays, she

said.

"We never got on the floor as much as we could have," Beck said. "We didn't show the scrap — although, we did show a lot of character."

The Huskers battled back from an 11-point halftime deficit, outscoring Creighton 40-27 in the second half for the win.

Last year, the Huskers started the season with a five-game win streak and two tournament championships. Nebraska finished the season tied for second in the Big Eight with a 17-11 record overall.

The Creighton game, Beck said, may show the Huskers can win but must keep improving this season.

"I'm hoping that game is a message to everyone," she said. "We could have just bowed out of that game. We beat a good basketball team."

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