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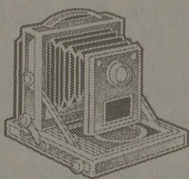
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THE BATTALION SPORTS

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Big 12 Championship Osborne, Husker players respond to Texas' comments

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Some of Nebraska's defensive players smiled broadly but talked softly after hearing that Texas quarterback James Brown had predicted the Longhorns would win Saturday's Big 12 Conference championship game by three touchdowns.

However, coach Tom Osborne offered the most terse reply from the Huskers' camp.

"My reaction is, I hope he's not right," Osborne said. "But that's why we play the game. To find out."

Osborne said Brown's comment wouldn't mean much to No. 3 Nebraska "because they've heard it all by the time they are juniors or seniors here."

All-America defensive end Jared Tomich rubbed his chin as he perused a story about Brown's remarks.

"Hm m m m m. We hear talk from teams every week, but I don't think anyone ever said they'd beat us by three TDs," Tomich said. "I'd say that if things get a little slow in practice, this is likely to come up."

Tomich, fellow defensive end Grant Wistrom and defensive tackle Jason Peter all voiced respect for Brown, the other Longhorns and

the four-game winning streak they take into the title game.

And they all kept smiling.

"That's fine, he can say what he wants to say," Wistrom said of Brown's remark. "If he does it, he's a prophet. If he can do it consistently he could probably make a lot of money predicting the future."

"If we don't sack him maybe they will beat us by three touchdowns, who knows?" Wistrom added. "They beat Texas A&M pretty bad. Texas is an experienced team."

Peter summed up what seemed to be the consensus among Huskers.

"Talk doesn't matter after the kick-off," Peter said. "I wouldn't have said what he did, but maybe he knows something no one else knows. We're going to come after him and we'll see what happens."

Jeff Ogard, the 6-foot-6, 300-pound quiet giant on the otherwise talkative Husker front four, didn't smile as he characterized Brown's pronouncement.

"It's a rarity, hearing something like that," Ogard said. "Maybe sometimes stuff like that will do you some good. Sometimes it will work against you."



Ripken discusses possible plans to move to third base

BALTIMORE (AP) — Shortstop Cal Ripken has met with Baltimore Orioles management to discuss plans of moving him to third base.

"Cal had the opportunity to express himself and we did the same thing," assistant general manager Kevin Malone said. "It was a very productive meeting. Our philosophies are on the same page and we're both going in the same direction."

"We told Cal that if we can upgrade at shortstop and make the team better, that's what we're looking to do — not just at shortstop, but at all positions. We just won't move Cal for the sake of doing it."

If the Orioles don't move Ripken, the Orioles would be interested in Boston Red Sox free

agent third baseman Naehering, Malone said.

"It will be very difficult to someone that would allow a move (Ripken) to third," Malone said. "We're looking at all the options ... We wanted to go on record telling him that's the

General Manager Pat Gillick spoke with representatives of land A's free agent shortstop Bordick over the weekend. He said he wanted to speak with Ripken before signing with Baltimore.

Bordick's agent said Baltimore received an offer from Baltimore. The Orioles also are considering New York Yankees free agent Tony Fernandez, who played third and shortstop for major league club Davey Johnson at Cincinnati.

Howard pleads not guilty

WASHINGTON (AP) — Washington Bullets forward Juwan Howard agreed to enter an alcohol rehabilitation and education program Tuesday after pleading not guilty to driving while intoxicated.

District of Columbia Superior Court commissioner Ronald Goodbread then continued the case until Feb. 24. If Howard completes the court-monitored course by that date, the charges will be dropped.

Howard was arrested Nov. 11 after his 1995 Mercedes-Benz was speeding in Northwest Washing-

ton. Police said he had just private party at a nightclub.

Howard apologized for the incident later in the day, calling it "truly a big embarrassment for me and for my family and the Bullets organization."

D.C. Corporation counsel Charles Ruff, who oversees the court's rehabilitation program, said Howard was not receiving special treatment because of a celebrity status.

"He's getting the same as any first-time offender would in his situation," Ruff said.

RELEASES

Continued from Page 1

"It was a deal where I felt what he wanted to do and what I wanted to do were different, and we had talked about me looking into other options."

Slocum and Ensminger did not return phone calls Tuesday night. Koenning was not available for comment.

Bennett said he talked to Slocum last night and told him he was examining other opportunities.

The news of the three coaches' release stunned several Aggie players who were not informed of the changes, including junior quarterback Brandon Stewart.

"I hate to see them leave," Stewart said. "I got to know coach Ensminger very well. It was kind of a shock. I wish them well and I wish they could stay, but that is the way the season worked out. I thought the coaching staff did a fine job."

Stewart said he feels the ousting is unnecessary.

"I feel we really don't need a change,"

Steve Ensminger
Offensive coordinator/
Quarterbacks coach



Ensminger came to A&M in 1994 from Georgia where he was the passing game coordinator and quarterback coach. His Bulldog offense ranked ninth in the country in total yards.

Stewart said. "We had a rough season with a lot of miscues and mistakes. A lot of people were pointing fingers, and that falls on me and the coaches."

Sophomore free safety Rich Coady said there had been no talk amongst the players about possible coaching changes.

"It was a decision that was not up to us," Coady said. "We did not talk about it. I'm disappointed to see them all go. They were all good friends of mine."

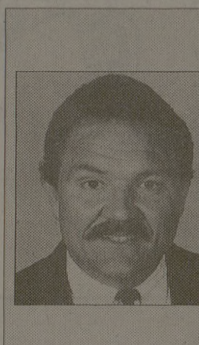
Stewart concurred. "I never heard talk," Stewart said. "The fans talked about it and expected it. I did not expect this."

Slocum conducted an end-of-the-season player's meeting Monday, where, according to sophomore wide receiver Aaron Oliver, he said he would do whatever necessary to turn the program around.

"When he said that he was going to make changes, you know it's not going to be cutting scholarships," Oliver said.

Although no mention was made in Slocum's statement of possible replacements, Stewart said with any new coach, the future is uncertain.

"The only thing is trying to learn a new of-



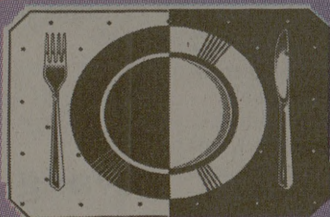
Phil Bennett
Defensive coordinator/
Inside Linebackers
Bennett came to A&M in 1995 from LSU where he held the same position. Bennett won the 1995 American football Quarterly Division I Defensive Coordinator of the Year.



Les Koenning
Wide receivers coach

Koenning came to A&M in 1994 from Duke University where he held the same position. Koenning was a three-year letterman at Texas (1978-80).

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