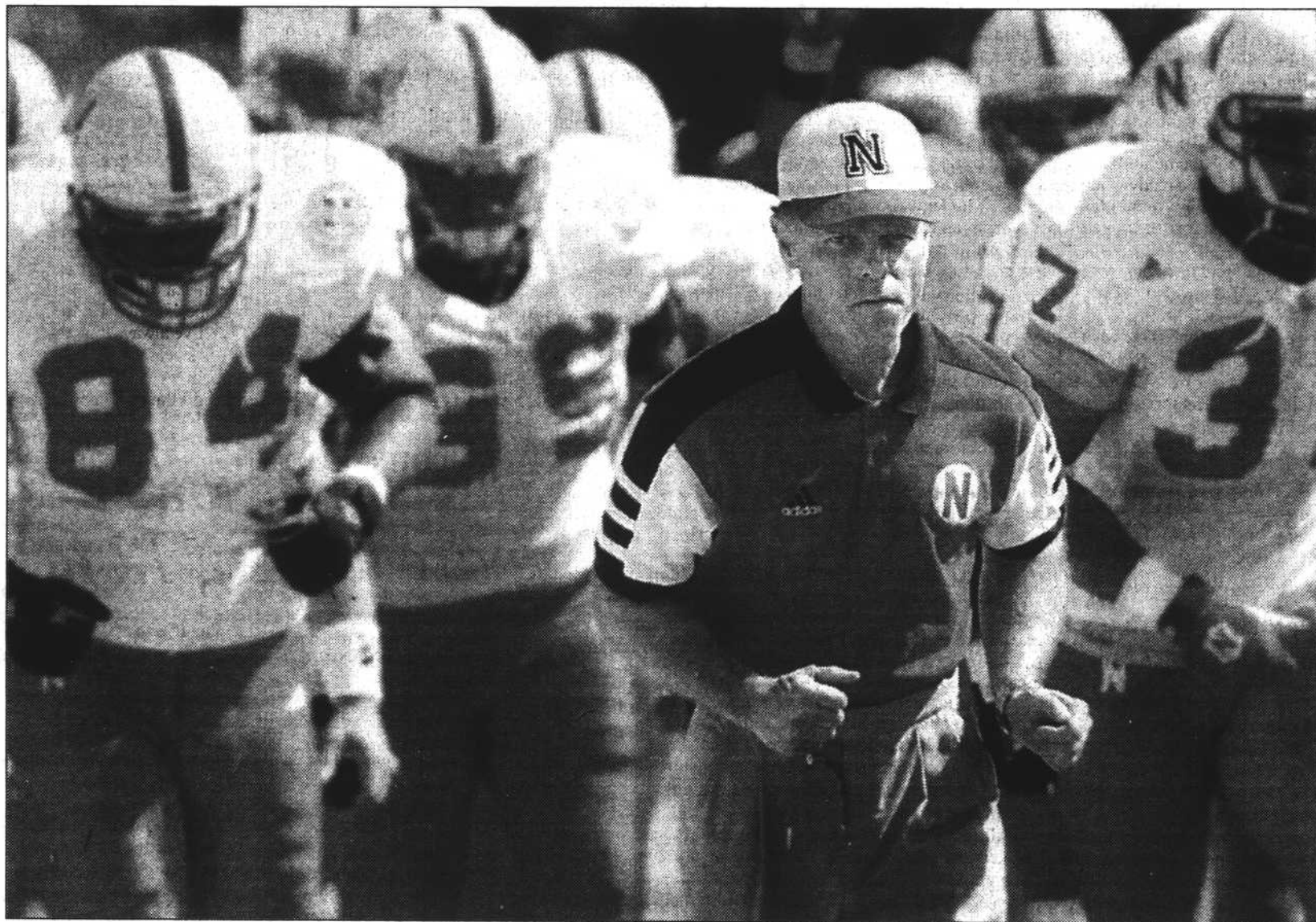


SPORTS



NEBRASKA HEAD COACH Frank Solich will begin his second season at the helm of the Husker squad Saturday in Iowa City, Iowa. The Hawkeyes will play host to NU at 11 a.m. in Kinnick Stadium. MATT MILLER/DN

Solich ready for 'next go around'

■ Despite first four-loss season since 1968, NU remains optimistic.

ADAM KLINKER
Staff writer

Walk into the Nebraska football offices in South Stadium during a regular week and there are a great many things to tempt the eye and stir within, even the most austere football fan, a sense of profound majesty.

It is legend embodied in Tom Osborne, as he walks down the hall, greets the secretaries and makes his way to his mid-morning class, his tie not yet knotted around his neck and his gray sport coat tucked under one arm.

It is the sanctity, the peculiar serenity of hazy October photographs of Bob Devaney in a red Kennedy-era hat, frozen in the moment of snapping commands at his squad on the field.

Osborne pauses at the desk to skim the front page of the newspaper, he looks across the lobby at the draped glass room that was once his office, now the seat of his successor, Frank Solich.

He makes eye contact with a player sitting in the lobby, calmly examining notes in an open book.

"Hello."

"Hi, Coach."

It is in the icons — the three crystal footballs sitting atop polished ebony pedestals with the engravings going down the line: The National Champion, University of Nebraska 1994, 1995, 1997.

And you can hear it emanating from the Nebraska football war room, where preparation has been continuing for many months, and the wistful whispers of last season can barely be heard above the din of excited voices.

Then Solich walks out of the room. Osborne is already down the hall and into the classroom. It is almost like a strange changing of the guard as Solich steps out, turns and walks into his office — the one that used to be Osborne's.

A tough season

Yes, Solich's first year marked the first time since Devaney's 1968 campaign that the Huskers lost four games. And yes, NU missed out on another Big 12 Championship. And yes, it seemed like a tragedy of endless injuries as Nebraska stumbled through the 9-4 season.

None of those things escape Solich, but none of it vexes him either. It was what it was, he says, a turning point in some respects.

"It was a very tough season for all of us," he said. "This was a team that faced a lot of adversity, especially in terms of injuries. But never was there any finger pointing among players or coaches. We hung together very, very well. When you have a team like that, that fights through the adversity, there is a strong bond made — a strong feeling of attachment to the team concept."

It is that cohesiveness which earmarked what Defensive Coordinator Charlie McBride said was one of the best-coached seasons in his memory.

"In all the years I've coached, it's

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Cornhuskers 'fired up' about season opener

Healthy team confident about offensive capability

DARREN IVY
Senior staff writer

Last year, it was Louisiana Tech that was doing the guessing as to what Nebraska Coach Frank Solich would run.

It was nearly a year ago last month when Solich joked that he would call a long pass on his first play from scrimmage.

This time around, as Solich begins his second season, it's his opponent that boasts a new coach.

With 13 games under his belt, Solich said he was more prepared for this year's 11 a.m. opener with the Hawkeyes and already had plays scripted out for the first three series.

"The way I have it drawn up, we score on all three," Solich joked.

The No. 5 Cornhuskers are expected to show some new offensive wrinkles this year, and it has even been hinted that quarterbacks Bobby Newcombe and Eric Crouch could be in the backfield at the same time. The Huskers also will have healthy I-back DeAngelo Evans and Newcombe for the first time since the Washington game in 1998.

With everyone healthy, Saturday's game could prove to be a big offensive explosion for the Huskers. Last season, the Hawkeye defense surrendered more than 40 points in each of its final four games. But junior split end Matt Davison doesn't put much stock in that.

"As with our offense, they have a different defense this year," Davison

Football Starters

Saturday
11:05 a.m.
Kinnick Stadium
TV: ABC
Radio: 1410, 1290 AM
90.3 KRNU



Nebraska starters

Offense				Defense			
Pos.	No.	Name	Ht. Wt.	Pos.	No.	Name	Ht. Wt.
SE	5	Matt Davison	6-1 180	LR	81	Aaron Wills	6-2 250
LT	69	Adam Julch	6-5 320	NT	96	Steve Warren	6-2 315
LG	63	James Sherman	6-4 295	DT	91	Loran Kaiser	6-4 290
C	54	Dominic Raiola	6-2 295	RR	83	Kyle Vanden Bosch	6-4 270
RG	55	Russ Hochstein	6-3 280	SLB	46	Brian Shaw	6-1 220
RT	58	Dave Volk	6-5 295	MLB	13	Carlos Polk	6-2 250
TE	85	T.J. DeBates	6-3 250	WLB	27	Eric Johnson	6-1 205
QB	12	Bobby Newcombe	6-0 195	LC	3	Keyuo Craver	5-10 190
WB	82	Sean Applegate	5-8 185	ROV	21	Mike Brown	5-10 205
IB	4	DeAngelo Evans	5-9 215	FS	19	Clint Finley	6-0 205
FB	15	Willie Miller	6-1 240	RC	22	Ralph Brown	5-10 180
K	26	Josh Brown	6-2 185	P	17	Dan Hadenfeldt	5-11 195

Iowa starters

Offense				Defense			
Pos.	No.	Name	Ht. Wt.	Pos.	No.	Name	Ht. Wt.
SE	5	Bashir Yamini	6-4 190	LE	99	Anthony Herron	6-5 270
LT	72	Bruce Nelson	6-4 270	LT	91	Jerry Montgomery	6-3 290
LG	63	Jay Bickford	6-4 285	RT	96	Corey Brown	6-2 290
C	52	A.J. Blazek	6-2 275	RE	98	Ed Saidat	6-7 271
RG	67	Chad Deal	6-4 285	OLB	97	LeVar Woods	6-3 240
RT	74	Alonzo Cunningham	6-4 295	LB	37	Derrick Davison	6-2 235
TE	80	Zeron Flemister	6-5 240	LB	54	Aaron Kampman	6-4 245
QB	4	Kyle McCann	6-5 190	LC	11	Joe Slattery	6-0 187
WR	87	Kevin Kasper	6-1 190	SS	9	Matt Brown	6-3 196
RB	46	Ladell Bets	5-11 206	FS	21	Matt Stockdale	5-11 186
FB	31	Rob Thein	6-0 230	RC	2	Tarig Holman	6-0 195
K	17	Tim Douglas	5-11 195	P	7	Jason Baker	6-1 195

MELANIE FALK/DN

42-7 victory led by quarterback Turner Gill.

It has been 17 years since the neighboring-state institutions met, but throughout the years, NU has listed many Iowans on its roster. This year there are six players—Dan Hadenfeldt, Brad Hamik, Jamie

Please see **HAWKEYE** on 9

said. "You can't look at statistics from last year and expect it to be the same. We know we have to go in there and play the game hard. Showing up isn't going to get it done. We want to put a lot of points on the board and hold them to very few points. I think our offense is looking to have a huge day."

The last time Iowa and NU met in 1982, the Huskers prevailed with a