

MU's Smith blows top vs. Huskers

"Quit looking at the damn replay boards! Quit looking at them! Quit looking at them!"

Missouri Head Coach Larry Smith chastising his Tiger players for watching the HuskerVision screen in the waning moments of a 51-7 loss to Nebraska in 1996.

Say a prayer for Larry Smith. He ain't got much time, or marbles, left for the college coaching game.

The pressure is on for him to produce at MU, even if he's done more than any of the previous coaches in 20 years. The heat is on because Smith's logic is off.

He's a real mix of old school and new age. He has seemingly two emotions: anger and tears. In three games I've witnessed Smith against Nebraska, one or the other (mostly anger) have been the order of the day.

His emotions kick in every year for Nebraska. When MU thoroughly outplayed NU in 1997, and still lost in overtime, Smith got glassy-eyed and lamented the sad fates with the words "one stinkin' play."

It might as well be his life mantra. Smith has taken four teams to bowls - Tulane, Arizona, Southern California and Missouri. But Smith is a builder, and his buildings don't last. Arizona dropped after he left. USC wilted in his final seasons there. And Tulane disappeared into oblivion.

He does not, under any circumstances, win the games he absolutely has to win, even when his job is on the line. He is 1-23 against Top 25 teams at MU. The Tigers have lost 36 straight against teams in the Top 10. That's a lot of anger. Not a lotta tears of joy.

Last year, the anger went from overboard to funny. His outburst after Missouri's big flop against Nebraska was memorable. At MU, a golden-haired talking head hits the coach up with questions first while the news reporters sit stone-faced, awaiting their turn. The Tigers were a comedy of errors that night in a 40-10 loss. It was much, much more of a blowout than the score indicated.

Smith seethed. He glared. And when the writers started with their g questions, Smith just let out. Some sample dialogue:

QUESTION: So, your opinions on the game?

ANGRY SMITH: It's real simple. We stunk. That's the worst excuse for a football team I've ever seen.

QUESTION: How will you get the team back on track?

ANGRY AND NOW VINDICTIVE SMITH: We're gonna whip their butts.

Well, whippin' butts didn't work, unless Smith preferred the effect to occur on the field. After a couple of close losses to Colorado and Iowa State, Missouri segued into gelatinous goo.

During a 37-0 loss to Oklahoma, Smith's hand was bleeding for unexplained purposes as he found a performance even more pathetic than that of the Nebraska game.

"It was the most pathetic thing I've ever seen in my whole life," he said.

Imagine his wonder in the following loss to Texas A&M 51-14. Or after that to Kansas State, where it got so bad his wife started screaming at referees toward the end of the miraculous 66-0 loss. Anger runs in the family, it seems.

In some ways, Smith reminds me of Jim "diddy poo" Mora, who basically got ousted from the New Orleans Saints for the "diddy poo" tirade after a loss. (On side note, it ought to be said the Saints replaced him with a real prince of soothing language, Mike Ditka).

The Smith train is about to derail. He allowed a new passing offense to stick for this year, and it had produced poor results. The 62-9 blast at Clemson must have been a real hello in the press room. Smith claims to have no false sense of security. Somehow, this doesn't sound like a good thing. If a man senses he's on his way out the door, he can get reckless, stupid. He can get angry.

If the Tigers get "pathetic" against Nebraska Saturday and start watching those HuskerVision screen again, watch out. It'll be a Hurricane Larry warning.

No. 1 Nebraska bowls over CU Buffs

The Cornhuskers have no problem with another Big 12 road game, this one a straight set victory over the young Colorado team.

BY KRISTEN WATERS

Wischmeier to Cepero. Cepero to Pilakowski. Pilakowski to the floor. And give the Nebraska's women volleyball team another point. Just another night for the No. 1 Nebraska volleyball team.

In a quick hour and 24 minutes, the Huskers (12-0) swept the Colorado Buffaloes (5-6) 15-5, 15-6, 15-9, doing to CU

exactly what it has done to all other Big 12 opponents.

The outcome was nothing new for NU Coach John Cook.

"For being on the road, we played very well," Cook said. "There are always things to work on, but what we worked on for this game we executed great."

"I think we came out and set the tempo early with our serving and blocking," Cook said.

The Huskers started the match with an easy 15-5 first game win over the Buffs with the help of sophomore Laura Pilakowski's five kills.

NU took the Buffs and the Colorado crowd off 1,988 out of the match early.

Nebraska	15	15	15
Colorado	5	6	9

"Colorado just couldn't get into rhythm tonight," Cook said. "They hit a negative percentage in the first game."

"You can't come into road games and let the teams think they have a chance."

The second game started out shaky when CU ran with the biggest lead of the night with a 5-1 edge. But the Husker's blocking and serving game overwhelmed Colorado as the Buffs fell, for the second time, 15-6.

In the third and final game of the night, the Huskers rallied back and forth with CU. It was side-out after side-out until senior

Angie Oxley stepped up with a game high five kills, giving the huskers a 15-9 victory and another "W" in the books.

"She (Oxley) came into Boulder, took care of business, and got out of there," Cook said. "Nobody even knew she was here, but they will when they look at the stat sheet tomorrow."

Oxley finished the night with 11 kills and the highest hitting percentage on the team at .500 percent. She also had two blocks and dug 12 balls. Pilakowski led the team with 13 kills.

Despite the Husker's easy win, the volleyball team still has room for improvement, Cook said.

"Winning is what is important right now, along with getting better," Cook said.



Ron Brown is one of many Nebraska football assistant coaches who have stayed with the Huskers despite a number of other job offers.

DN File Photo

Former Husker gets gold

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Rulon Gardner, a former Nebraska All American as a heavyweight, stunned the wrestling world when he defeated Russian wrestling legend Alexander Karelin in the gold-medal match of the 2000 Olympics.

In the 286-pound finals, Gardner defeated Karelin 1-0 in overtime.

It was Karelin's first wrestling defeat in his 13 years of international competition. The Russian, considered the best Greco-Roman wrestler of all-time, was never scored upon in the 1990's and trailed last in a match at the 1988 Olympics.

The crowd at the Sydney Exhibition Hall was stunned at Gardner's seemingly impossible feat. So were other wrestlers, coaches and experts.

"What does this mean? He just beat the best wrestling in the history of wrestling - a wrestler who had never been beaten," U.S. national Greco-Roman Coach Steve Fraser said.

Gardner scored the match's only point at the beginning of the second period. Overtime was then required because neither wrestler had scored at least three points.

Karelin tired in the overtime, taking less and less scoring chances. With eight seconds left, he dropped his hands, conceding his first international defeat.

The appearance was Gardner's first at the Olympics while Karelin was wrestling for his fourth Olympic gold medal in Greco-Roman wrestling.

The gold medal is the first for the former Nebraska wrestler and just the third for a U.S. Greco-Roman wrestler. Matt Lindland, a 1993 Big Eight Champion for NU won a silver medal on Tuesday.

Gardner's win is considered historic because Karelin has been mentioned as the greatest Olympic athlete of modern times. Karelin, before losing his first international match, had compiled nine world championships and three Olympic golds.

Gardner, who had never finished higher than fifth in international competition, said he never expected to beat the wrestling legend.

"When did I think I could beat him? About 10 minutes ago," he said, 10 minutes after leaving the mat.

nummainstays

Coaches stick with staff despite offers

BY JAMIE SUHR

It would have been easy for former Nebraska Defensive Coordinator Charlie McBride to be a coach on another team's sideline.

When University of Wisconsin-Madison approached McBride he turned down the university. Wisconsin eventually hired Barry Alvarez.

When Arizona State University in Tempe contacted McBride about their coaching vacancy, McBride respectfully declined. ASU settled for Bruce Snyder.

After Bill McCartney resigned as Colorado's coach in 1995, people close to the university asked if he would be interested, but once again, McBride refused.

In addition to the college opportunities, Tom Landry, former Dallas Cowboys coach, interviewed McBride for defensive line coach and offered him the job. Luckily, McBride refused Landry because Landry and his staff were fired shortly thereafter. In all, McBride was offered 15 NFL positions.

But McBride wouldn't leave Nebraska. Sometimes the grass isn't always greener on the other side of the pasture. That's the case for McBride and NU's other assistant coaches.

The Cornhuskers have been successful

with keeping assistants, while other college programs replace staff members each season.

Year after year, NU's same assistant coaches prowl the sidelines, forgoing other assistant and coaching jobs.

The NU staff is the definition of consistency, and consistency is the reason many stick around for decades.

"At Nebraska, you don't have to reinvent the wheel every year," Brown said.

The consistency starts with the head man. Football Coach Frank Solich has spent 19 seasons on the staff - 15 of those were spent coaching the running backs.

Solich, despite being offered other jobs around the country, decided to stay at NU. The decision couldn't have turned out better.

"I feel very fortunate to be here," Solich said. "There were times when I looked at other jobs, but nothing out there was better than here."

Ditto for Brown, who has been offered numerous jobs with other college teams.

In 1989, Brown was offered the coaching position at Brown University in Providence, R.I., but declined. Since then, Brown has interviewed for assistant coaching jobs at Florida State University in Tallahassee and Penn State University, and was also offered a coordinator's position at an unspecified school.

NFL teams have also inquired about Brown's availability. He turned down offers for the wide receivers coach at both Tampa Bay and New England.

The Nebraska assistants said the continuity of their lives in Lincoln would be hard to leave.

Brown, who is involved with Christian organizations, said being an assistant coach allowed him to do things that a coach wouldn't have the time for.

Brown co-founded Mission Nebraska and is the university adviser for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

"A head coaching job might not be for everyone," Brown said. "Head coaches have got to be tedious and do a lot of the dirty work. I have things to do that if I were a head coach, I couldn't do."

Quarterbacks Coach Turner Gill said his beliefs and family have kept him in Lincoln.

"I would always consider leaving, but I have to pray to God to see where he wants me," Gill said. "I have to know what's best for my family."

To NU's elder assistants, Defensive Back Coach George Darlington, Offensive Line Coach Milt Tenopir and McBride, starting over somewhere new held no interest.

"At my age, I have no desire to leave," Darlington said. "Not that I won't look, though."

"The pluses here outweigh my desire, which isn't overwhelming, to be a head coach," he said.

McBride said it wouldn't be fair for him to take a job at another school.

"At my age, I wasn't interested to leave," McBride said. "To be a head coach, you should be able to coach for 10 years, but only wanted to coach another three."

Tenopir said the last time he seriously con-

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Diedrick odd man out in Cornhuskers' I-back rotation

BY DAVID DIEHL

A victim of the circumstances surrounding him, Dahrran Diedrick isn't in the position where he'd like to be.

As opposed to the latter half of 1999 where Diedrick saw regular playing time in the Nebraska backfield, the Scarborough, Ontario, native has spent much of 2000 watching NU's offense from the sideline.

But the decrease in playing time isn't Diedrick's fault, said NU coaches and players. Rather, the conditions around him haven't allowed him to step on the field.

Solid play from I-backs

Dan Alexander and Correll Buckhalter, tighter games and a healthy staff have limited Diedrick's action.

With top running backs Alexander and Buckhalter turning out quality performances and cutting down on mistakes, Diedrick is again forced to take a backseat to the two seniors ahead of him.

Alexander leads the Big 12 in all-purpose yards and rushing. Buckhalter ranks sixth in the conference rushing. NU has lost just one fumble in its first three games.

"To take two seniors out of the game, it'd have to be because of their playing, and

they've been playing great," Diedrick said. "They're both having great seasons. There's no reason to take them out prematurely."

Alexander said turning the backfield into a three-person revolving door wouldn't allow anyone to get into a rhythm.

It was a different story last season when fumbling problems forced NU to experiment at I-back. Nebraska fumbled against KSU 10 times. Diedrick took advantage of the situation and rushed for 93 yards on 14 carries, and scored on a 42-yard run.

"There was on occasion a

lack of effectiveness from the guys in front of Dahrran," said Dave Gillespie, running backs coach. "So, he had a few more opportunities."

Those opportunities also came in large chunks when games were out of reach. However, this hasn't been the case for all of NU's games this year.

Diedrick's best performances in 1999 came vs. Iowa State and Kansas State, games which NU won by 35 and 26 points, respectively.

This season, only Nebraska's 49-13 win over



Stephen Bender/DN

NU sophomore I-back Dahrran Diedrick has only seen action in one contest this season after gaining 303 yards and averaging 5.3 yards per carry in 1999.

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