

Sports Opinion



Mike Kluck

Field battles take priority over recruiting

Before Nebraska and Baylor take a snap Saturday at Memorial Stadium, some fans from both teams already believe that the Bears have beaten the Cornhuskers.

Last season Baylor beat Nebraska and a large group of other schools, signing the man referred to by many as the most versatile high school quarterback in the nation: Odell James.

James was a senior at MacArthur High School in Aldine, Texas, racking up impressive numbers, which included 5,870 total yards in his three-year career and a 25-7-2 record as a starter.

Moments after Nebraska's victory over Florida in the Fiesta Bowl, a Husker fan asked ESPN's Chris Fowler if NU could three-peat.

Only if NU could sign James, Fowler said.

Early on, it looked like Nebraska had the inside track. All the way down to the numbering system, MacArthur's offense was a Cornhusker clone, so James would have fit in perfectly in Lincoln.

James had attended Nebraska's summer camp in 1995 and had a good feel for the campus. Throughout his senior year, James told his MacArthur assistant Terry Forga — now the school's head coach — that he was going to Nebraska.

That was until a recruiting trip to Lincoln in December, about a week before the Huskers left for Tempe, Ariz., for the Fiesta Bowl.

When James returned to Aldine, his views about NU had changed, and in less than three weeks, he signed with Baylor, a team that finished the 1995 season with a 7-4 mark.

On Thursday, all James would say was that he had a bad experience in Lincoln.

His mother, Claudia, said she doesn't want to talk about Odell's trip.

"Children can be children," Claudia James said, "especially when they're not brought up properly. There were some on the trip who were very disrespectful to Odell."

According to Nebraska Coach Tom Osborne and Forga, James argued with an NU player during a game of dominoes while on his visit in Lincoln.

But by the time James visited, Osborne said, the Huskers had backed off in their recruiting effort for many different reasons, including James' academic problems.

When Baylor takes the field on Saturday, James will be sitting in his dorm room in Waco, Texas, recovering from arthroscopic knee surgery during his redshirt season.

And both teams face the same question: Who really won the battle?

Kluck is a graduate student in journalism and a Daily Nebraskan senior reporter.

NU aims for domination

Despite his injury, Benning earns the starting I-back spot.



By **MIKE KLUCK**
Senior Reporter

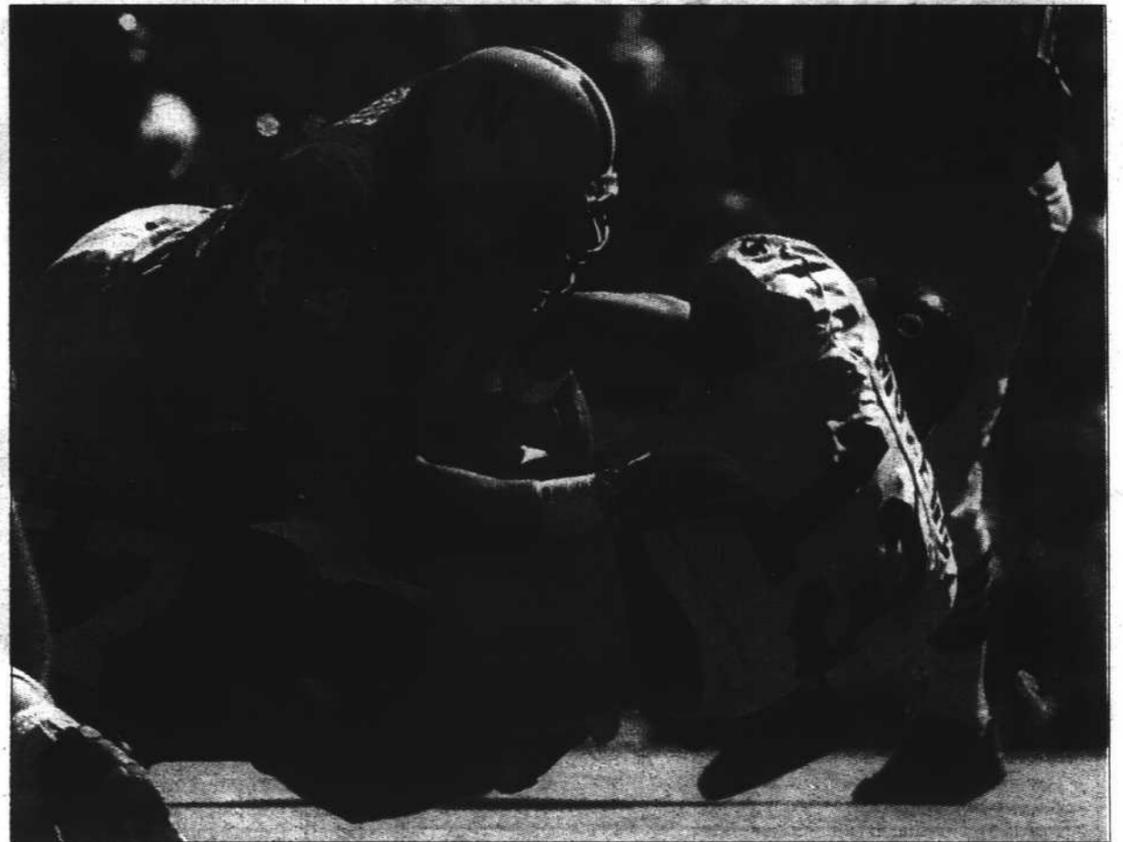
Last Saturday against Kansas State the Nebraska defense turned in one of the most dominating performances Cornhusker Coach Tom Osborne has seen in his 23 years as a head coach.

In a 39-3 victory Nebraska (3-1 and 1-0 in the Big 12) allowed the Wildcats only 86 yards of total offense, recorded **Wistrom** three sacks, blocked one punt, stuffed another punt and intercepted three passes.

Saturday, Baylor (3-1 and 0-1) gets to find out whether the Huskers will experience a let-down, or if last week's game was just a building block for a defense that is continuing to improve.

Nebraska will play host to Baylor at 1 p.m. Saturday at Memorial Stadium.

"I hope it (the defense) is hitting its stride quicker," Osborne said. "We just have to hope that we can maintain that intensity week after week. Defense is played with intensity, and it has to do a lot with emotion."



SCOTT BRUHN/DN

JON HESSE sacks Colorado State's Moses Moreno earlier this season. Hesse and his defensive teammates hope to produce a second straight dominating performance Saturday against Baylor.

Surprising to Husker fans and disheartening to Baylor supporters, Nebraska rush end Grant Wistrom said the Husker front four did not play great against Kansas State.

Wistrom, fellow rush end Jared

Tomich and defensive tackles Jason Peter and Jeff Ogard combined for just five of Nebraska's 34 tackles last week.

"We played pretty darn good Saturday," Wistrom said. "But we felt that none of us played exceptionally well.

There were lots of things we could have done better in the game.

"I feel we can improve on that performance. We were pretty darn suc-

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Two-day layoff helps Huskers, Walker says

By **VINCE D'ADAMO**
Staff Reporter

The sixth-ranked Nebraska soccer team wraps up its 10-game homestand this weekend at the Abbott Sports Complex with a pair of contests against Big 12 Conference opponents.

The Cornhuskers (11-0 and 3-0 in the Big 12) take on Oklahoma State tonight at 7 and Colorado on Sunday at 1 p.m.

Oklahoma State is in its first season playing soccer, but Coach Karen Hancock's Cowgirls have not played like a first-year team. Their record is 6-4-1. However, they have struggled since starting 4-0.

NU Coach John Walker said Oklahoma State is a determined and hard-working team.

"They've played everyone very tough," Walker said. "They're taking the same mentality we did in our first year. They're not using age as an excuse, and they don't seem to be awed by the competition."

Colorado brings a 3-5-1 record to Lincoln. The Buffaloes have struggled offensively, scoring only 10 goals in nine games.

Freshman forward Shawn Kenyon leads the Buffs with five goals, and CU goalkeeper Nina Bjornstad has played well, recording 78 saves and allowing just 15

Soccer

Abbott Sports Complex

Oklahoma St., today, 7 p.m.

goals.

"We want to come out flying," Walker said. "Anytime you can come out and score one or two goals early, it makes it a much bigger challenge."

For the Huskers, junior midfielder Kari Uppinghouse has a chance rewrite the record book for total points in a season. Uppinghouse needs only one assist to break Danielle Boswell's mark of 26 points, set in 1994.

"Kari's had an excellent season," Walker said. "She's evolved into a complete player, especially defensively. She's also done a fine job of creating things offensively."

Last week, Walker said, the Huskers were experiencing the "dog days of October." So the coach gave the team two days off at the beginning of the week.

"It was their first break since training camp," Walker said. "We have a lot of nagging injuries but nothing serious. I think the team feels rejuvenated."

Endicott's last stand highlights exhibition

By **TREVOR PARKS**
Senior Reporter

As Lori Endicott prepares to say goodbye to the U.S. National Volleyball Team, she is also glad to have the opportunity to bid farewell to the people who launched her decorated career.

"I'm really excited about coming back to Lincoln," said Endicott, a former Nebraska All-American who **Endicott** will play setter for the U.S. National Team tonight against the Huskers in an exhibition match.

"I'm thinking about retiring at the end of the month, so it will be nice to play in front of a great crowd and be part of that great tradition one final time."

Endicott returns with eight other players from the 1996 U.S. Olympic Team to face NU tonight at 7 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center. The Huskers continue regular-season play Sunday with a 1:30 p.m. match against Oklahoma at the NU Coliseum.

Tonight Endicott is scheduled to set for the Cornhuskers in a rally-scoring game following the match.

All reserved seats for the match are sold out, but many \$6 general admission tickets are still available. As of

Volleyball

Devaney Center

U.S. National Team, today, 7 p.m.

NU Coliseum

Oklahoma, Sunday, 1:30 p.m.

Thursday afternoon, more than 4,000 tickets had been sold.

The national team is playing the fourth of a six-match Alumni Challenge Tour. In the tour's first three matches, the national team has beaten second-ranked Stanford 15-4, 15-4, 15-6, No. 18 Pacific 15-1, 15-2, 15-5 and fifth-ranked Long Beach State 15-7, 15-3, 15-10.

After playing the Huskers, the national team winds up its tour with matches against Arizona State and Arizona.

Although his team is likely to be blown out, NU Coach Terry Pettit said his major concern is to get through the match healthy.

When the match was scheduled last May, the Huskers were expecting to have 15 players available. But with Renee Saunders doubtful after suffering an injury to her left ankle Wednesday against Colorado, NU is left with only 10 healthy players.

"Realistically," Pettit said, "if we play hard and the U.S. team plays hard,

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