

Coach stands by Phillips with hopes of helping him

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ter Coach Tom Osborne allowed him to play in the 1996 Fiesta Bowl.

After winning the national championship, Phillips entered the NFL draft and was picked up by the St. Louis Rams as the sixth pick overall.

Some controversy over past incidents followed him to St. Louis, and Phillips stumbled through a lackluster rookie season hampered by a late knee injury.

Phillips is tentatively scheduled to appear in Douglas County Court today for the Sunday night incident, Omaha police said.

Omaha Police Officer Jim Murray said police were called to the Red Lion Inn, 1616 Dodge St., around 2:30 a.m. on a loud-party complaint. Managers led officers to an upper floor, where they found a party breaking up. Vermeil said the party was a wedding reception.

As officers were investigating, Murray said, Phillips became verbally abusive and started shouting obscenities. He was then arrested and taken to central booking.

Also stemming from the party are allegations of sexual misconduct — improper touching —

against several men, including Phillips. Murray said that when police arrived, six men were still at the party, but there were reports of more men having been there.

"What went on prior to our arrival, I don't know," he said. "That is an issue we have to investigate and resolve."

Vermeil, who was hired in January as the Rams' new head coach, said he is putting himself between Phillips and criticism.

"We're trying to get ourselves in a position to help him, not eliminate him," he said. "I just don't believe I know him well enough to do something that drastic."

The coach said he had not heard of any disciplinary action on the part of the NFL, nor did he expect any.

Vermeil said he was going to try to help Phillips the way Osborne helped Phillips. When Phillips was arrested for the assault in 1995, Osborne did not boot him from the team. Instead, he offered him a chance to return if the troubled running back went through counseling and a mental evaluation.

"He needs help," Vermeil said. "He made a mistake. Where he made a mistake was being abusive when the police got there."

UNL strives to strengthen its recruiting arm this fall

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hopefuls solidify their decision to attend UNL.

More than a letter

But Schmidt said recruiting new students is more than a one-day event.

Recruitment is a university priority that can span several years for some high school students, she said. Recruitment's priority status at UNL keeps its budget at about \$1 million annually, not counting scholarship funds, Schmidt said.

Recruitment begins at a young age for Nebraska students when they see or hear about the university from friends, parents or through the media.

"They're going to start forming perceptions of the university very, very early," Schmidt said.

For this reason, the university begins recruitment at the fourth-grade level for some Omaha public school children.

Students, especially minorities whose parents have not attended a university, are prime targets for early recruitment, she said. The purpose is to provide early awareness of college opportunities and spur students to strive toward attending UNL, Schmidt said.

"Every part of the process is important," she said.

The hunt

But the big push to recruit students occurs at the high school level, she said. The university sends informational fliers to interested students and buys names from national lists to recruit students in specific areas, she said.

The lists are compiled from those taking tests, including the PSAT and the ACT, Schmidt said. For about \$180, universities can buy a report of all students meeting certain criteria, such as Nebraska high school students scoring 25 or higher on the ACT. In addition to the report fee, the university pays about 22 cents per name that appears on the report, she said.

This money is well spent, Schmidt said, because the university can then initiate contact with students by sending fliers and other information.

By their senior year, most students have decided where to attend college or have narrowed their field of choices to just a few schools. During this year, there's an "intense push" to recruit those students who show interest in UNL, she said.



JAY CALDERON/DN

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS tour the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus for Red Letter Day Monday.

Cream of the top

Informational mailers will not be enough to recruit many of the best and brightest students, Schmidt said.

"For some students, all that mail isn't going to make a bit of difference," she said.

What matters to these students is scholarships and educational value for the amount of tuition required to attend UNL, she said.

"There's a lot of talent out there that we could be recognizing, but the money does not go far enough," she said.

Chancellor James Moeser said increasing scholarship funding to recruit Nebraska's best students in state and at UNL is his top priority in recruitment.

"We don't want them to be lured out of state by other schools," he said.

Moeser said gifted Nebraska students who fall just below the cut for receiving a UNL scholarship might receive a scholarship offer to an out-of-state school.

Although that scholarship might not cover enough out-of-state expenses to make the school's overall cost as inexpensive as UNL, he said, the student could be insulted by UNL's apparent lack of interest and appreciation for his or her talent.

Such a student would likely attend the out-of-state school, Moeser said, and UNL doesn't want that.

"We've got to attempt to increase the scholarship pool," Moeser said.

Schmidt said the current total amount of scholarships offered is the

highest ever at UNL, and recent raises in this amount have helped a lot to recruit outstanding students.

And both Moeser and Schmidt said the amount of scholarships offered would continue to be increased.

Virtual tour

Schmidt said the future of effective recruitment could also lie in electronic means through the World Wide Web.

The admissions office has applied for \$150,000 to go toward electronic recruitment in the next two years, she said.

Currently UNL is at a disadvantage in electronic recruitment because it is not featured on several popular college search engines on the web, Schmidt said.

One such engine, College Viewbook, could provide the university with space for a 40-screen campus viewbook. This could be a strong virtual recruitment tool, she said, but it comes with an actual price tag.

A deluge of scholarship funding and the means to recruit electronically would be ideal for the admissions office, she said.

But when students finally commit to attending UNL, it is up to Red Letter days to make them welcome, Schmidt said.

"We want them to feel as comfortable as possible on this campus," she said.

And of course, she said, the university wants them to come back in the fall.

Jaycees criticized after 'Co-ed Naked' controversy

OMAHA (AP) — Though "Co-ed Naked Jaycees" may have worked to boost attendance at a convention, the concept prompted opposing groups to call for better coverage.

The Nebraska Jaycees wanted to draw attention to their convention over the weekend in Kearney, so the local chapter billed it as "Co-ed Naked Jaycees," much like the novelty Co-ed Naked T-shirts.

The tactic worked. The Jaycees gained attention all right, but not from the crowd they were after.

The creative theme caught the eye of the Nebraska Commission on the Status of Women — and its members were fuming.

It didn't help that a Jaycee official urged chapters to invent "indecent" prizes for the convention and embellished the theme to "Co-ed Butt-Naked Jaycees."

Now the woman who heads the state Jaycees is mortified that the flap will tarnish the organization's reputation for helping the needy and training young adults for leadership.

"I do apologize if we have offended anyone," said Karen Heng, president of the Nebraska Jaycees. "My particular preference is that it die down."

Responding to a complaint by a Nebraska Jaycee member, the commission sent a letter to the state and national Jaycees complaining about the "tasteless and sexist title."

The Jaycees probably will not face any fines or sanctions for the theme, but Joni Gray, the commission's executive director, said the group should have known better.

"They were drawing attention to women as sexual beings in a business context, and that's not acceptable," she said.

Heng said the Kearney host chapter just wanted a catchy theme for the quarterly convention. It may have worked. About 300 Jaycees attended the event, up from 200 at the past two conventions.

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