

Sports Opinion



Trevor Parks OU coach builds foundation for future success

NORMAN, Okla. — With the elections Tuesday, I'd like to make an endorsement. John Blake is the right choice for football coach at the University of Oklahoma.

It's an endorsement that is difficult to understand after one of the worst losses in school history, the equivalent to a scandal the night before the election.

In its 73-21 loss Saturday, OU allowed more points to Nebraska than it had in 980 games. But Blake is right for the Sooners.

He's not the one out there fumbling punts, missing tackles or throwing back-to-back-to-back interceptions. He's not the guy missing blocks, punting the ball with a hang time of 0.2 seconds or allowing a kickoff return for a touchdown in the final minute.

But Blake still takes the heat for his players. The fumbled punt by Jarraill Jackson was not Jackson's fault, Blake said, but his fault for not teaching the redshirt freshman how to properly field a bouncing punt.

Blake, who at 34 is one of the youngest head coaches in college football, is a good coach with a team full of Gary Gibbs and Howard Schnellenberger leftovers. Ten of the 24 players Blake recruited are redshirting this season.

"I was aware how far down the program was," said Blake, who is 2-6 in his first year at OU. "We've done some good things as a football team. This football team is building. This football team is down, but we are going to come back."

Blake has seen the program go from glorious to sourness. He played at Oklahoma from 1979 through 1982 and came back 10 years later as an assistant coach before taking over the top job in December. For now, Blake must struggle through a rebuilding season with little talent.

As an assistant coach with the Dallas Cowboys from 1993 through 1995, he watched a supremely talented team win two Super Bowls.

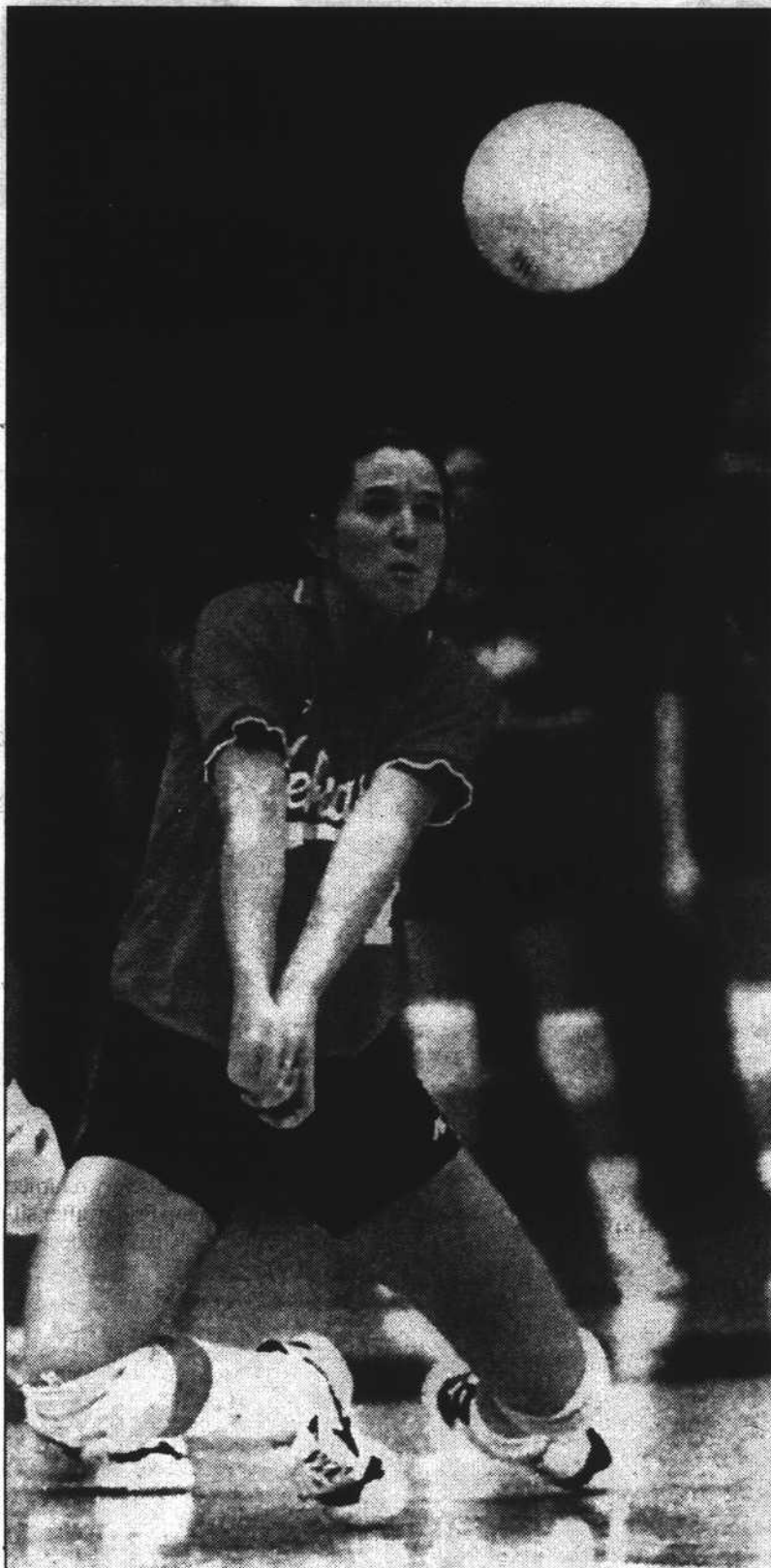
"I know what kind of personnel it takes," Blake said. "I know what kind of effort it takes. We are building toward that, and I'm looking forward to get the right personnel to go out and match up against Nebraska."

Blake has the right formula to get there. He wants athletic kids who have the heart to give their best, something that has been lacking from Sooner football for several years.

"If you do things right," Blake said, "and you treat people right and you live right, then you ought to be treated right."

If that were the case, Blake would be winning all his games by a landslide.

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



JAY CALDERON/DA

KATE CRNICH digs an Oklahoma attack Friday night.

Kiptarus, Boor place 1-2 at Big 12 meet

From Staff Reports

Juniors Jonah Kiptarus and Cleophas Boor became the first Nebraska combination to finish 1-2 at a conference cross country meet, leading the Nebraska men to a second-place finish at the Big 12 Championships in Ames, Iowa on Saturday.



Third-ranked Colorado Kiptarus squeaked by Nebraska, scoring 68 points to NU's 70. Iowa State (95 points) finished third, Missouri was fourth and Oklahoma was fifth.

Kiptarus crossed the finish line at 24 minutes, 52 seconds and Boor placed second at 25:04. The Nebraska duo has placed 1-2 at every meet this fall.

Balazs Tolgyesi finished in eighth place and Phillip Maiyo came in 35th. Other NU finishers included Aaron Scheer (40th), Lou Petricca (45th) and Aaron Johnson

(52nd).

Cornhusker captain David Olson exited the race early with a sideache, damaging NU's chance at the title. Kiptarus became the first Husker to win a league title since 1992.

The runner-up finish by Nebraska was NU's best finish since it placed second in 1989.

In the women's 5,000-meter competition, Colorado won the Big 12 title with 30 points, followed by Missouri with 78 points and Nebraska (123 points). Colorado's Kelly Smith won the race in 17:59.

Nebraska was led by senior Christina Blackmer, who placed 18th with a time 18:40. NU freshman Jaime Pauli finished 22nd in 18:45 and Melissa Wilson was 24th in 18:46.

Other Nebraska finishers included Sheri MacFee (29th), Amie Finkner (30th), Nora Shepherd (32nd), Melinda Mohr (39th), Sandy Fein (53rd) and Megan Mahle (83rd).

Nebraska will next compete in the NCAA District 5 Championships in Peoria, Ill., on Nov. 16.

Tired NU digs deep in sweep

Huskers welcome
rest after four matches
in eight days.

Nebraska	15	15	15
Oklahoma	11	10	9

By Trevor Parks
Senior Reporter

NORMAN, Okla. — A weary Terry Pettit was wary of playing Oklahoma Friday night.

Nebraska's volleyball coach feared fatigue may be a factor after NU's tough three-match run that had it playing at Baylor and No. 19 Texas Tech last weekend before a home match against Colorado last Wednesday night.

Seventh-ranked NU concluded its fourth match in eight days by defeating the Sooners 15-11, 15-10, 15-9 in front 1,340 fans — the largest crowd in Oklahoma volleyball history — at the OU Fieldhouse. More than half of the crowd was cheering for Nebraska. The Husker fans were in Norman for Saturday's NU-OU football game.

Despite hitting a season-low .150, Nebraska improved to 19-3 overall and 11-1 in the Big 12, while the Sooners, who had won three straight matches, dropped to 12-10 and 3-8.

"There are points in the season like this," Pettit said, "where sometimes you have to go out and just kind of will it, and maybe not win quite as pretty as you would like to. I appreciate the effort, because I know how tired I am."

"I know what we can do, and there are moves we are not making. It isn't because they don't want to. It is because of fatigue."

Lisa Reitsma battled through the fatigue to post a team-high 18 kills. Megan Korver and Kate Crnich each added eight, and Tonia Tauke had six kills while hitting .500.

The Sooners were led by Melissa Peterson. Peterson, who had five kills in a three-game loss at Nebraska earlier this season, recorded 18 Friday night.

Patrice Arrington — Oklahoma's kill leader who had only four in Lincoln earlier this season — added 10 kills for the Sooners, who hit just .085.

OU Coach Miles Pabst said there was a point in every game where NU showed its championship mentality.

"Nebraska stepped up their level of play when we got up to about 10 points," Pabst said.

In all three games, the score was tied at nine before the Huskers took control.

In the first game, after NU rallied to tie the score at nine, Jaime Krondak served five straight points. Reitsma had three kills in the five-point run. OU fought back to cut the lead to 14-11, but a Peterson attempt was blocked by Megan Korver and Fiona Nepo to give

Please see SWEEP on 11

NU shuts out 2 foes to end regular season

Huskers will await
Tech or Missouri for
Saturday matchup.

Nebraska	4
TCU	0

Nebraska	2
SMU	0

From Staff Reports

Goalkeeper Becky Hornbacher shut out Southern Methodist 2-0 Sunday at the Puma Classic in Dallas, ending the regular season for the Nebraska soccer team.

The fifth-ranked Cornhuskers (19-0) are the nation's only perfect team and will face Texas Tech or Missouri Saturday at 11 a.m. in the semifinals of the Big 12 Tournament in St. Louis.

Sophomore striker Kristen Gay scored the game-winner for NU on Sunday, an unassisted goal 31 minutes, 5 seconds into the action. Freshman Lindsay Eddleman added another goal off assists from Stephanie Vacek and Isabelle Morneau at the 63:17 mark.

The shutout of SMU (10-4-4), a Final Four team last season, was Nebraska's 13th of the season, a school record. NU has allowed just 11 goals this season while scoring 83.

On Saturday, the Huskers blanked Texas Christian 4-0.

In the victory over TCU (7-11), Nebraska attempted 16 shots on goal

while preventing Horned Frogs from attempting a single shot. Eddleman struck with a first-half goal at the 11:18 mark and the Huskers led 1-0 at the half.

In the second half, Kari Uppinghouse added a goal to give Nebraska a 2-0 lead. Morneau continued her strong play with two second-half goals.

The freshman from Longueuil, Quebec, has been on fire recently, scoring 24 points in Nebraska's last seven games. Morneau now has 39 points on 16 goals this year, second on the team to Uppinghouse.

Nebraska, which concluded the Big 12 season last weekend, has earned a first-round bye as the top seed at the league tournament, Thursday through Sunday at St. Louis' Anheuser-Busch Conference and Sports Centre.

Missouri and Texas Tech, both of whom Nebraska has defeated this season, will play Thursday at 7:30 p.m. Texas A&M is the tournament's No. 2 seed.