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evaney has faith in Osborne

By Derek Samson

Senior Reporter

If Tom Osborne wins his first national championship in his 22 years as the Cornhuskers' head coach, his

predecessor will be just as re-

loses to Miami in the Orange Bowl change former Husker coach Bob Devancy's opinion of

Osborne.

According to - who coached Nebraska Devaney to its only national championships in 1970 and 1971 — the waiting is over for Osborne.

"I think they'll win and Tom will be coach of the year," he said. "I think he's the best coach in the country, and I hope he wins this game so there won't be any question.

"Nearly every year he coached he was in contention for a national championship. He deserves it more than anybody that I know.

Devaney picked Osborne to replace him after his 11-year stint with Nebraska ended after the 1972 sea-

"I figured he would be successful, and I picked him over some guys that were with me for a lot of years," Devancy said. "I can't say that there wouldn't be anyone else that could come in and do the same job I was

too many could have done it the way Tom has.

Osborne has racked up a 218-47-3 record, but is still without a national championship — a title that Devaney says is overrated. "People make such a big deal over

that last game, and it spoils the whole But if Nebraska season," he said. "Some of the things people write say he doesn't win the big ones. Well hell, if you don't win on Jan. 1, it won't the games before that, you never get to the big one. People are lucky that Tom has got us to the big one every year."

Osborne was a vital part of both of Devaney's titles, Devaney said.

"I found out what a fine coach he was right away, but especially the last few years I was (head coach) and he was the offensive coordinator, Devaney said. "He called most of the plays, and he showed at that time that he had a great offensive mind. He was very instrumental in the last four

years I coached.

"If you say that (Nebraska wouldn't have won the champion-ships without Osborne), you're hurting the rest of the staff. That could be right, but I don't know. I do know he contributed a great deal to those teams.

Devaney said it hurt him more than anyone to see Osborne's national championship elude him, especially when the Huskers lost 31-30 to Miami in 1983 and 18-16 to Florida State in 1993.

"I hate to see that happen to Tom,

doing and be successful, but I doubt because I think Tom is the finest football coach in the country," he said. "I've said that for a long time. His record stands for itself. There isn't anyone in college football that has

done what he's done. But Devaney said he felt equally sorry for Husker fans, who haven't seen a national championship in 23

"There are no better college football fans in the country than those in the state of Nebraska," he said. "But they like to win. The way they pack that stadium makes it a great place to coach football. But you better win."

So if Tom Osborne walks out of the Orange Bowl Jan. 1 with his first national championship, no one will be more happy for Osborne than

"We may not have had a lot in common as far as our social lives, but consider Tom a close friend," he said. "We've been good friends ever since we started associating with each other. He's the best football coach in the country, and I have nothing but admiration for Tom. He's a fine person and a fine coach."

But if Nebraska comes out a loser, don't expect Devancy to feed out any advice to Osborne on how he was able to win two championships in 11

"When I quit coaching, I quit coaching," he said. "I made up my mind that I wasn't going to get in anyone's way. I made sure when I quit coaching, that was what I did and I never made one single suggestion to him as far as coaching."

oach can't forget 1984

By Derek Samson

Senior Reporter

When Coach Tom Osborne stands on the sidelines at the Orange Bowl and looks across the field at the Miami Hurricanes, it may be hard for him not to think of Nebraska's 31-30 loss to Miami in the 1984 Orange Bowl.



time, there will be another coach in the stadium with the same memories. Louisville coach

Howard Schnellenberger, who coached Miami to the national champion-

ship victory over the top-ranked Huskers in 1983, will be watching from the stands.

And he will never forget what happened in that stadium 11 years ago.
"Southern Florida was in a

frenzy," Schnellenberger said in a phone interview from Louisville, Ky. "It was engulfed in the most electrifying and exciting atmosphere I ever remember being involved in. That

"As the week went on, I noticed

wanted to bring any football team into the Orange Bowl to play Miami on that night.

And both coaches will probably think about Nebraska's failed 2-point conversion that would have won the Obviously, when I think back to

it, I think about the 2-point conversion," Schnellenberger said. "I knew he (Osborne) was going to do it. Any At the same coach with any grit is going to go for the win. We had a good idea what they were going to do on the play,

But that was then and this is now,

right?

according Wrong, Schnellenberger, who said Nebraska fans should be prepared for the same kind of atmosphere the Hurricanes produced in the 1984 Orange Bowl.

"People don't realize what that home field means," he said. "It means so much. This year particularly, it should be as electrifying as in 1984. The Cornhuskers are going into a very intense and very difficult situa-

"It's too bad Nebraska can't get more fans to go down there because it isn't even close to a neutral site. This isn't just any old home field, this

Schnellenberger took over a Miour players realizing they could ami program in 1979 that had only match up against Nebraska. We were two winning seasons in the previous ready for that game. I would not have 11 years and led them to a 41-16

record in his five seasons at Miami.

Since Schnellenberger's arrival in Miami, the Hurricanes have won four national championships under three different coaches - Schnellenberger, Jimmy Johnson and Dennis Erickson.

"When I went to Miami in 1979, the University of Miami was coming off of the floor," Schnellenberger said. 'I had a five-year contract, and the football program there depended on what I got done in those five years. The turnaround was almost complete.

"Then in 1983, we were 10-1, rated No. 4 and going against a team that was supposed to be the best football team in four decades. We certainly had a fine football team, but we weren't even close to as talented as Nebraska. Then, what happened that night was phenomenal.'

Because of Schnellenberger's ties to Miami - he was a Miami Dolphin assistant before becoming coach of the Hurricanes — he still owns a house in Miami and remains a fan.

"The history books state that (I turned it around) and nothing can take that away," he said. "When you give a birth to something, just because you want to see it fall. I built something, and I want to see it continue to grow. My heart will always be in

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