



Trevor Parks/DN

Schnellenberger's first season at OU ending in disappointment

By Todd Walkenhorst
Staff Reporter

When the state of Oklahoma watched Gary Gibbs coach his last game against Brigham Young in the Copper Bowl, fans were expecting brighter things to come.

Howard Schnellenberger already had been named the new Sooner head coach and watched the 31-6 Sooner loss from a skybox at Arizona Stadium. The Sooners ended 1994 with a 6-6 record and a 4-3 conference record.

In 1995, things have been anything but brighter. In Schnellenberger's first season, Oklahoma has posted a 5-4-1 record and a 2-4 conference record, including losses to Kansas and Oklahoma State.

And on Friday, the Sooners must face No. 1 Nebraska, a team that reminds Schnellenberger of the 1983 Nebraska team that his Miami team defeated 31-30 in the 1984 Orange Bowl.

"If there's a better one around, I haven't seen them," he said. "They have a lot of confidence and enthusiasm. Just like back then (in 1983), it is hard to find a weak spot."

But Schnellenberger has found many weak spots in his young Sooner team this year.

"Our biggest downfall is the fact that we have not played with the con-

fidence and consistency I thought we would," Schnellenberger said. "We have not found the way to not lose; it has been surprising to me, but maybe it should not have been."

In the tradition-rich Oklahoma program, the attention on the Sooners this year has intensified because they are rebuilding.

"It puts much bigger spotlight on it," Schnellenberger said. "Your lack of success is certainly magnified."

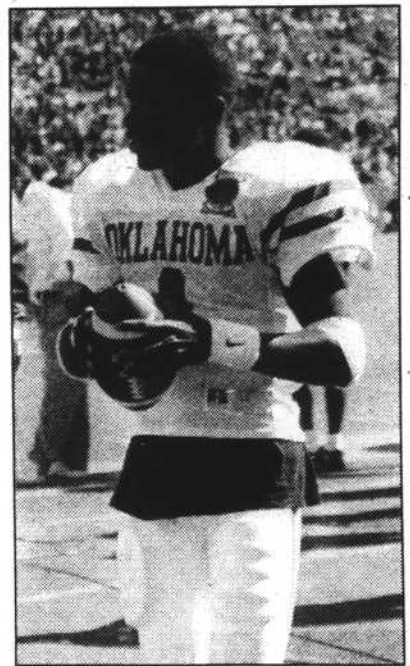
Schnellenberger began the season with wins over San Diego State, Southern Methodist and North Texas. After that, the Sooners posted a 2-4-1 record. And as the schedule got tougher, the team's confidence decreased.

"Our young quarterback (Eric Moore), who started out playing well for a youngster," Schnellenberger said, "ran into so much adversity that he is not playing with as much confidence as he did at the beginning of the year."

Even though it's been a tough year for Oklahoma, Schnellenberger said he hoped to build on the Oklahoma-Nebraska tradition. Friday's game will be the last Big Eight game for both teams because the Big 12 starts next season.

"I'm certainly banking on some of that being a positive thing for us," Schnellenberger said. "As happens in most traditional games like this, there is a resurgence of enthusiasm, and that's what I'm counting on."

Schnellenberger believed from the



Mitch Sherman/DN

Oklahoma quarterback Eric Moore has struggled at times for the Sooners this year.

start of the season that his team could compete, and if his team could compete, the wins would come.

"When I started the year, I was optimistic and confident," Schnellenberger said. "I thought we could compete and win. I wasn't very far off; we've competed but not won."

Before the season Oklahoma coach Howard Schnellenberger was pointing toward revitalizing the Sooners. Now, after posting a 5-4-1 record in his first year, Schnellenberger has come under fire.

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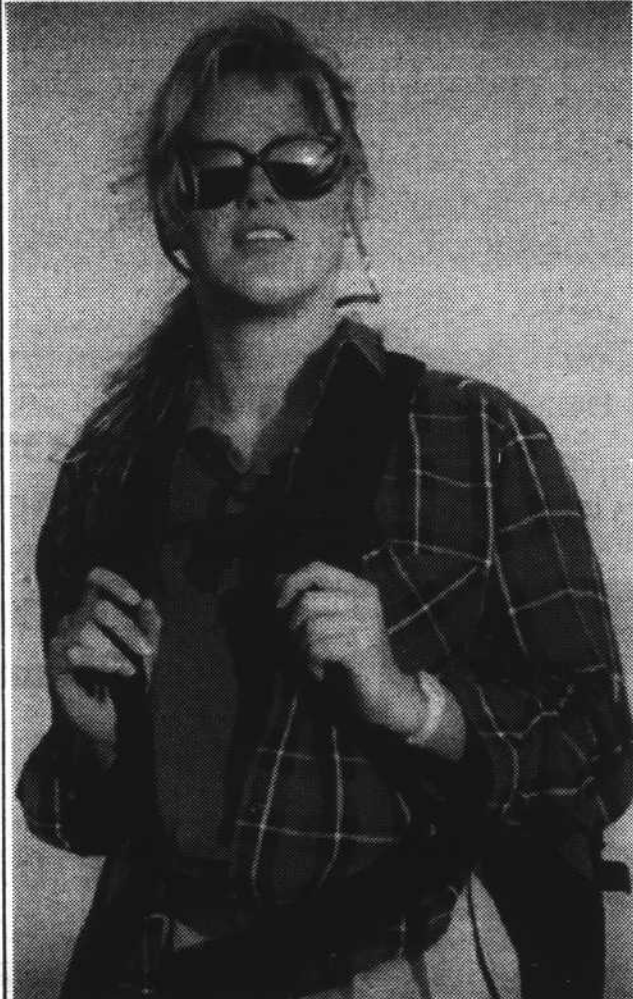
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A decade after her treatment, Robin is employed in alcohol and drug prevention.

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