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Ostergard aids Huskers

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In addition to working with the players, Ostergard's responsibilities as head trainer include overseeing treatment and rehabilitation, attending coaches' meetings, taping and preparing athletes before practices and games and "whatever else falls my way."

Basic treatment offered to players includes stimulation units, ultrasound, traction machines and whirlpools.

Ostergard will work approximately 70 hours a week with no days off this fall. The demanding hours come with the territory, he said.

"Especially with the (low number of) scholarships these days, you've got to make sure the key players are healthy, because there is not that much depth anymore,"

Ostergard said.

When a player fails to recover from an injury as scheduled, Ostergard takes partial responsibility because "that's what we're there for."

But more often than not, Ostergard's job proves worthwhile.

"Once you see someone back on the field performing, then you feel like you've accomplished something," he said.

A player's successful recovery depends not only on the trainers, doctors and strength coaches, Ostergard said, but on the individual's state of mind during the recovery period.

"The most important thing I remind them is there isn't any shortcut. There are steps you have to go through," he said. "If you do that, you'll have a good return."

Osborne: NU wanted to play tough schedule

SCHEDULE from page 7

13, Osborne said Northern Illinois backed out two years ago after deciding it didn't want to play Nebraska. Central Florida then entered the picture.

"We've had a lot of that going on," Osborne said. "I think the driving force has been our desire to have six home games every year. Now in order to have six home games every year, you pretty much have to have a couple of teams that will come here without expecting you to go to their place. It may be that we'll end up some years with five home games."

Most teams, Osborne said, will not agree to travel to Lincoln without the Huskers agreeing to return the favor.

"It used to be that if you pay them a fair amount of money, they would come in and play and not expect you to return," Osborne said. "Whether that's good or bad, I don't know."

Akron will earn \$450,000 for playing in Lincoln. But even after reaching an agreement with Akron, the Zips weren't necessarily going to be the Huskers' first opponent.

Osborne said he showed interest in playing in the Pigskin Classic, but the Huskers couldn't find a team to play in Lincoln. Oklahoma ended up losing 24-0 to Northwestern in Chicago on Saturday.

"There's been a lot written about

the Pigskin Classic," Osborne said. "We were accused of a lot of things, but basically the only reason it ever surfaced was I wanted to play it."

"Our preference was to play a team that was perceived as a fairly strong football team that had some history of some tradition. Initially we weren't too crazy about playing somebody that we thought was pretty good but would not be perceived as good. If you're going to stick your neck out and start the season that early, you might as well play somebody that people think is pretty good. The last conversation we had, they said they couldn't find anyone to come."

Akron, however, should provide decent competition, Osborne said.

"We've watched quite a bit a film from last year's season," Osborne said. "In my mind, the high point of their season was against Virginia Tech, because we know quite a bit about Virginia Tech and have a lot of respect for them."

Virginia Tech defeated the Zips 21-18 last season. The Huskers defeated Virginia Tech 41-21 in the Orange Bowl last season.

Rush end Grant Wistrom said he's not expecting Akron to come to Lincoln and roll over.

"They played Virginia Tech pretty tough last year," Wistrom said. "We're expecting a pretty competitive ball game."

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