

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: NEBRASKA COACH Tom Osborne gives instruction during a 1980 game while quarterback Jeff Quinn (11) looks on. In the background is future Lombardi and Outland Trophy winner Dave Rimington.

BELOW: OSBORNE AND ALL-AMERICAN BRODERICK THOMAS accept the 1986 Sugar Bowl Trophy after defeating Louisiana State University 30-15. Osborne's teams have gone to a bowl every season with him as coach.

BOTTOM: OSBORNE AND FORMER COACH and athletic director Bob Devaney look at the plaque commemorating the two coaches for each having won more than 100 games.

BOTTOM LEFT: OSBORNE AND FORMER PLAYERS Christian Peter, Aaron Graham and Jared Tomich admire the two Sears National Championship and Associated Press Trophies. With its 62-24 victory over Florida in the 1996 National Championship, Nebraska became the first team in 40 years to post perfect back-to-back national championship seasons.

TOP LEFT: OSBORNE TALKS to Tommie Frazier before the 1994 Orange Bowl. Although Nebraska lost the game 18-16 and the national championship to Florida State, Osborne said he was pleased with his team's performance against the Seminoles.

“*I doubted I would last more than five years . . . I wouldn't say that I couldn't make it, I just felt that the odds were pretty good.”*

TOM OSBORNE

was a gratifying moment,” Osborne said. “I think that the great thing there was to end up being the strongest team in the fourth quarter.”

The win snapped a seven-year bowl-game losing streak for Nebraska. Though losing has never happened more than three times in a season, Osborne has always been noted for taking his losses graciously — something he attributes to Devaney.

“Bob said, ‘If you get beat, you might as well congratulate your opponent,’” Osborne said. “I can see no benefit from doing anything else. But I wish I didn't have to talk about losses as much as I did.”

As a head coach, Osborne has lost just 49 games.

After 45 years of football, Osborne said he is not ready to retire. But he said he doesn't know how much longer he will want to coach.

“I'm not real sure what's going to happen down the road,” Osborne said. “I really don't see myself coaching as long as Joe Paterno and Bobby Bowden, but I'm sure they felt that way when they were 60. Hopefully, when I retire, it will be because I feel that's what's best for the program.”

Whenever he decides to leave, Gill said, Osborne will have left his mark at Nebraska.

“I think he's just a phenomenal man,” Gill said. “Nowadays to stay at a coaching job for 25 years is unheard of. The thing I like about him is he's consistent, loyal, and he's a person that you can talk to. I love the way he relates to people. I'm not saying he's a perfect man — none of us are. But I know where his heart is. That's the key thing. He's going to touch all these players' lives and even us as coaches. I think he's the best person to represent what a coach should be.”

for Osborne this season

later I found out Dan Alexander had a torn ACL (anterior-cruciate ligament).”

Spring-game surprise Alexander is rehabilitating after having surgery for the torn ACL he suffered in the spring.

“He probably will not scrimmage for about a month, but he will practice once a day and will be running plays,” Osborne said. “If we can get him back into the flow sometime in the early season, that will be a real plus. With most guys, recovering fully from an ACL is a 12-month, 10-month, nine-month proposition. We're asking this guy to get back to almost full go within five months.”

Second-string I-back DeAngelo Evans is sidelined after having pelvis surgery this summer. At fullback NU has Joel Makovicka, Billy Legate and Josh Cobb healthy, with backups Willie Miller and Ben Kingston out with injuries. Makovicka suffered a slight bruise to his knee, but is

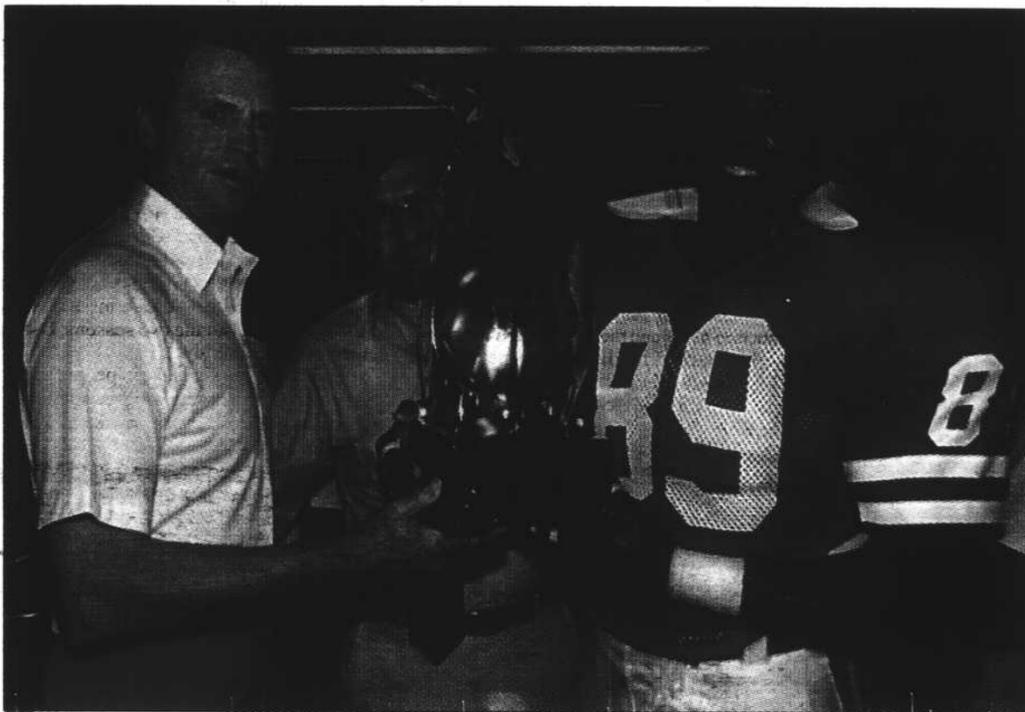
practicing.

“Even though we're thin in the backfield, I think it's a quality backfield,” Osborne said. “So, we have four guys and right now, that's where it ends. My feeling is that four running backs, usually, have not been able to carry you through a season.”

The offensive line returns with a strong corps of players led by senior Aaron Taylor, who played guard last season but will return to the center spot this season. Along with Taylor, Eric Anderson and Jon Zatechka both started last season while backups Fred Pollack, Josh Heskeu and Matt Hoskinson all have game experience. Hoskinson is the backup guard and center, but will see a lot of playing time this season.

“He's playing two positions,” Osborne said. “He's pretty much like a starter.”

Please see **OSBORNE** on 35



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