

OMAHA U. PREVIEW  
THE MAGICIAN IS BACK!

If lettermen are a key to success, Omaha University head football coach Al Caniglia can unlock the door to a winning season.

Caniglia, however, isn't saying anything. He can't. His smile is too wide for him to talk. Twenty-eight lettermen, including 16 starters, is enough to make anyone grin.

The Indians last year finished 8-2 and captured their third CIC championship in four years. Only six starters--four from the offensive unit and two from the defensive squad--have been lost.

The brightest spot this year is at quarterback. Marlin "The Magician" Briscoe is back. Pro scouts are drooling over Briscoe. He's hailed as one of the best in the midwest, including Big Ten and Big Eight signal-callers, and some scouts rank him with the best in the nation.

OU switched to a new offense last year--the pro set. Briscoe and his mates took to it like kids take to Santa Claus. The Magician was fourth in the nation in total offense with 2,181 yards--passing for 1,668 and rushing for 513.

But not to be overlooked is the fact that the Indians' attack was well-balanced. OU's air game netted 1,729 yards and its ground attack picked up 1,986 yards.

Little All-American Gerald Allen is the only back who graduated. It's hard to lose a back who set a school season rushing record (815 yards) last year. But Caniglia feels he has an able replacement in Rick Davis, a 5-7, 180-pounder, who was the starting flanker last year.

Ron Sayers, whose brothers, Roger and Gale, are with the Chicago Bears, is also expected to see action at the running back slot. Sayers was a starting defensive back last year.

The fullback spot will again be handled by Bill Dodd. A powerful runner, the 6-0, 225-pounder also stood out as a blocking back last year.

The offensive line is the only portion of the squad that needs shoring up. The entire right side was wiped out by graduation. Caniglia indicated during spring practice that he will rob the defensive line to fill the offensive gaps. Soph Carl Goodman (6-3, 255) has been moved from defensive end to offensive guard.

Other changes are senior Bill Jansen (6-1, 258) from defensive tackle to offensive tackle and senior linebacker Terry Edwards, who will see double duty as a tight end.

Spearheading the defensive unit will be three-year lettermen Larry Von Tersch (middle linebacker) and Dave Rak (tackle).

OU finished No. 12 among the nation's NAIA colleges, dropping from sixth place the final week of the season following a 36-30 loss to Drake. This year the Indians have No. 1 potential behind the finest quarterback around.