

# WHAT THEY THINK OF FOOT-BALL

Opinions From Various People Who Are Interested in the Welfare of Our Team.

## THEORIES ABOUT THE DISASTROUS SLUMP

Each One Advances a Different Theory; All Consider it Very Unfortunate.

The season of '98 has been remarkable because of the quality and quantity of material for the team, for never before have we had such an amount of it. With two tackles, one end and a full back to develop and seven old players back in harness, the eleven began practice.

Under very trying circumstances the season progressed. The unfair newspaper criticisms in the early games and the rigid enforcement (too rigid in some cases) of athletic rules, which had been a dead letter since '96, in no way benefited the team. The loss of two valuable players resulted directly because of these rulings and in no small degree affected the spirit and play of other members of the team.

The successful play of the season cannot be attributed to any GREAT support or encouragement received from Nebraska, for the crowds at the games were insignificant compared with last year. The playing of our team was all the more remarkable. This was due greatly to the good feeling toward each other of the members of the team, to the individual hard work of every one; obedience to coach and captain and the splendid interference taught by Coach Yost.

Because the team was temporarily weakened by the loss of good men, we could not end the season without a defeat. Our record of eight victories, one forfeit to us, and but three defeats; of 271 points scored (more than any other two Nebraska teams together) and the fact that we defeated Kansas by a larger score than we have ever defeated her before goes to show that the team of '98 holds the record above all others made under the scarlet and cream.

The prospects for next season are favorable. The captain for '99 is an able man and has always worked for the good of football and athletics. He has had experience in captaining teams and has the good will of the whole team. Then with two league games on the campus, a spirit of unity in the team and a little rooting from an immense crowd on the side lines, the team of '99 ought to be another winner.

W. C. MELFORD, Captain.

I think the team this year was the strongest the University ever put on the gridiron. It was richer in substitutes, having several that could play most any position with credit to our banner, the "Scarlet and Cream." It played five more games than last year's team, and harder ones. It played under difficulties fatal to the best results. Yet record was phenomenal. Having a strong captain and good coach, the team was victorious and the pennant still waves over our institution. Any school might win once, but only the strongest continues to win. Let Nebraska demonstrate her superiority still another year. The prospects for a winning team next year are very bright. Most of the old players will be in their positions, with stronger determination than ever to uphold the honor of our institution. There are three or four positions to fill, but let every one do what he can for the team and it will do honor to the school. From what I am told by the players and various students, I feel that all will work harmoniously for the best interests of the team of '99, and that enthusiasm will not be wanting to inspire the players to their grandest efforts. The school can make the team win, and I believe it will.

C. E. WILLIAMS, Captain '99.

The team which the University put out last season was as remarkable in some ways as any that has ever represented the institution. The points which were especially developed were the offensive play and the individual work of the men. In these two points the team was stronger than any other that has ever been brought together. The play which characterized the team was brilliant in nearly every game and at times was spectacular. Of course the accompanying defect of not being able to sustain such work is not peculiar to this team alone, but is always found with any team which develops along those lines. The weak spot in the varsity's play lay in its defense. As it was strong on aggressive, it was correspondingly deficient when it came to stopping its opponents. The one thing that shows that it lacked strength in this part of the team work is the fact that in every important game, it was unable to prevent the "other fellows" from scoring.

The team was fortunate in having as fine material as ever went upon the football field of this school. The men were, taken as a whole, energetic and conscientious workers and attended to business. A good number of the old men were back, which always furnishes a working basis and there were sufficient candidates to make them earn their places. The men were at a disadvantage in playing the large games away from home, and this taken together with the fact that three times during the season, two games were played within a day of one another, shows that their work was of an excellent standard. It is an unfortunate mistake to schedule two games together, and it is not to be wondered at if the second is poorly played, or lost.

Melford, as captain, always handled his men wisely. He has a good, cool head and is able to use it at critical points. It is unnecessary to speak of his ability as center for those who know anything of foot ball are well aware that in him the University has a center who has never been equaled by any former one, or probably by

ing as to their ability. They proved themselves equal to all emergencies; and certainly one may consider them the strongest men in their respective positions this side of the Mississippi. The new men played fully as well, and even better than one had the right to expect. New men must learn and the only way for them to gain the necessary experience is to go through several large games. It shows them not what they could do, but what they cannot do; and after thinking over their deficiencies for nine months, they enter the next fall ready to take advantage of what they have learned. The first year a man learns the game of foot ball; after that he learns to play his own individual game.

The team suffered from the fact that it was necessary to change its quarter backs every game or two. Any one of the men who played would fill the position, if kept there through the entire season. It is a lamentable necessity which requires the trying of new men in this position, for above all the other backs must have the same men to pass the ball to them game after game. Backs are men who work in certain grooves, and for successful team work these grooves must always be the same.

The line of development which a team should follow ought to be one of a gradual ascent, reaching the highest degree a week or two before the close of the season remaining at this point. This is a most difficult thing to accomplish. The varsity team started out well, but came to its height somewhat too soon. As a result it was unable to keep its "condition" until the end. It was exactly the same thing as happened at Princeton last year. The line along which Harvard developed this year is said by eastern experts to be the most perfect of any team for years. Is it necessary to keep this point in view in the arrangement of games, and the regular grind of practice must be made to meet it. It is a hard thing

much more advantageous to her than they would have been to our lighter team. However, I think Nebraska, with her heavy tackle and guard interference, would have played a much more aggressive game had she played more openly.

Tackle back and full back runs should be just around their tackles or almost straight through them. But half-backs should sweep around the ends of the opposition unless the ends box them in and then the half may turn in.

I believe in modern foot ball and I think the open plays present the scientific part of the game to the spectators in the best manner.

Nebraska's interference last season can be justly praised, for it was good and was well suited to her heavy line.

J. P. HOWARD,  
Captain of Missouri '98.

To answer briefly the questions of the Nebraskans regarding athletics let me say that in my opinion there is nothing more unfortunate than the evident lack in the University today of general and genuine interest in this part of University life. Student support is given sparingly, and it almost seems grudgingly, to the various forms of athletic sport. In private conversation different reasons have been assigned for this condition of affairs which all students seem to recognize and most deplore. One says the team is no good, another thinks it is managed in the interests of a chosen few, not his own, and a third objects to the way the sport is carried on or the effect it has on the morale of the participants; yet all agree in not extending to it in any support. Have not these critics and many others reversed the real order and are not their reasons for withdrawing support, which have at times no doubt the color of truth, really the result of their attitude rather than its causes? So long

awakening to the realization of the breadth of University training, an appreciation of his education that lies outside class room and study hours and a sense of the responsibility of the University student for all things that pertain to our life as a part of his own that will, if he cherishes it, yield him returns in fuller, rounder development. In all his relations to our multiplex organization let each one take as his motto (with apologies to the shades of the classic poet) "Studiosus sum; Universitatis nihil a un alienum puts," and not only the success of athletics assured, but the tone of the whole life in the University will be raised, and the individual will secure a correspondingly broader and fuller development from his college life.

HENRY B. WARD.

After a thing is done it becomes an easy task to criticize it and show how much better it could have been carried out; as Thackeray says the best after dinner speeches he ever made were those which he delivered in the carriage on his way home from the dinner. Such critics do not always consider the circumstances which determined the plan of action at the time, hence are often uncharitable.

As for myself, I feel proud of the record which our football team made for itself during the season. At the beginning, the "cranks" felt pretty blue, for the loss of such men as Shedd, Wiggins and Pearse seemed to weaken our chances for the pennant very materially. Good men were found to fill these places, however, and under the able leadership of the captain and inspired by his grit and courage, the team came through the ordeal with flying colors and inter-state pennant in their possession. Unfortunately for the general record, as soon as the pennant was won, what had previously been an invincible team, apparently went to pieces, and the other teams which ought easily to have been beaten, had no difficulty in wresting victory from us.

Various attempts have been made to explain this slump in the team's work, but it seems to be due almost wholly to lack of training. Previous to the Kansas game, when there was an extra inducement to exertion, some show of training was made by individual members of the team, though training as a whole was never indulged in, after this their chief interest was gone, the pennant was ours; other teams were looked upon with lofty indifference as small fry, with the inevitable consequences.

The team practised faithfully, they worked hard on the field, but this one element of success—perhaps the most important—was entirely wanting. We have a right to be proud of the team, but we should have a greater right to feel proud, if so important a matter as training had not been overlooked.

I cannot leave the subject without saying something concerning the lack of interest in athletics shown by the student body generally. I am at a loss to explain this. At other universities with which I am familiar, the students support athletics in an enthusiastic way, by voice, by deed and by subscriptions; without all of these it is impossible to make a success of any branch of athletics. I hope to see the time, and that very soon, when such support will be heartily accorded by the students in this institution.

JOHN WHITE.

### OBSERVATIONS OF AN ALUMNUS.

To the interested alumnus the most pleasing feature of a successful football season has been the development of the fact of the supremacy of a faculty-students athletic board. One not acquainted with the athletic management or rather lack of management of earlier university days cannot realize how radical is the change. Even in the early '90's the manager of an athletic team was responsible to no one and made no report of his doings. He could not indeed have made a report had he wished, for the lack of any one to whom to report. The writer well remembers that in the spring of 1892, he was manager of the University base ball team, by whose appointment he was and is now unable to state. A tour and series of games through Kansas was arranged and on his own responsibility the manager received transportation and advanced necessary monies. The trip was fairly successful in that expenses were all met. The writer will not soon forget how on the train home the members of the team gathered around him as he figured disbursements and receipts and arrived at a grand total of fifty cents to his credit. By unanimous consent the train boy was summoned and such further disbursements were as that a refiguring of account would have failed to show any grand total whatever. This is a fair instance of the way things were done in those days.

The advantages of the present system are manifest. It demands business-like methods. To leave large sums of money to the absolute control of any one man is as unsatisfactory to the student body as it is unfair to the manager. The system inspires the confidence and good will of the public and especially of the business world, who must furnish athletic goods on credit. It eliminates the free trade idea in athletics. Last but not least it brings home to the aspiring athlete an all-important reminder



NEBRASKA'S FIRST SIX CHIEF EXECUTIVES.

any in the west; and when the time comes for him to step out it will be a long time before another will "come out of the west" to fill his shoes.

The strong part of the team this year, taken as a whole, were the backs and the left side of the line. We were weak on the right end, and though one man after another was tried, it seemed impossible to get the right one. The backs were individually brilliant players and worked well together. Nearly all were good kickers, and were able to carry the ball and to interfere well. Although heavy, they were quick to move, and this is always necessary. The center, guards, and left end were old men; and there could be no guess-

to bring about at best, this gradual development, and with the peculiar way the varsity games followed one another, it can be truly said that it was practically impossible this year.

GEO. H. SHEDD, Captain of '97.

There are now two almost distinct systems of foot ball, the open and the closed plays. And these were clearly seen in the styles or systems of play used by Nebraska and Missouri.

We use the open plays because we think them the best under all circumstances and especially for light teams such as we so often have.

But Nebraska used the closed plays last season; and no doubt they were

as the majority of students withhold their influence is it not true that athletics will be dominated by cliques of their own interest, that questionable methods are likely to be introduced, and certainly that financial success cannot be attained? In England college athletics stand above question by force of public opinion in the universities which zealously guards the good name of the college as equally important with success. Here among us awakened general interest in sports as a real part of University life would conduce equally to moral and financial success. It is a sad thing that so many students regard a University education as attained by merely attending classes and securing credits.