

Osborne is God to GQ writer

GQ from page 1

Osborne's "flock" of players — players who, in recent years, have been receiving press for off-field troubles.

In the article, Junod refers mostly to three violent incidents involving Husker football players. In 1992, Scott Baldwin, a Cornhusker running back, was arrested for beating a Lincoln woman after he stripped off all his clothes in the middle of a street. Lawrence Phillips, a Husker I-back, pleaded no contest to assaulting an ex-girlfriend in 1995. And Christian Peter, a defensive tackle, was found guilty of third-degree sexual assault in 1995.

In his article, Junod asserts that Osborne looms faithfully omnipresent in those players' lives, lives in which the only constant may be football, and Osborne.

But no matter what Osborne does, or who he is, Junod wrote, the coach's flock still wanders sometimes.

He is the coach as creator or, more precisely, the Creator as Coach, and if he is not God, then at the very least he has to answer for God's own paradox: how a man so faultless, so spot-

less, so famously good has managed to fashion, in his own image, an entity as open to tragedy, and as given to malice and mayhem, as the Cornhuskers of Nebraska.

Junod met Osborne during his research for Sports Illustrated on the Scott Baldwin story. And although Junod just wrote a personal profile on Osborne, the coach remains almost as much of a mystery as he was before to the author.

"I've never met anybody like Tom Osborne," Junod said, "which lent a level of fascination that took me through the hard stretches."

And there were hard stretches: Osborne is a notoriously tough interview. Junod has worked for magazines like Sports Illustrated, GQ and Life, and is the only writer in history to have won the National Magazine Award for feature writing two years consecutively.

"The things that you do with a normal story didn't work with Osborne," he said. "You can't quote him at length. It's hard to carry on your regular human conversation with him." The respect Junod has for Osborne shines

through, if not in the article, when he speaks of the coach. Junod said he was aware of Osborne's religious beliefs when he used the God reference.

"I have no doubt that he is the Christian man that he says he is," Junod said. "If the opening blast of blasphemy bothers him, I have to take the repercussions."

Junod said he thinks it probably will offend Osborne, but he didn't mean necessarily to do that.

"It's just a strategy to get the story going," he said. "It certainly wasn't done in the spirit of mockery."

Junod said Osborne didn't talk much while the author was researching the article. And the coach didn't talk much about the article, either. When he saw the close-up, gritty, black and white photo GQ ran with the article, Osborne showed little surprise.

"I didn't figure it would be very flattering," Osborne said. "I don't read that stuff, and I told them I'd prefer not to do the article."

That's all, and that's it. The only words anyone ever may hear about his reaction to his appearance in the slick fashion magazine.

While he was doing interviews for the article, Junod had a hard time capturing a more personal view of Osborne. So he turned to those who knew the coach well, including Christian Peter, who Junod describes in the article as one of the coach's favorites.

During interviews at Lazzari's Pizza, where Christian and his brother Jason Peter's jerseys hang on the wall, Junod said he grew to like Peter, despite all the bad things he had heard about him. In his article, he compares Peter to Lennie, the blunt-minded, bumbling, big-hearted giant who makes fatal mistakes in "Of Mice and Men." Junod has a theory on why Osborne likes Peter as much as he does.

"Christian represents a side of Tom that he could never express: gregarious, rowdy ... the side that Tom keeps beyond tucked in."

The Osborne Junod describes is more than "tucked in." The "personal" profile is merely a far-off squint at the life of an untouchable.

"I think he's one of the most distanced and distancing people I've ever met."

Speaker says unity underlies China's political past, future

By KASEY KERBER
Senior Reporter

Professor Daniel W.Y. Kwok examined China's past and its link to the future in this year's first E.N. Thompson Forum lecture, held Thursday afternoon at the Lied Center for Performing Arts.

Kwok, a professor of Chinese and world history at the University of Hawaii, founded the public discussion group China Seminar in 1975. He is also chairman and director of the Freedom Forum Asia Fellowships.

He said current issues such as China's "cultural revolution," communist influence and recent military challenge to Taiwan were linked to past unity and disunity of China's northern and southern provinces.

Kwok explained that China's alternating periods of unity and disunity

spanned from the Shang Dynasty, which ran from 1766 B.C. to 1122 B.C., to the formation of the People's Republic of China and beyond.

During these periods separate and joint dynasties, as well as foreign powers, ruled China. This often caused disunity among parts of the country, Kwok said, but also produced a longing for unification that survives to the present day.

"Unification runs very deep in the China conscience," he said.

The unification theme ties into China's future acquisition of Hong Kong from the United Kingdom.

Hong Kong, currently a dependent territory of the United Kingdom, will have its ownership revert back to China in 1997.

"July 1997 is less than a year away," Kwok said. "What changes will occur at that time? This we do not fully know."

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