Possible Big Twelve title pits money against talent

By Mitch Sherman
Senior Reporter

When the Tier I Bowl Alliance plan goes into effect at the end of next season, many coaches in the Southwestern Conference feel their part of the country is going to be left out.

Although Texas, Texas A&M, Baylor and Texas Tech will be joining the Big Eight to form the Big 12 prior to the 1996 season, Baylor coach Chuck Reedy said the Cotton Bowl was getting the short end of the stick.

The alliance calls for a national championship game to be alternated yearly between three sites: the Orange Bowl, the Sugar Bowl and the Fiesta Bowl.

"Certainly Dallas (site of the Cotton Bowl) has a lot to offer," Reedy said Monday. "Everyone in the Big 12 recruits in Texas. It'd not only be good for the Texas schools; it would be good for all the Big 12 schools."

Reedy said he was in favor of playing an annual Big 12 championship game at the Cotton Bowl.

The championship game would pit the winner of the south division (four Texas schools plus Oklahoma and Oklahoma State) against the champion of the north division. The winner of the championship game would then advance to the Tier I Bowl Alliance, Reedy said.

"I don't see any reason for a game in Dallas over a game in Kansas City or Oklahoma City.

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OSBORNE
Nebraska coach

But some of the current Big Eight coaches aren't happy with the idea of a championship contest.

"I would prefer not to have a championship game," Nebraska coach Tom Osborne said. "The reason being that if you have two teams that are playing well, you would rather not put them head-to-head."

The Southeastern conference currently uses a format similar to the proposed Big 12 plan.

Osborne said he would prefer to have two divisional winners advance to the bowl alliance without meeting head-to-head.

Colorado coach Bill McCartney agreed with Osborne.

"It looks like we are headed towards a national championship game," McCartney said. "If we have a national championship game, I wouldn't be in favor of a Big 12 championship game. The Big 12 might have two teams headed towards a championship, so let's not knock one out."

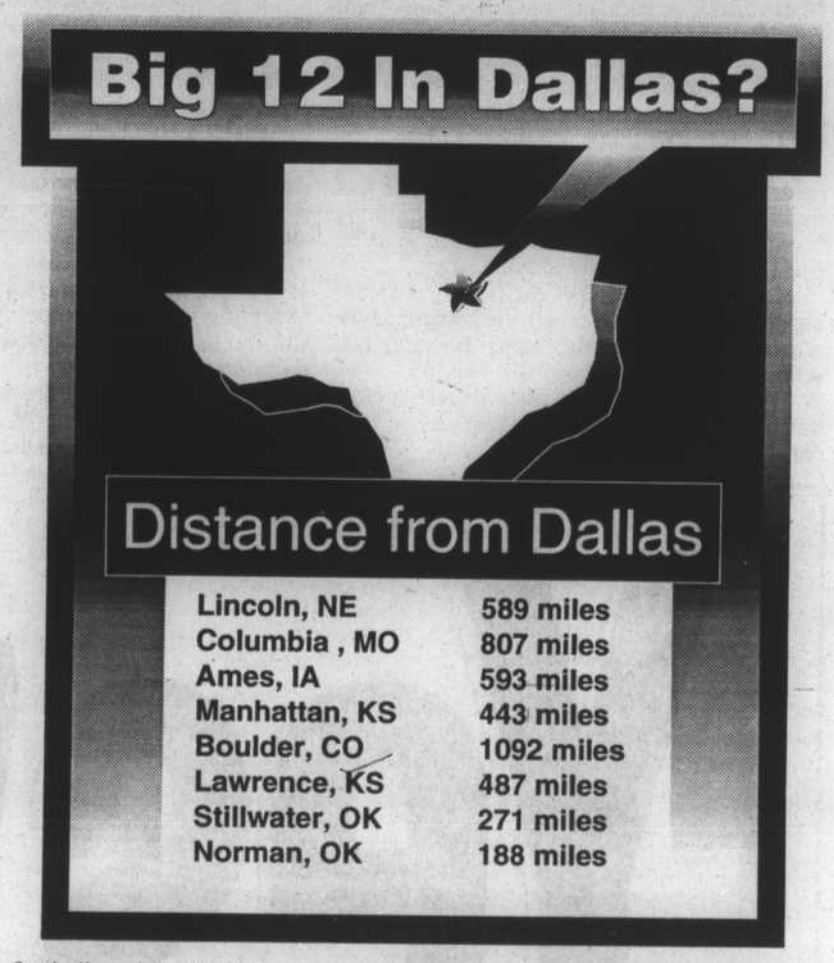
"I don't see any reason for a game in Dallas over a game in Kansas City or Oklahoma City," Osborne said. "The people down there joined the Big Eight. The way I understood it, they were going to take the Big Eight rules."

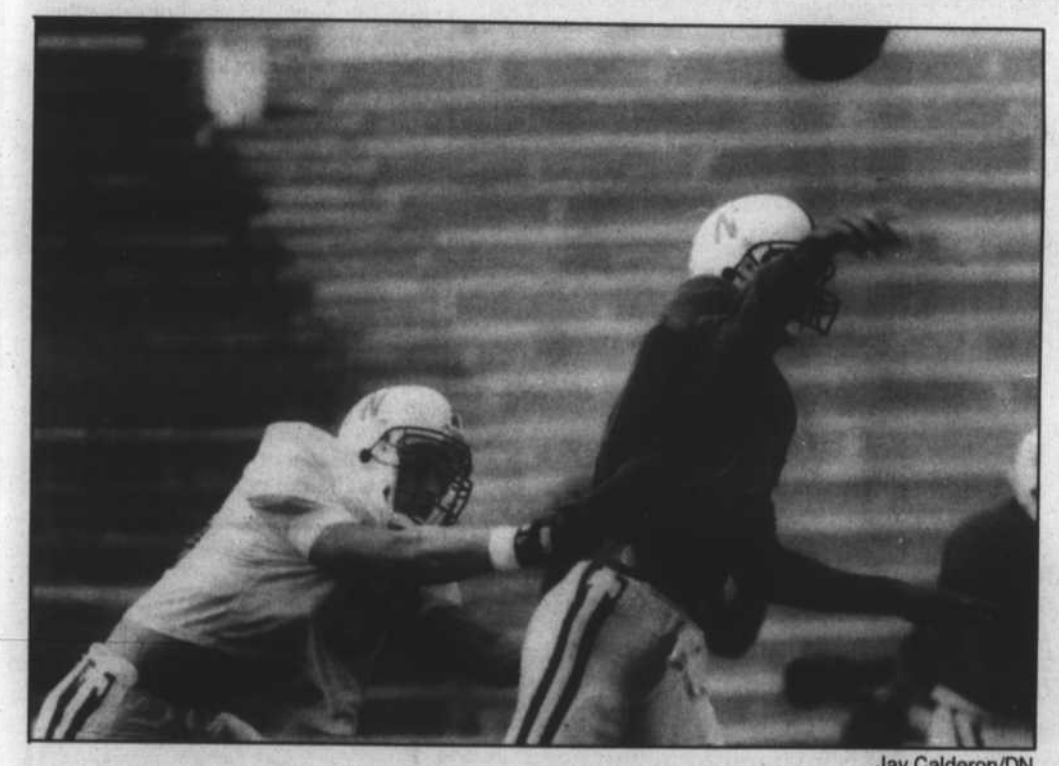
Iowa State coach Jim Walden brought up another point in the issue.

"I think it's a terrible idea," Walden said. "But you can't argue with dollars. It sounds good monetarily because everything is money driven in football, and football is paying all the bills."

Texas Tech coach Spike Dykes said a championship game made sense.

"It would be sort of indistinctive to not have anybody as a champion," Dykes said. "You can't have two champions. That wouldn't be too great of a deal. You have to have somebody in first place."





Jay Calderon/DN

Nebraska quarterback Brook Berringer gets off a pass during a scrimmage with outside linebacker Jeff Olsen in pursuit. Berringer got in a few snaps against West Virginia in the Kickoff Classic. He is the only scholarship quarterback behind Tommie Frazier.

Result gets mixed feelings

By Trevor Parks
Staff Reporter

When Don Nehlen spoke to the media after his team lost to Nebraska 31-0 at the Kickoff Classic, he had the look of a tired man.

"All I want to do is get out of here," Nehlen said.

On the other hand, Nebraska coach Tom Osborne said he was happy things went the Cornhuskers' way after taking the gamble of playing in the first game of the college football season.

"It gives us a little momentum going into the season," Osborne said. "It gives us an opportunity to shake things down and see where we are."

According to Nehlen, Nebraska is in a pretty good position to start the season.

"They're a good football team, no question with that," he said.

Osborne said he was glad to beat a team like West Virginia, but he can't tell how good his team might be after just one game.

"The first three games will test us pretty well," Osborne said.

Osborne also said having some time off between the opener and the next two games — against Texas Tech Sept. 8 and UCLA Sept. 17 — will be beneficial to the Huskers.

West Virginia plays host to Ball State Saturday and doesn't have an off week until Nov. 5.

Although Nehlen was disappointed that his team lost, he hoped to find something positive out of the game.

"We at least got one game of experience under our belts now if nothing else," Nehlen said. "We should learn quite a bit from this game."

Nehlen said he was still upset that his 11-0 Mountaineers didn't play the Huskers for the national championship in the Orange Bowl last season.

He also said Sunday's performance by his team probably wouldn't have been duplicated in Miami.

"We're a completely different team from a year ago," Nehlen said. "When you stub your toe in major college football, you don't automatically get a second chance."

NOTES:

Nebraska's Big Eight rival, Colorado, will start the season without two starters. Buffaloes' coach Bill McCartney announced that No. 1 wide receiver Michael Westbrook and No. 1 strong safety Donnell Leomiti are suspended for one game for disciplinary reasons.

Athletes shouldn't be penalized for off-season flashing

Beau Finley

I did a little yoga, practiced my breathing exercises and drank copious quantities of Nyquil.

I made the conscious decision this year that I wouldn't get overexcited while watching Husker football.

No more leaping in the air after every semipositive 'sker play.

No more yelling, "feel that, Mr. running back" after every good hit.

No more chants of "Heeeeeeeeeeeey, Wusseeeeeeeeeey" when an opposing player got injured.

I had dedicated myself to a season of quiet enjoyment — restrained enthusiasm, if you will.

Then the friggin' game started.

By the middle of the first quarter, I found myself standing on the coffee table screaming: "C'mon, Zebras, Eddie Stewart's getting held like a newlywed."

By the second half, I had tucked my 10-year old cocker spaniel under my arm, juked my mother out of her socks, systematically hurdled every piece of furniture in my house and yelled, "Heisman, here I come."

There, of course, were really no bad calls.

I, of course, realize I'm not Tommie Frazier. (However, I do have an aunt who thinks we bear a striking resemblance.)

The reason I bring up my activity during the game is to make this point: You can take the game out of Nebraska — Sunday's game was played in New Jersey — but you can't take the game out of me.

Also, you can't take copious quantities of Nyquil out of me without a stomach pump. Just a little tip for you insomniacs out there from your Uncle Beau.

Now for the topic du jour.

Wait, why did I just use the word "du jour?"

Could it be that by throwing in a random French word, I think I can somehow impress you, my vast readership, with a bloated sense of culture and vocabulary?

Is this the type of egomaniacal sports punk I'm turning into?

Well, I owe all three of you reading this column a little more respect. Allow me to rephrase: Now for the topic of the day.

There have been unsubstantiated reports that a member of the Nebraska men's tennis team is facing expulsion from the squad for posing nude in a national periodical.

For purposes of anonymity, I won't use Rick Stempson's real name and instead will call him "the player."

Allegedly, the player was approached by editors of Field and Stream magazine about doing a "natural" pictorial.

The player did admit that he was confused by the editor's use of the word "natural" but stood by his right to be pictured any way he thought proper.

"Hey, I got a constitutional right to flash my butt in the middle of a river. THAT'S RIGHT. Just look at the friggin' Constitution. It's all there. Butts ... rivers ... obscene exposure. It's all there," the player allegedly said.

However, the athletic department supposedly doesn't concur with the player's constitutional interpretation.

According to unsubstantiated reports from my confidant and gerbil, Mookie, the player has been asked to leave the team.

The athletic department was unavailable for comment, but they did allegedly say that the tennis team needs to start getting a little more sun.

Now, if you'll indulge me in a little commentary, I think any athletes, when not participating in their respective sports, should be able to conduct themselves in the manner that they deem appropriate.

In the present case, the pictorial was tasteful and artistic. Well, if you don't count that one picture with the player and the three muskrats. But seriously, besides that, everything was done with a high degree of integrity.

We must allow public figures to lead the lives they want to lead. I mean first it was James Brown and now this. Will Big Brother ever leave his grimy, bureaucratic hands off of us?

I feel compelled to end this column with a correction. Last week, I reported that the Nebraska football team had two scholarship quarterbacks and a scholarship wussy. This is erroneous. Nebraska, in fact, has two scholarship quarterbacks and a walk-on wussy. Sorry for the confusion.

Finley is a second-year law student and a Daily Nebraskan sports columnist.