

Passing game makes Stoops a winner

By JOSHUA CAMENZIND
Staff writer

The wishbone is out and the fun and gun are in at Oklahoma. And they are winning doing it — winning big.

New Head Coach Bob Stoops has the Sooners off to a 3-0 start and a No. 23 national ranking. OU doubled up Louisville on Saturday with a 42-21 win at Louisville.

Stoops has implemented a passing offense at a school primarily noted for its ground attack.

The Sooners are outscoring opponents at an average of 44 to 10. They have the No. 1 passing offense in the country with 399.7 yards per game. Spearheading this air attack is junior college transfer Josh Heupel.

Heupel, a quarterback, passed for 2,308 yards and 28 touchdowns at Snow Junior College in South Dakota. If he keeps up his current pace, he will surpass those numbers on the Division I level before November.

An offensive captain in his first

year at OU, Heupel has passed for 1,190 yards and 13 touchdowns. The southpaw has completed 71.3 percent of his passes and is the No. 1 rated passer in the Big 12 Conference with a 170.5 rating.



Stoops

He has been named the Big 12 Offensive Player of the Week twice, while breaking the school record in passing yards in both of those games leading up to the award.

Stoops said he is pleased with his quarterback and his quick start.

"We knew from spring ball that Josh was a very calm, very sharp person," Stoops said.

"A quarterback with Josh's ability has the opportunity to be successful in this offense."

The new offense that Stoops has put in is not just focused on one target. The wealth is being spread

around while OU has racked up 536 yards per game. Four wide receivers have more than 100 yards receiving and six have more than 50 yards. Jarraill Jackson is Heupel's favorite target with 10 receptions, three of them for touchdowns.

Stoops, a former assistant at Florida, where scoring and airing it out is the way of life, brought Gator Coach Steve Spurrier's attitude to Norman, Okla., along with Spurrier's patented visor.

"The Steve Spurrier attitude — I believe I've got a lot of it," Stoops said. "I just believe in what we can do in this style of offense with the defense, and I believe it can be successful."

The Big 12 style of play is not foreign to Stoops, as he was the Assistant Head Coach and co-defensive coordinator at Kansas State under Bill Snyder for seven years in the Big Eight.

A defensive coordinator for the Gators for the last three years, Stoops has Oklahoma playing solid defense as well. The Sooners are ranked No.

16 in the country in total defense but are No. 8 in the Big 12, giving up 263 yards per game. OU is also scoring just over 10 points per game on defense.

Stoops said he is rarely involved in the offense and would prefer to leave that preparation to his assistants.

The first-year head coach brought in Mike Leach to be his offensive coordinator after a two year stint at Kentucky.

Leach has implemented the same type of offense that he had at Kentucky, which is similar to the one that Heupel ran at Snow.

The folks down in Norman expect a lot and are pleased for the moment with what Stoops has produced.

"Nobody's complaining about (the offense) right now," Stoops said. "I don't know how popular I am. I am just trying to be a good husband and father."

With all of the success that the offense has seen, Stoops said there is still room for improvement.

"I believe our offense can be bet-

Big 12



ter," Stoops said. "Without question. We are going to see stronger defenses. We realize that. But we can play better, execute better in many situations better than we have. I still believe we will run the ball better, and we plan to as the year goes."

The offense will have to maintain its high level of play if OU is to be successful in the next three games. The Sooners visit South Bend, Ind., on Oct. 2 to face Notre Dame. The next week offers no letdown as it travels to Dallas to face Texas in the Red River Shootout, one of the greatest rivalries in college football today.

"Being ranked in the Top 25 does not mean anything," Stoops said. "We've got a long road ahead of us. We are not looking at that."

"Our goal going into the season wasn't to be No. 25 in the country. Hopefully, as the year goes we will find ways to get stronger and better as a team."

Big 12 Notebook

Oklahoma State and Nebraska enter this week's meeting with the No. 3 and No. 4 ranked defenses in the country, respectively. OSU has allowed 182.3 yards per game as compared to NU's 195.3. Eight of the Big 12 Conference teams are ranked in the top 16 nationally in total defense. NU is followed by Iowa State at No. 5, Texas A&M at 7 and Kansas State at 11. Texas Tech, Texas and Oklahoma are Nos. 14-16.

For the second week in a row, Oklahoma quarterback Josh Heupel earned Big 12 Offensive Player of the Week honors. Heupel passed for 429 yards, a school record he has broken for the third week in a row now, and five touchdown passes. He led the Sooners to a 42-21 victory over Louisville on Saturday, which preserved OU's undefeated start at 3-0.

Defensive Back Jason Webster of Texas A&M was the Big 12 Defensive Player of the Week after leading the Aggies to a 23-9 win over Southern Mississippi. Webster had 10 tackles and an interception, while providing solid coverage in the secondary to hold the Golden Eagles to nine points.

David Allen, running back and punt returner from Kansas State, was selected as the Special Teams Player of the Week. Allen, who broke a KSU record with his sixth career punt return for a touchdown, moved within one more touchdown of tying the NCAA mark held by Nebraska's Johnny Rodgers and Oklahoma's Jack Mitchell.

Allen helped lead the Wildcats to a comeback victory over Iowa State on Saturday. KSU was down 28-7 at halftime but managed to fight back and win behind Allen's 94-yard punt return. ISU Coach

Dan McCarney called the return a "back-breaker" and "turning point of the game."

Texas Tech Coach Spike Dykes has come under fire recently from the local media in Lubbock, Texas. The Red Raiders are 1-2 after early losses to Arizona State and North Texas. Dykes responded Monday to his critics during the weekly Big 12 Coaches Teleconference.

"When you lose to somebody that you are supposed to beat by a big margin, as far as what people say, I think that takes a lot of wind out of your sails," Dykes said. "And certainly, it makes the wolves howl. I understand that, I have been in this business for a long time. The distractions are there, like them or not, and if you really worry about them then I think they are effective. I don't have any control over what they say anyway. We'll just plug them up and go about our business."

The Athlon Sports Big 12 basketball predictions are out, and Kansas owns the league's No. 1 spot in the preseason rankings. Texas, Oklahoma State, Oklahoma and Texas Tech round out the top five. Nebraska is No. 9 and guard Cookie Belcher was selected to the preseason All-Big 12 First Team.

Also selected to the team were Marcus Fizer of Iowa State, Chris Mihm of Texas, Eduardo Najera of Oklahoma and Rayford Young of Texas Tech.

Fox Sports Network has picked up the Nebraska vs. Iowa State football game on Oct. 9. The game will be televised nationally starting at 6 p.m.

Notebook compiled by Staff Writer Joshua Camenzind.

1st-year starter brings intensity to trenches

RAIOLA from page 10

two players — Junior Togoai and Toinu Fonoti — to the mainland, and Fonoti is playing as a true freshman.

"Dom's influence affected the decision of a couple of those kids we got this year," Tenopir said. "Not just because you had another Hawaiian guy here but because he said, 'Hey, I like it here. You might like it here, too.'"

Raiola's influence spreads to his teammates, too. Volk said the intensity the sophomore brings to the field is unique, but it rubs off on the rest of the line.

"He's vocal. He's a leader," Volk said. "He doesn't make a lot of mistakes. When we go one vs. one in practice, he gets everybody fired up. He gets it up to game intensity right there."

As he's been able to stay relatively injury-free at Nebraska, Raiola's progress has been steady, Tenopir said. His understanding of the game — not only his role, but others — is among the best on the team.

With two seasons left, Raiola

"He's vocal. He's a leader. He doesn't make a lot of mistakes."

DAVE VOLK
NU offensive lineman

could finish among the best centers to play at Nebraska. There's been some great ones: Dave Rimington, Mark Traynowicz, Jake Young and Aaron Graham, among others. Tenopir figures Raiola could be mentioned with those players before he's done.

"He's just a pup," Tenopir said. "But he's got the work ethic. He'll end up being one of the better ones we've had around here."

That suits Raiola just fine.

"In high school I figured out this is where I want to be, not anywhere else on the field," Raiola said. "This type of position is for me."

I-back records first 100-yard game for NU

BACKS from page 10

of the running backs' success came from the early passing game Nebraska displayed. With the Missouri defense not knowing what to expect, holes that were clogged in the first three games opened Saturday.

Buckhalter said the early passing didn't allow Missouri to "key on the run" as Nebraska's first three opponents did, but the main reason for success on the ground was because of how prepared the team was to perform.

"If we come out and play the way we did against Missouri, we'll have 100-yard rushers every game no matter how the defense plays," Buckhalter said.

NU golfers in 10th after first round in Colorado

From staff reports

The Nebraska women's golf team shot a 309 Monday, which put the Cornhuskers in 10th place through the first day of the Heather Farr Memorial at the Coal Creek Golf Course in Louisville, Colo.

NU was led by senior Elizabeth Bahensky, who fired a 75 to finish 17th individually.

The Kearney native is five strokes behind leader Laura Torrissi of Campbell.

Sophomore Sarah Sasse, from Lincoln, and junior Amy Roux, from Kearney, both shot 77s to finish the day tied for 27th place.

Rounding out the Husker lineup was sophomore Catha Fogelberg, from Helsingborg, Sweden, who shot an 80, and freshman Amanda Krane, from Wantagh, N.Y., who shot an 86.

The final round of the tournament will begin this morning at 8:30.

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