

SPORTS

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SPORTS OPINION



Derek Samson

K-State Kittens definitely not the cat's meow

Nebraska coach Tom Osborne had a word of warning after the Cornhuskers cruised to a 57-0 rout of Missouri Saturday.

"From here on, it's different," he said. "We're going to hit K-State, Colorado, Kansas and Oklahoma. They're all going to be pretty solid football teams. There's nothing easy left that I can see."

The Huskers definitely will run into some stiffer competition than they have seen in the first half of the season, considering they will play four of their final five games against teams in the top 15.

So should the Huskers expect to get its first nail-biting game of the season when No. 8 Kansas State comes to Lincoln this Saturday?

Nope. Kansas State will be out to prove it is worthy of its lofty ranking, but the only thing that will become evident after Saturday is that the Kittens are the most overrated team in the country — including Notre Dame.

Just because Kansas State talks a big game doesn't mean it has played one.

For proof, consider the Kittens' non-conference schedule: Temple, Cincinnati, Akron and Northern Illinois — which went a combined 9-34-1 last season.

Bill Snyder has done a superb job of turning the Kittens into a top 25 program. Unfortunately for Snyder, Kansas State will be given a demonstration Saturday that there is a major difference between the top 25 and the top 10.

Why the Kittens are ranked so high is somewhat amazing.

Sure, they are 6-0 against teams with a combined record of 15-49-3 last season. But it took a last-minute touchdown pass for the Kittens to tame Cincinnati (not the Bengals) 23-21, and they could manage to beat Oklahoma State only 23-17 last Saturday at Stillwater, Okla.

Even bad Kansas State teams of the past made it a habit to play the Huskers close, but it's time for that to end.

At midweek, the Huskers are a 25-point favorite, which might seem amazing to a lot of people.

How can the No. 8 team in the country be a 25-point underdog against anyone?

Easy. Gamblers in Las Vegas know it. Cincinnati knows it. Oklahoma State now knows it.

And Saturday, it will become clear to the rest of the country — the Kittens just aren't that good.

To help pay off student loans, keep in mind what the intelligent people of Las Vegas are indicating — a Nebraska rout.

Welcome to the top 10, Kittens. Sorry you couldn't stay any longer. Nebraska 42, Kansas State 7.

Samson is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan senior sports reporter.

Snyder aims at victory

By Trevor Parks
Senior Reporter

MANHATTAN, Kan. — Kansas State coach Bill Snyder is tired of losing close football games to Nebraska.

Scores such as 17-6, 45-28, 38-24 and 38-31 were posted on the scoreboard the past four times the two teams have clashed.

Those games used to be looked upon as successes for the 6-0 Wildcats, but on Saturday when Kansas State travels to Lincoln to play the No. 2 Cornhuskers, Snyder doesn't want the moral victory of finishing close.

"We have played well enough to stay in the ball game against them for four years," Snyder said at his weekly press conference Tuesday, "but not

good enough to win."

In Snyder's first two seasons, Nebraska hammered Kansas State 58-7 in 1989 and 45-8 in 1990. Overall, Snyder is 0-6 against the Huskers in his career.

But from that point on, the teams have played competitive football, Snyder said.

It all started in 1991 with Nebraska trailing Kansas State 31-24 in the fourth quarter. The Wildcats had a chance to extend that lead to 10 points, but Tate Wright missed a 32-yard field goal.

After the missed field goal, the Huskers regained control.

Two Derek Brown touchdown runs — his second coming with 2:47 left in the game — helped Nebraska erase a seven-point deficit. The Huskers even-

tually held back Kansas State after the Wildcats had a first-down-and-goal at Nebraska's 7-yard line in the final minute.

In 1992, the Wildcats trailed 21-0 in the Japan Bowl at Tokyo before outscoring the Huskers 24-17 the rest of the game.

Snyder said his team had opportunities in those games, but they just didn't capitalize on them.

Former Kansas State quarterback Chad May burst on the scene in 1993 throwing for 489 yards. The Wildcats trailed 31-14 at half time, but with 7:44 left in the fourth quarter the score was 31-28. Nebraska scored two late touchdowns to hold off Kansas State 45-38.

See SNYDER on 8

Nebraska vs. Kansas State

Kansas State football coach Bill Snyder is 0-6 against Nebraska.

1989 NU 58 KSU 7

1990 NU 45 KSU 8

1991 NU 38 KSU 31

1992 NU 38 KSU 24

1993 NU 45 KSU 28

1994 NU 17 KSU 6

DN Graphic

Soccer team travels toward tough match

From Staff Reports

The road does not get any easier for the Nebraska soccer team.

After losing 3-1 to No. 4 Southern Methodist at home on Sunday, the 8-5 Cornhuskers now travel to College Station, Texas to play No. 13 Texas A&M today at 4 p.m.

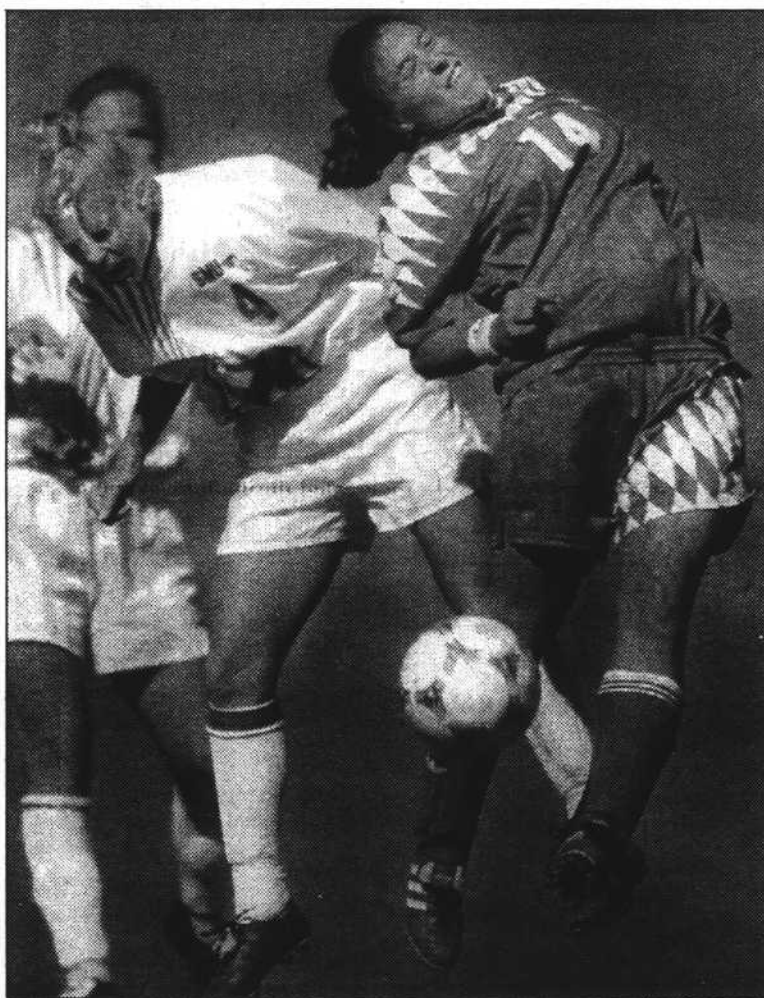
The Aggies are coming off a 1-0 victory over No. 9 Maryland in their last contest. Nebraska coach John Walker said he knew his team was up for a challenge playing a quality team on the road.

"With all the scouting reports," Walker said, "they might even be stronger than SMU."

Nebraska played SMU to a 1-1 draw in the first half on Sunday before losing 3-1. The loss ended the Huskers' seven-game winning streak.

Walker said his team could not dwell on the past and had to worry about the present.

"We're right back at it," Walker said. "We don't have time to feel sorry for ourselves. It's going to be a tough game on Wednesday."



Jon Waller/DN

Nebraska's Tanya Wright and SMU's Melissa Kittner head the ball during the Huskers' 3-1 loss Sunday. Nebraska will take on Texas A&M tonight.

Ott impacts opposing defenders

By Derek Samson
Senior Reporter

Nebraska offensive guard Steve Ott knows his job requirements — helping running backs and quarterbacks gain fame while remaining unknown.

The 6-foot-4, 275-pounder from Henderson said that was the story for every offensive line, and it didn't change just because he was a member of the tradition-filled Nebraska offensive line.

"We're just linemen," he said. "We're not going for any of the glory. We just go out there and do the job. We don't worry about what people say about us or if they know us."

But if the offensive line continues its domination of opponents, Ott can't help but be recognized.

Nebraska is averaging 626 yards a game, including 466 yards rushing a contest. And it all has happened while the Cornhuskers have started four different I-backs throughout their first six games.

"We're going to make yards no matter what," Ott said. "It doesn't really matter who they put back there at I-back. We've been blocking the same since the first game."

Ott said he credited the success to the work put in during the off-season, which was a standard set by last year's offensive linemen.

"It has reaped benefits so far," he said. "We were out there every night, lifting weights and doing our running drills. We had basically 100 percent attendance every night."

"We saw the line last year do that, and to win a national championship, that's just something you have to do. You have to be dedicated the whole year, not just the fall."

After lettering as a sophomore in 1993, Ott played in the first seven games behind left guard Joel Wilks last season. But Ott broke his left foot against Kansas State, ending his season.

Ott underwent surgery for the broken lower fibula on Oct. 16, 1994, and was still slowed by the injury in spring

practices.

Offensive line and kickers coach Dan Young said the coaches were very concerned with Ott's recovery.

"He's been a nice surprise," Young said. "We weren't sure how he'd bounce back after that, but he came back very strong for us this fall."

Ott said he didn't question whether he would be ready for his senior season.

"During spring ball, I was having trouble coming off the ball with my ankle," he said. "But I never really doubted that I wouldn't be 100 percent by the season. I had the whole summer to get back to full speed."

While Ott said he was grateful that last year's line, which returned center Aaron Graham only, taught the younger players valuable lessons; he was still glad they were gone.

"They were great players, and we really learned a lot playing behind them," he said. "But this is great now. It's a great feeling to go out there and play 70 snaps a game. We want to play as much as possible."

Series pits Cleveland vs. Atlanta

SEATTLE (AP)—The Cleveland Indians overcame it all — Randy Johnson, the Kingdome and history.



The epitome of bad baseball for four decades, the Indians reached the World Series for the first time since 1954, defeating the Seattle Mariners 4-0 Wednesday night to win the American League playoffs 4-2 behind seven shutout innings from Dennis Martinez.

"I think that the people of Cleveland have suffered long," said Indians manager Mike Hargrove, who played on some of Cleveland's terrible teams. "This is something you can never count on."

The Mariners, for the fourth time in 16 days, asked Johnson to save their season. Relying on his slider more than his overpowering fastball, he kept his team close until Carlos Baerga's homer capped a three-run eighth, and Johnson left to a standing ovation that included the applause of Indians pitcher Orel Hershiser.

"They come back so many times. They got us scared," Baerga said. "They've got guys that can beat you any time."

Martinez matched Johnson pitch for pitch, holding the Mariners to four hits in seven innings. At 40, he finally won for the first time in the postseason and became the oldest pitcher to win a league championship series game.

Now the Indians, who won 100 times in the regular season and swept Boston in the first round of the playoffs, will take on the Atlanta Braves, the team with the best record in the National League.

The World Series starts Saturday night in Atlanta. Greg Maddux, likely to win his fourth straight NL Cy Young Award, will start Game 1 for the Braves. Orel Hershiser, 7-0 in the postseason, likely will pitch for Cleveland.

The Mariners, a team that had won four games this year when a loss would have meant the end of the season, couldn't come up with any late-inning heroics Tuesday night.

A two-base throwing error by second baseman Joey Cora in the fifth set up an RBI single by Kenny Lofton for a 1-0 lead. Cleveland broke open the game at last in the eighth on a passed ball by Dan Wilson that allowed two runs to score, and the homer by Baerga that finished Johnson.