

From The Bushes



Billy's Toe

The curtain goes up on the 1964 football season this Saturday at two o'clock. That's Mountain Standard Time for you folks.

The place? None other than Pocatello, Idaho. That's a small town in southern Idaho at the base of the Rockies. Last time an Omaha U. football team played there, the Indians were sent home on the short end of a 39-6 score. That was in 1959. However, most fans would like to remember the 1957 season. The Bengals had not been beaten on their home field, the Spud Bowl, in about ten years.

It was Homecoming and the Bengals were unbeaten and headed for post season play. OU was 6-1-1 with an upset loss to Morningside as the only blemish.

All-American Billy Englehardt kicked a first quarter field goal in the rain to put Omaha on top at the half, 3-0. The Indians held on and scored again in the fourth quarter and won it 9-0.

Lloyd Cardwell and his troops made it a miserable afternoon for Idaho State fans. Fine way to start 1964, too.

Marlin The Key?

A lot of the fortunes of the 1964 team may depend on the flying feet of soph quarterback Marlin Briscoe. Briscoe amazes you with his speed and deceptiveness and the ability to cut a thousand different ways when cornered. Coaches say he throws the running pass with the best. He's quicker than Carl Meyers but his ability to call the "right" play and his coolness under fire will be tested Saturday by a big, tough Idaho State line. For sheer running ability, he could develop into the best OU signal caller yet.

Out On The Proverbial Limb

Part of the fun of being a sportswriter is forecasting the outcome of a game or a whole season. I already feel the noose tightening around my neck after being one of only 12 writers to pick Nebraska for a repeat Big 8 title this year in the annual poll conducted by Kansas U's Don Pierce. I will not risk the wrath of the Indian coaches by making a prediction on a season record but I sure pick 'em for a third CIC title. A rough non conference schedule makes another 7 game winning season seem unlikely but there are so many question marks about this young team that it is difficult to predict. I do look for Northern Illinois as the best game of the year.

Bombs Away

But maybe not so much this year as in the past against OU. Teams like Northern Illinois have been setting records in the air against Omaha for the last two years as a result of a leaky pass defense. Indian cornermen and safetymen appeared hesitant to knock a receiver down until he had the ball in his mitts. Others seemed content to let them have the short ones and stay back safely to guard against the bomb.

But this year, with Briscoe in the defensive backfield, teams may hesitate to throw the flat pass as much.

Marlin picked off a George Bork aerial last year and took it in for OU's only score against the Huskies. He played his man aggressively and got in front of him.

The little sophomore is probably the best defensive back, despite his lack of size and experience, on the squad this year. He's not afraid to tackle and takes the chance when he has to against a bigger man.

With a defensive umbrella of Briscoe, speedy little Doug Butler, Don Crum (if he learns to tackle) and maybe Joe Benson or another quick back, opponents should think twice about trying Bork's antics of the last two years when he set all kinds of records against the Indians.



Briscoe

View From The Boxes

Officials still decline to shift the team bench to the East side of University Stadium. Coach Al Caniglia has repeated time and again that it would be better over there because there would be no interference from photographers and other people who have to do their work from the sidelines. There is a problem with the sun being in the eyes of the coaches and players if they are on the West but it's that way at Lincoln and Bob Devaney certainly doesn't seem to mind. Those box seat patrons at OU deserve a better shake.

Mike Moran
Gateway Sports Editor