

New book reflects on winning

By Mike Kluck
Staff Writer

When people reminisce about Nebraska's back-to-back national championships, Tom Osborne hopes they don't just read newspaper clippings.

That hope is why the Cornhusker football coach decided to write "On Solid Ground", a book detailing his viewpoint of the Husker's last three seasons on and off the field.

"Obviously there has been a lot of things said about Nebraska football over the last couple of years, particularly last year," Osborne said. "Some of it wasn't entirely accurate and some of it was deserved. So, I thought I would provide at least a little bit different perspective on it. Admittedly a biased perspective."

"On Solid Ground" goes on sale Friday at Nebraska Bookstore locations, and then goes nationwide the week of Aug. 12. The book will sell for \$26.95 plus tax.

Osborne said he didn't think it was appropriate to prosper personally from the sales of the book, so all proceeds he receives will go to charity.

Osborne will be autographing books tonight from 6-8 p.m. at the Nebraska Bookstore for 1,500 buyers who have pre-purchased tickets. He previously autographed books on Tuesday and Wednesday. Tonight's session is the only one Osborne said

he plans to have until at least after the 1996 season.

Osborne said "On Solid Ground" helps explain on- and off-field decisions which were made last year and haven't been discussed before.

"Hopefully the average fan would enjoy reading it," Osborne said. "The one thing I'm concerned about is that 20 years from now when someone wants to look back on Nebraska football, they will have another resource."

The book isn't "ghost written," Osborne said, and 90 to 95 percent of the words in the book are exactly as he wrote them.

He also said 75 percent of the book is a chronological history of the 1995 season in which the Huskers won their second straight national title, but also endured media scrutiny for off-field problems. The rest of the book focuses on the players and the 1993 and 1994 seasons.

"The main reason I felt some need to write a book was that I have been very impressed by the attitude, the commitment, the unity and the goal-centeredness of our football players the last three years," Osborne said. "I felt as good about the team three years ago as I did in '94 and '95. In any case, on all three teams there was a lot of focus."

Many aspects of the 1995 season are discussed in the book Osborne said, including his handling of Lawrence Phillips.

The former Nebraska I-back was suspended for six games for an assault of a former girlfriend in September. But when Phillips returned to the team in November, Osborne and the Nebraska football program became labeled as a win-at-all-costs program.

"I would want people to understand more why things were done," Osborne said. "It's pretty much a public record of what was done, but nothing is as simple as it seems at first. There's a lot more that goes into college athletics than what the casual observer believes. It's not quite as simple as it sometimes seems."

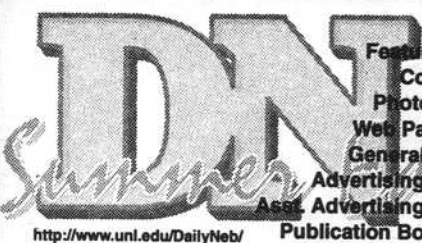
With the start of the football season, Osborne said he doesn't plan on promoting the book too much.

However, Jim Cornell, general manager of the Nebraska Bookstore, said they have received 20 requests from markets across the country ordering the book. Cornell said he is planning on running an ad in USA Today this week to promote the book.

Cornell said "On Solid Ground" has the potential to be a strong seller nationally.

Osborne, who wrote "More Than Winning" in 1985, said "On Solid Ground" will probably be his last book.

"More Than Winning" sold approximately 80,000 copies, while the Nebraska Book Publishing Company has published 50,000 copies of "On Solid Ground," with 25,000 more on order.



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<http://www.unl.edu/DailyNeb/>
 Fax Number 472-1761

The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNL Publication Board, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588-0448, Monday through Friday during the academic year; weekly during summer sessions.
 Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by phoning 472-1763 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The public also has access to the Publication Board. For information, contact Tim Hedegaard, 472-2588.
 Subscription price is \$55 for one year.
 Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, P.O. Box 880448, Lincoln, NE 68588-0448. Periodical postage paid at Lincoln, NE.

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