

Sports Opinion



Antone Oseka Texas Tech: How not to run a school

Dear student athlete at Texas Tech University:

You don't need to go to class. You don't need to study. All you need to do is perform on the athletic field.

We'll cover for you, we'll make sure that no one checks for eligibility until after the season is over and you're through playing here. Trust us, no one will ever know.

Now, hit the weight room, not the classroom.

Sincerely,
The Administration of Texas Tech

OK, so maybe it's not that spelled out. Maybe it's a little more subtle. Perhaps it's an understood rule among the athletes in Lubbock, Texas. If you perform on the field, the program will take care of the grades. It's probably not going to be found on a memo circulating around to the coaches in the Texas Tech Athletic Department.

But it could be. Over the last six years, 76 ineligible athletes have performed on the field or court for Texas Tech. Who knows how many others got away without being noticed?

The most publicized one, of late, was Byron Hanspard, the star running back of the Red Raiders who was sprinting toward the Heisman Trophy instead of running to take his final exams.

Everyone was ready to accept that Hanspard made a bad individual choice. During Big 12 media day at the end of July, Tech coach Spike Dykes raved that Hanspard's case was not indicative of Tech's program.

Yeah, right.

Seventy-six athletes over six years indicates a major problem for the Big 12 university. The student in student athlete comes first for a reason. Texas Tech is supposed to be a Division I institution with standards that all students must follow. They are not an athletic trade school. It seemed as if Tech's previous stance was also a simple one: Star athletes don't need the added stress of going to class like normal students.

Most universities check their athletes' grades every week or two. Nebraska checks each athlete's grades every two to four weeks. Most times, the checking is handled by the coaches. An athlete who is not going to class or not taking the exams is not going to get by.

It's a simple policy someone should send to Texas Tech.

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

Huskers invade Devaney Center

By SHANNON HEFFELFINGER
Assignment Reporter

Two matches against unranked Big 12 Conference foes Iowa State and Missouri allowed Nebraska volleyball coach Terry Pettit to experiment with his offense last weekend.



Pettit

When the Huskers (13-2 overall and 4-0 in the league) play host to No. 22 Colorado tonight at 7:30 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center, Pettit will have his first true chance to analyze the results.

The Buffaloes (8-4 and 4-0) are one of three teams to remain undefeated in conference action this sea-

son, and they present a formidable challenge for Nebraska.

The fifth-ranked Huskers have not faced a ranked opponent in nearly three weeks.

"They're a team that will definitely be in the NCAA tournament," Pettit said. "They could beat any given team on any given night."

Pettit said the Huskers will use the offensive changes they made last weekend against Colorado tonight.

In the first of two changes, Pettit has opted to move right-side hitter Lisa Reitsma to the middle of the court during the past few matches, better utilizing her attacking and blocking ability, he said. The switch, employed when 6-foot middle blocker Katie Jahnke is on the court, has created increased opportunities for

outside hitters Jaime Krondak and Mandy Monson.

The second court switch was a necessity. Sophomore defensive specialist Nikki Henk, who transferred to NU this season after a year at the College of Charleston, has stepped into an increased backcourt role. Henk has stepped up because Renee Saunders, who played primarily a defensive role for the Huskers, injured her foot in a physical education class and will miss six weeks.

"We're fortunate Nikki Henk has become such a nice player," Pettit said. "She's an exceptional passer. Nikki can fill the gap for Renee. The problem is, who will fill it for Nikki?"

Middle blockers Jahnke and Megan Korver, who contribute mainly at the net, have started to play the full rotation. Pettit also mentioned sophomore defensive specialist Kim Crandall as a possible substitute.

Crandall, who has seen action in just 11 of NU's 48 games this season, hopes to see her playing time increase, she said.

"It's frustrating not to play a lot," Crandall said. "But being a back row specialist, I understand that you only get 12 subs a game. But I knew if I was patient, I'd get the chance."

Pettit said he expects a large crowd for tonight's match. Two years ago, in NU's only contest at the Devaney Center, the Huskers secured the NCAA record for the largest single-match crowd with 11,529.

"Some people are hesitant to come down to a match not knowing if they can get in or not," Pettit said, "so it's really a concession to our fans to know that once a year, we'll play at the Devaney Center."

"Our success rate is probably higher in the coliseum. But if we have a good crowd there, we'll play well. I'd be surprised if we didn't."



LANE HICKENBOTTOM/DN

AHMAN GREEN rushed for 193 yards against Kansas State Saturday, the second-best performance in his career. Green has rushed for 534 yards this season, which leads Nebraska and ranks eighth in the nation.

The Green machine Powerful running returns I-back to freshman form

By DAVID WILSON
Senior Reporter

Plagued with injury last season, Nebraska I-back Ahman Green fell short of expectations, which left many fans questioning his toughness.

But Green didn't get mad. He just kept running hard.

"It makes me wonder what people are watching," said Green, who rushed for 917 yards in 10 games last year. "Because I know when I'm out on that field, I'm running as hard as I can."

"I had close to 1,000 yards with an injury. You don't pick up 1,000 yards running soft. That's all I'm going to say about that."

If putting up big numbers means a back is running tough, then Green

hasn't been weak this season for the Huskers.

Through four games, the junior has scampered for 547 yards and is averaging 6.4 yards per carry. The Big 12 Conference rushing leader also ranks second in the conference with seven touchdowns.

Though he has been carrying a bigger load for the Cornhusker offense this season - averaging 21 carries per game - Green is not the lone tough back.

Bull-headed running by quarterback Scott Frost and fullback Joel Makovicka has inspired Green to run harder, Green said.

Frost ranks sixth in the Big 12 in rushing with 370 yards (6.6 yards per carry) and Makovicka has carried the

Please see GREEN on 10

Osborne steers clear of overconfidence

By DAVID WILSON
Senior Reporter

Former statistics teacher and current Nebraska football coach Tom Osborne said Tuesday that NU fans might not want to make their Orange Bowl reservations just yet.

With only one ranked team (No. 25 Colorado) remaining on their regular schedule, it may appear that the 4-0 Cornhuskers are on a cakewalk straight to Miami.

But mathematics tell a different story, Osborne said.

"What you do is find out the probability of winning nine straight games if your odds of beating somebody are four out of five, and then the next game four out of five," Osborne said. "By the time you play nine

games, the odds of not winning all nine are very, very high.

"And yet, people sometimes assume that since you would be favored against most everybody else, you would play, it's automatic you're going to win all of the games. Mathematically, it doesn't work out. But hopefully it will work out for us anyway, mathematics aside."

Rather than figuring complicated probability equations, Osborne said, many Nebraska fans have gone ahead and planned their winter vacations.

"Some of the mind-set of our state may be just a little bit unrealistic," Osborne said. "I've heard of people already buying tickets to Miami and that's really scary as a coach - to realize that people get that focused on something that's that far down the

road."

Executive Travel president Steve Glenn said that Husker fans have shown a lot of interest in an Orange Bowl package, which will be available from the Lincoln travel agency in two weeks.

"Everybody assumes we're going to win them all," Glenn said.

Fans have also shown interest in traveling to the Big 12 championship game in San Antonio, Texas, on Dec. 6, Glenn said.

Osborne said he hopes his players won't assume the Miami-or-bust mind-set of the Husker fans just yet. After defeating two ranked opponents, Osborne said, it would be easy for third-ranked Nebraska to slack off.

But that's when the team captains come into play.

"One of my responsibilities is to make sure guys don't lose focus," senior defensive tackle Jason Peter said. "Myself and Grant (Wistrom) and Aaron (Taylor) and Vershan (Jackson) - we're keeping on everybody's back and making sure when we go out there to practice that everybody is working toward the same goal. And that's to win week after week and eventually be undefeated and play for it all."

"It's important that we keep improving. The teams that we're playing, they're certainly not at their respective schools just hanging out. They're out there practicing. Now with us beating everybody so far, we're everybody's big game. Everybody wants to try to knock us off."