

# SPORTS

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## Huskers' full potential still eludes Osborne

By Trevor Parks

Staff Reporter

The Nebraska football team may be the top-ranked team in the country according to the coaches' poll.

However, two games into the season, coach Tom Osborne still isn't quite sure how good his team can be.

After dropping to second in the Associated Press poll and looking back at the first two games on the schedule, Osborne said the competition Nebraska had played might not have been as tough as he originally thought.

"I'm not real sure about the quality of our

opponents at this time," Osborne said at Monday's Extra Point Club luncheon.

Still, Osborne said he voted his team No. 1 in the coaches' poll.

After Nebraska beat West Virginia 31-0 in the Kickoff Classic, the Mountaineers won a 16-14 squeaker over Ball State and lost at Rutgers 17-12 Saturday.

"Obviously West Virginia is not as good as last year," Osborne said. "A 16-14 victory over Ball State is not a real whitewash. Rutgers beat them, and that doesn't look good."

Nebraska's second opponent, Texas Tech, impressed Osborne with the way it played in the 42-16 loss to the Cornhuskers. Earlier this year,

the Red Raiders defeated New Mexico 37-31.

"I was impressed with their tenacity," Osborne said. "They might have an outside chance at the (Southwest) conference title."

Osborne said this Saturday's contest against No. 13 UCLA would be a sign of just how good the Huskers could be.

"This week will be the first team we face that has a comparable type of athletes," Osborne said. "We'll play that by ear and see how we do."

The Bruins are coming off of a 17-10 victory at home against Southern Methodist Saturday.

"A lot of people might look at the score and get a lot of encouragement," Osborne said. "Some say UCLA is not very good; I don't think that's the

case."

Osborne said he was hoping to see UCLA blow out SMU, so the Bruins might come into the Nebraska game confident in their abilities.

"They probably weren't too excited about playing SMU," Osborne said. "Now they may be under a lot of scrutiny. They might want to make a statement this week."

Osborne said he expected the Bruin team that defeated No. 15 Tennessee 25-23 to show up in Lincoln, not the team that struggled against the Mustangs.

"You will see a way different team Saturday in Lincoln than the one last Saturday in the Rose Bowl," Osborne said.

## Husker receiver Reggie Baul catches on with four receptions

By Trevor Parks

Staff Reporter

Reggie Baul is happy to be a major part of the Nebraska football offense this season, and his statistics have shown it.

After playing in 11 games last year, Baul caught only seven passes for 116 yards.

In the Federal Express Orange Bowl, Baul hauled in his first touchdown pass as a Cornhusker. Baul caught a 34-yard touchdown pass that deflected off teammate Clester Johnson.

And he didn't have to wait long to catch another.

Against West Virginia in the Kickoff Classic, Baul pulled in his second career touchdown pass on a 12-yard diving catch.

Now only two games into the 1994 campaign, Baul has four receptions for 60 yards and one touchdown.

For his efforts in the Kickoff Classic, Baul was named Nebraska's offensive player-of-the-game by the Husker coach-

ing staff.

"I wasn't even thinking about that," Baul said. "I need to keep doing my job and don't think about getting awards."

Receivers coach Ron Brown said Baul deserved the award.

"Every play, play-in, play-out he was blocking. When the time came for him to catch the ball, he did," Brown said. "His big plays, as well as his consistency, led him to achieving that selection."

In Thursday night's 42-16 victory over Texas Tech, Baul had one reception for 12 yards.

The 5-foot-8, 170-pound junior from Papillion-La Vista said playing split end in a running program could be frustrating at times, but it has paid dividends.

"I understand what our football philosophy is, so I'm content with blocking," Baul said. "That makes me a more all-around receiver."

Baul, who backed up Corey Dixon last year, said changing his style of receiving was tough, but now he's glad to see the progress.

"My first game here, I felt I needed to be at more of a passing school," Baul said. "After you see how well your blocking helps get bigger plays, you start wanting to block more."

Brown said Baul had improved his overall receiving ability since coming to Nebraska as a walk-on in 1991.

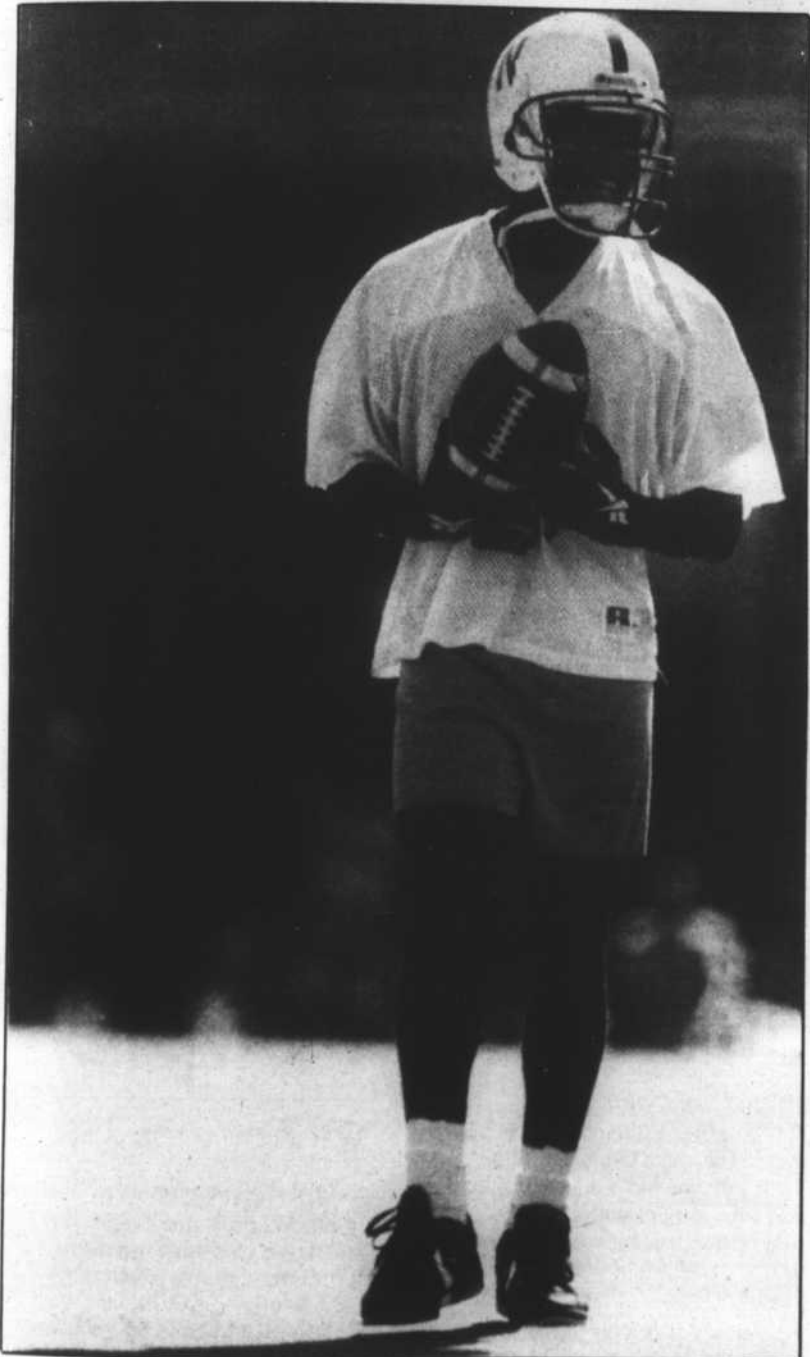
"He's improved tremendously," Brown said. "There is still some more work to get done, but his work ethic has increased dramatically."

Although Baul may lack the size of a receiver, his speed and quickness more than make up for that problem.

"I have to be a little more quicker because I'm not as tall as some other receivers," Baul said. "Speed and quickness are really an advantage."

Brown agreed.

"He can stop on a dime," Brown said. "A receiver has got to have more than just speed; he's got to be able to change speeds, and he's still learning that phase of the game."



Jon Waller/DN

After his first game at Nebraska, split end Reggie Baul wasn't happy. Now after three years, Baul is the Huskers' second-leading receiver.

## Coaches' poll ranks five Big 8 teams

By Mitch Sherman

Senior Reporter

For the first time in 16 years, the Big Eight conference boasts five teams ranked in one of the major polls.

Kansas entered this week's coaches' poll ranked at No. 23. Along with No. 21 Kansas State, No. 19 Oklahoma, No. 7 Colorado and No. 1 Nebraska, the Big Eight has more ranked teams than it's had since Sept. 25, 1978.

But that isn't the whole story.

Hard times have fallen upon two Big Eight programs that had fostered high expectations heading into this season.

Iowa State, which returns 21 starters from a year ago, has kicked off the 1994

season with back-to-back losses.

In addition, Missouri, optimistic heading into the season with new coach Larry Smith, has looked hapless in its first two games, including Saturday's 42-0 loss to Illinois.

Smith said "wholesale changes" will be made in the Missouri lineup before Saturday's game in the Astrodome against Houston.

"If a guy is not giving you effort and not making improvements," Smith said, "then you make changes. We find ourselves having to change goals, but this team is completely capable of anything right now."

Cyclone coach Jim Walden, who has

a 28-49-2 record in seven-plus seasons at Iowa State, said he has had to shield his players from harsh fan treatment after two losses to in-state rivals Northern Iowa and Iowa.

Walden said he would rather be the sole victim of criticism.

"You can call me a bum if you want," he said, "but don't call our players that."

NOTE:

● Nebraska I-back Lawrence Phillips was named Big Eight offensive player of the week for his efforts against Texas Tech on Thursday. The sophomore from West Covina, Calif., ran for 175 yards on 19 carries and caught three passes for 39 yards in the Huskers' 42-16 win.

## Heisman hype arrives too early in season for Frazier

My mother always told me, "Don't count your chickens before they've hatched."

I, of course, misunderstood her as saying, "Don't surmount your chicklets while on a velvet couch."

As you may have guessed, I didn't know what the hell that meant, and so I failed to learn this piece of life's truth until the beginning of this year's Hornhonker, I mean, Cornhusker football season.

This brings me to the artistic portion of today's column:

Roses are red,  
Clams are mollusks,  
If I hear one more thing about Tommie Frazier winning the Heisman, I'm gonna yak with the immediacy of Speedy Gonzalez.

Speaking of Speedy, did anyone see the time he played pingpong by him-

self? I tell you, if you failed to see this feat of table tennis excellence, you missed out on a slice of something special.

For my money (and maybe I'm going out on a limb), I think a healthy and confident Speedy Gonzalez could take Forrest Gump. Hey, pingpong is a sport of concentration, and Speedy is just stronger mentally, and plus — he's a MOUSE. Ya gotta love rodents.

OK, back to my original topic. Why, as Nebraskans, are we so concerned about Tommie winning the Heisman?

He doesn't seem to give a rat's heiney about the award; why the hell should we?

Now please don't get me wrong, I think Tommie "Dairy Queen" Frazier is the best quarterback I've ever seen wear a Cornhogger uniform, but that doesn't mean I've picked him for the Heisman already after watching him play for only seven quarters.

The Heisman is becoming less an



Beau Finley

award for the best player in college football and more a hypefest to see which school's sports information department is the slickest.

The play of players seems to mean less in the Heisman race than the advertising appeal of players.

That's patently wrong, and it angers me that the press and the colleges across the country are trying to steal the dignity of college football's most prestigious award and cheaply replace it with an advertising slogan.

By the way, did you guys get that

"Dairy Queen" nickname I gave to Tommie? C'mon — you know, Dairy Queen Frazier — and then I said "Dairy Queen" Frazier. Ya get it, ya get it?

Ah, forget it. The only reason you all are reading this friggin' column is so you don't have to listen to the boring professors you all have. Not only is this column crappy, it's facilitating ignorance among my peers. My life's a cruel joke.

Anyway, if I could pick anyone in the country to win the Heisman, it probably would be Tommie. Wait, actually I'd most likely pick my sister, Ashley, but that's only because she throws more accurately than Tommie. She's got a cannon, a CANNON I tell you.

No, if I could pick any major college football player in the country to win the Heisman, the truth is that I couldn't right now. I've seen only 200 players so far this season out of the vast multitude

that are playing in the NCAA this year.

My point is there's no real way to select even a list of Heisman candidates two weeks into the season, let alone a winner.

So my suggestion is: Let's chill a bit on the Heisman banter. Let's sit back, grab a fruit roll-up and just enjoy watching Tommie and the Cornlovers win a national championship. Hey, if the Heisman comes — cool. If it doesn't — we've got something to bitch about.

NU Swimming Update: It has been rumored that several drownings have occurred in preseason workouts this year.

The rumor mill claims this year's team is lacking something compared to previous Husker swimming squads — flotation devices.

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