

Applewhite, unity key to UT streak

■ After an uncertain start, Mack Brown says team has pulled together.

By JOSHUA CAMENZIND
Staff writer

After its opening loss to North Carolina State, Texas Coach Mack Brown had doubts that his team would be able to make a bowl game.

Brown was concerned with his team's inexperience and youth and most importantly its source of leadership. At many times early in the season he said that his team was not playing together.

That span involved a 69-17 win over Stanford and a 62-0 blanking of Baylor. But everything changed during halftime of UT's win over Oklahoma, and the rest is history, including a win over Nebraska and Saturday's 58-7 thumping of Texas Tech.

"We felt the Tech game was probably the most complete game we have

played from top to bottom since the Stanford game," Brown said. "We played very well against Stanford, but then we had some games where we didn't play like we wanted to."

"Since the Kansas State game, we have been a pretty good football team, and I think we have progressed since the end of the first quarter against Oklahoma. We have probably progressed the most of any team I have ever been around."

Texas is now No. 6 in both major polls, and Saturday's win over Tech clinched at least a share of the Big 12 South Title for Brown. Now the Longhorns are 9-2, scoring UT a berth in the Big 12 Championship, regardless of its game against Texas A&M Nov. 26.

All that for a team whose coach said they did not play together for the first six games of the season.



Brown

"They are to be commended," Texas Tech Coach Spike Dykes said. "In my opinion, they have improved each week. They have a lot of weapons, play hard and have leadership on the field. It was just too much."

A majority of the leadership on the offensive side of the ball has come from sophomore quarterback Major Applewhite. Applewhite, with his boyish looks and small stature, has established himself as one of the top quarterbacks in the conference and one of the most prolific passers in UT's grand history.

For the season, Applewhite has thrown for 3,132 yards with a completion rate of 60.6 percent and is the first Longhorn to ever eclipse the 3,000 yard plateau. He has thrown for 21 touchdowns compared to six interceptions.

Applewhite impressed Dykes with his play on Saturday.

"I'd put old Major Applewhite for governor," Dykes said. "Because I think he is a rare guy. He is really aware, and he does a good job. Boy, it is hard to get him going."

Applewhite and the rest of the Longhorns are No. 6 in the Bowl Championship Series Rankings, which put the Longhorns right in the thick of things.

Brown has his team peaking at the right time, and, even with two losses, the national title is still in view. The Longhorns may need binoculars to see it, but nonetheless there is a window.

With talk around Austin and the rest of the country about UT's national title picture, Brown stressed the importance of not looking ahead.

"We know and we have proven that if we don't play well we can't beat anybody," Brown said. "To sit here with A&M coming up on the road; it is the only thing we are thinking about."

Before the Tech game, Brown told his team there were five things that they could play for and to pick out one. But most of all, Brown told his players to enjoy playing the game of football.

"I told the guys to enjoy the moment," Brown said. "And quit talking about all the stuff that is out there. You just enjoy playing football, and if you enjoy the game - the rewards will come."

Big 12 Notebook

In Texas' 58-7 win over Texas Tech, quarterback Major Applewhite not only led the Longhorns to clinching a spot in the Big 12 title game but also became the first UT player to pass for 3,000 yards in one season. Applewhite threw for 241 yards and had three touchdown passes, which gave him another school record at 21 total for the season.

Kansas State place kicker Jamie Rheem has been named a finalist for the Lou Groza National Place Kicking Award. Rheem has connected on 16 of 17 field goals this season and is following in the footsteps of former Wildcat Martin Gramatica. Gramatica won the 1997 award and is now kicking in the NFL for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

Rheem's only miss: Saturday against Nebraska.

KSU linebacker Mark Simoneau has been named one of four finalists for the Dick Butkus Award, given annually to the nation's best linebacker.

The Missouri Tigers basketball team opened up regular season play for the Big 12 with a 66-55 loss to Wisconsin on Friday night and a 51-48 win over Princeton on Saturday night. Both games were part of the National Association of Basketball Coaches Classic, and the win over Princeton gave first-year coach Quin Snyder his first career victory.

"Finish strong" is the theme around Waco, Texas, where Baylor is 1-9 with one game remaining. Coach Kevin Steele said that it is very important for his team to finish the season with a victory despite not being competitive since Baylor's lone win against North Texas on Oct. 2. BU plays Oklahoma State on Nov. 20.

Nebraska dominated the Big 12 Players of the Week honors, picking up both the offensive and defensive awards. Husker quarterback Eric Crouch and rover Mike Brown were honored for their contributions to the Huskers' 41-15 win over Kansas State.

Crouch rushed for 158 yards on 27 carries and two touchdowns. Brown led an NU defense that held KSU to 142 passing yards. He had six total tackles with an interception, a forced fumble and a fumble recovery.

Oklahoma State's Terance Richardson received the special teams honor after OSU's win over Kansas. Richardson was instrumental in the Cowboys coming back from a 13-10 halftime deficit to win 45-13. He had six returns for 160 yards and is 2 yards from setting the school record for return yardage on the season.

Notebook compiled by staff writer Joshua Camenzind

check out sports on
dailyneb.com

Nebraska women score NCAA bid

■ The Huskers will compete Monday in Bloomington, Ind.

By JASON MERRIHEW
Staff writer

It didn't take long. In fact, there was no doubt about it. They knew they had the qualification to make it.

The Nebraska women's cross country team found out Monday it will be making a trip to Bloomington, Ind., for the NCAA Championship.

"There was really no question about whether or not we would make it," Coach Jay Dirksen said Monday. "We had some victories over some great teams."

A third-place showing at the Midwest Regionals solidified the at-large bid the Huskers earned during a very successful and competitive regular season.

The Cornhuskers took care of business all season long. NU ran with the best teams and beat the teams that it needed to.

"About every team that had beat us during the season will be running at the NCAA Championships," Dirksen said.

Only one team that didn't make the NCAA Championship had scored a victory against Nebraska. Baylor had placed better than NU in a meet earlier this season, but the Huskers took care of the Bears in the Big 12

Championship.

The depth of the team has been the key factor for the success the Cornhuskers have had.

Senior Michelle Brooks has been the catalyst for the Huskers all season long. Brooks has been the first Husker to cross the finish line in every race she has participated in.

Senior captain Jaime Pauli has also been a key staple in Coach Dirksen's lineup. Pauli has consistently finished right behind Brooks all season long.

Pauli had a career-low time of 17 minutes and 35 seconds for an 11th-place showing at the Midwest Regionals last weekend.

"Jaime had a tremendous race this past weekend," Dirksen said.

Sophomore Jeannette Zimmer has played a key role for NU this season. Zimmer, Nebraska's No. 1 runner last year, has been the Huskers' No. 3 runner despite battling stress fractures during the latter part of the season.

Perhaps the biggest surprise of the season has been true freshman Kathryn Handrup. Due to injuries sustained during her senior season of high school, Handrup had less time to prepare during the preseason.

"We are running well in every position," Dirksen said. "I don't plan on making any changes in the roster."

The Huskers will take off to Bloomington, Ind., Saturday and compete in the NCAA Championships on Monday. The race will start at noon.

Darlington: Adjustments helped NU shut down Cats

By JOSHUA CAMENZIND
Staff writer

Nebraska reeled off its second-straight solid defensive performance in its upset 41-15 win over Kansas State.

The Huskers, coming off a 37-0 shutout win over Texas A&M, held KSU to 234 total yards and 15 points.

NU did not allow the Wildcats a passing touchdown, and George Darlington, the Husker defensive backs coach, said that he was pleased with the defense and his secondary.

"Overall we played pretty well on defense," Darlington said. "Certainly the ability two weeks in a row to deny an opponent a score, much less a touchdown, was huge because opportunities that are given to a team can get them off to a good footing."

For the second straight week, NU fumbled on the first play of the game, and the defense followed with stops and a blocked field goal. Both blocks were by rush end Kyle Vanden Bosch.

"To have a gift handed to you and then to have the best, most consistent field goal kicker in the Big 12 get a kick blocked started us off well," Darlington said.

For the game, the defensive backfield forced Wildcat quarterbacks into an 8 for 32 completion day for 142 yards. Starter Jonathan Beasley com-

pleted three out of 19 attempts, but those three were for 100 yards.

Darlington said the jail-break screen Beasley threw to Morgan for a 55-yard gain in the second quarter changed the defense's play calling in the second half.

"There were a lot of things that we were afraid to call in the second half because of the jail-break screen. It limited us in our thinking, but by the same token worked out fine," Darlington said.

With the defense on a roll, NU will enter its first off-week since the loss at Texas. The Huskers travel to Colorado on Nov. 26. NU can earn a rematch with UT by beating CU.

Darlington said NU learned a lesson from its lack of focus before facing UT.

"After the situation before," Darlington said, "you would prefer to go ahead and play on Saturday."

Darlington credits his thinking to the fact that NU has one of its goals in reach - the conference championship. He said it is easier to stay focused when a goal like that is almost realized.

Darlington said that NU must work on taking care of the ball after fumbling 10 times against KSU.

"It almost becomes a mind-set problem where you have people paranoid about fumbles," Darlington said. "To the point that you probably get more because there is such an emphasis and stress on it."

McKewon: Bad play at the root of latest Phillips NFL demotion

PHILLIPS from page 9

return, Phillips has produced a big cup of jack squat. Beyond the 68-yard run, he had rushed 29 times for - brace yourself - 76 yards, an average of - brace again - 2.6 yards per carry. He was beaten out for the starting job by Charlie Garner, a man destined to journey from team to team his entire career.

He didn't want to block; it was his missed assignment that sent Young to the bench for the rest of the season with another concussion.

Faced with yet another limited role, Phillips found himself a way out in classic Phillips fashion.

"Lawrence has indicated to a number of other players and to other people that he did not want to play for the 49ers and was expecting to play for Buffalo in the very near future," Walsh said. "So I think that, in a sense, that Lawrence knew that there would be an incident such as this at some point."

Can't say Phillips wasn't crafty in

creating such a scenario. He's learned the ropes, all right. For a 24-year-old, he's been through more than most players, in terms of turmoil. He brought a lot of it on himself. Some say he never had a chance from the start.

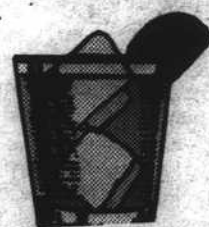
But too often, it's these facts of Phillips' life people choose to focus on, although they've been dragged over and over in the muck. Sure, his tenure in the NFL is marked by misbehavior.

More importantly, it's marked by mediocrity.

Put up or screw up - Phillips has had this choice on every professional football team he's ever been a part of. He's never been able to do the first.

So he settles for the latter. Shockingly enough, the league is so diluted, yet another NFL team might settle for it, too.

Samuel McKewon is a junior news-editorial and political science major and a Daily Nebraskan senior editor.



\$2

Captain Morgans

TUESDAYS 9 TO CLOSE

Bodega's Alley
1418 "O" Street