

Papuchis To Go It Alone As DC In Last Game At Nebraska

BY ERIC OLSON

AP College Football Writer

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — It's not the way he wanted it to happen, but John Papuchis relishes the opportunity to fly solo in his last game as Nebraska's defensive coordinator.

The firing of head coach Bo Pelini has left Papuchis in charge of every aspect of the Cornhuskers' defense in Saturday night's Holiday Bowl.

"How lucky am I for it to be against Southern Cal?" a smiling Papuchis said with a big dose of sarcasm.

Pelini was hailed as a defensive

whiz when he was named head coach in 2008, and Papuchis was 35 and a first-time coordinator when he was promoted from defensive line coach and special teams coordinator in 2012.

Many fans wondered — rightly so, Papuchis said — just how much authority he had.

"It never really has been clearly laid out there," Papuchis said. "A lot of people look at the role of defensive coordinator and think that the only role was calling (the game) on Saturdays."

Make no mistake: Pelini was in charge on game days.

Pelini formulated game plans through discussions with Papuchis

and other defensive assistants. Papuchis said his primary roles were running player meetings, organizing practices and installing game plans.

Pelini and Papuchis stood nearly shoulder-to-shoulder on the sideline during games, with Papuchis hand-signaling defensive calls to the players on the field. Papuchis said Pelini sometimes would ask him for input.

"At the end of the day," Papuchis said, "Bo had the final hammer in terms of what was called on Saturday."

The Holiday Bowl will be Papuchis' show, and possibly an audition for his next job.

"In a sense, I kind of feel that way, although it's an odd way to have that because of all the dynamics that surround it," he said. "I wouldn't want this (game) to be the only piece of the resume. I think there are a lot of things that have happened over the course of the years to build that resume, but I certainly think it's part of it."

Barney Cotton, the running game coordinator who also coaches tight ends and the offensive line, will be Nebraska's interim head coach for the bowl.

With this being his last game for No. 25 Nebraska (9-3), Papuchis plans to be aggressive against quar-

terback Cody Kessler and the No. 24 Trojans (8-4).

"There's no real reason to be conservative, I guess," Papuchis said. "I don't want to be stupid, either. We want to put our guys in the best possible scenario to be successful and let the game play out the way it's going to play out."

Pelini brought Papuchis along with him from LSU, where he was a defensive intern and graduate assistant. Papuchis said he's grown as a coach and that he and his wife, Billie, enjoyed the experience.

"I walked in here excited, with my head high," Papuchis said, "and I'm planning to leave the same way."

Hoops Roundup

Parkston Powers Past Pirates

PARKSTON — The Parkston Trojans led 18-5 after one quarter and never looked back, claiming a 51-24 victory over Avon in boys' basketball action on Tuesday.

Dillon Thuringer and Wes Genant each had 14 points to lead Parkston. Joshua Rangs added seven rebounds in the victory.

For Avon, Logan Mudder led the way with nine points and 14 rebounds.

Parkston, 3-0, faces Miller in its annual Parkston Classic on Monday. Avon is off until a Jan. 2 game at Alcester-Hudson.

AVON (0-3).....5 17 19 24
PARKSTON (3-0).....18 31 42 51

Scotland 42, Dakota Christian 41

SCOTLAND — The Scotland Highlanders held off Dakota Christian 42-41 in boys' basketball action on Tuesday.

Tanner Skorepa had 14 points and eight rebounds to lead Scotland. Shaye Bloch added 11 points.

For Dakota Christian, Drew Veurink had 11 points and nine rebounds. Chase Pfeifer had 10 points and Michael Maas had nine rebounds for the Cadets.

Both teams are off until January. Scotland hosts Centerville on Jan. 3, while Dakota Christian travels to Burke to face Burke-South Central on Jan. 8.

Dakota Christian won the JV game 33-26.

DAKOTA CHRISTIAN.....5 15 30 41
SCOTLAND.....13 19 31 41

DeSmet 42, Colman-Egan 31

COLMAN — The DeSmet Bulldogs outscored Colman-Egan 25-13 in the second half to claim a 42-31 victory over the CE-Hawks in boys' basketball action on Tuesday.

Dane Couglin scored 12 points and Jayden Janssen had 10 points for DeSmet, which trailed 18-17 at the half.

Bodee Groos led Colman-Egan with 14 points and eight rebounds.

DeSmet, 2-1, faces Hamlin on Saturday in Brookings. Colman-Egan, 2-2, also plays in the Entringer Classic on Saturday in Brookings.

DESMET (2-1).....10 17 27 42
COLMAN-EGAN (2-2).....6 18 20 31

Arlington 81, Estelline 53

ARLINGTON — The Arlington Cardinals outscored Estelline 43-17 in the second half to coast to an 81-53 victory over the Redmen in boys' basketball action on Tuesday.

Alex Heuer scored a game-high 26 points, hitting seven three-pointers, to lead Arlington. Andrew King had 14



Scotland's Chandler Diede (10) is fouled by Dakota Christian's Chase Pfeifer (24) while Pfeifer's teammate Drew Veurink (42) lends defensive support during high school basketball action Tuesday night in Scotland.

points, 10 assists and four steals. Kyle Stegeman also had a double-double, finishing with 10 points, 10 rebounds and four blocked shots. Tanner Lemme and Luke Weber also had 10 points each in the win.

For Estelline, Trevor Gorder led the way with 17 points. Ethan Kurka had 13 points and Nolan Sonnenberg had 11 points for the Redmen.

Arlington, 2-0, plays Madison in the Entringer Classic on Saturday. Estelline, 2-1, faces Oldham-Ramona-Rutland in the Entringer Classic on Saturday.

ESTELLINE (2-1).....17 36 48 53
ARLINGTON (2-0).....21 38 62 81

Monday

Alcester-Hudson 65, Elk Point-Jefferson 59

ALCESTER — Alcester-Hudson led 21-11 after one quarter and held Elk Point-Jefferson at bay in a 65-59 victory over the Huskies in boys' basketball action on Monday.

Sam Jensen had 19 points and six rebounds, and Grant Johnson had 18 points to lead Alcester-Hudson. Chris Klemme had 12 points and Gavin Doering had five assists in the victory.

For EPJ, Brandon Koupal scored 23 points. Michael Murphy had 14 points, eight rebounds, six assists and five steals for the Huskies.

Alcester-Hudson, 3-2, faces Hanson in the Parkston Classic on Dec. 29. EPJ plays OA-BCIG on Jan. 8 in Sioux City, Iowa.

ELK POINT-JEFFERSON (1-3).....11 28 42 59
ALCESTER-HUDSON (3-2).....21 36 49 65

Andes Central 40, Freeman Academy 34

FREEMAN — JB Bruguier scored 16 points and had 12 rebounds Monday night to lead the Andes Central Eagles to a 40-34 win against the Freeman Academy Bobcats in Freeman.

Jason Drapeaux added nine points in the victory, with Leo Hopkins contributing eight rebounds and five steals.

Ian Hofer scored 11 points for Freeman Academy, with Ryan Haggerty adding six points, nine rebounds and seven assists. Jeff Graber also had nine assists.

The Bobcats host Menno January 2, while Andes Central hosts Menno Tuesday, Dec. 30.

ANDES CENTRAL.....9 16 28 40
FREEMAN ACADEMY.....8 14 23 34

Creighton 64, EPPJ 44

ELGIN, Neb. — The Creighton Bulldogs outscored Elgin Public-Pope John 37-18 in the second half to pull away to a 64-44 victory in boys' basketball action on Monday.

Beau Schindler scored 17 points and had 13 rebounds to lead Creighton. Reid Liska had 12 points and five assists. Brandon Borgmann had 11 points, 10 rebounds and six assists in the win.

For EP-PJ, Jack Borer had 13 points and Regan Kerkman had 12 points to lead the way. Kyle Heithoff added seven rebounds.

Creighton, 3-2, is off until its holiday tournament begins on Jan. 2. EP-PJ plays in the Riverside Holiday Tournament, Dec. 29-31 at Cedar Rapids.

CREIGHTON (3-2).....12 27 41 64
ELGIN PUBLIC-POPE JOHN (2-4).....10 26 31 44

Menno 67, Iroquois 15

MITCHELL — The Menno Wolves rolled to a 67-15 victory over Iroquois in boys' basketball action on Monday at the Corn Palace in Mitchell.

Caleb Preszler led a balanced Menno attack with 12 points. Derrick Lehr, Dustin Lehr and Jacob Hertz each had eight points. Dustin Lehr also had seven rebounds. Andrew Schaeffer had five assists in the victory.

For Iroquois, Jaedyn Barber and Erik Wehlender each had four points.

Menno, 2-1, faces Andes Central on Dec. 30. Iroquois travels to Estelline on Jan. 2.

MENNO (2-1).....11 31 50 67
IROQUOIS (0-2).....4 9 9 15

Monday Girls

Creighton 62, EPPJ 42

ELGIN, Neb. — Creighton outscored Elgin Public-Pope John 44-26 in the middle two periods to claim a 62-42 victory in girls' basketball action on Monday.

Emily Sorensen led four Creighton players in double figures with 15 points. Natalie Nielsen scored 13 points. Rebecca Eggerling had 12 points and eight rebounds. Jessica Gragert had 10 points and Sarah Erb had nine rebounds in the win.

No statistics were reported for EPPJ (5-1), which suffered its first setback of the season. Next up for EPPJ is the Riverside Holiday Tournament in Cedar Rapids.

Creighton, 4-1, is off until hosting its holiday tournament Jan. 2 and 3.

CREIGHTON (4-1).....12 25 56 62
ELGIN PUBLIC-POPE JOHN (5-1).....11 18 37 42

Menno 59, Iroquois 14

MITCHELL — Menno defeated Iroquois 59-14 in girls' basketball action on Monday night in Mitchell.

Courtnee Edelman scored 12 points for Menno. Abby Herboldt added 10 points, and Ashton Vaith scored 8 points.

Kelsey Blue had eight points and six rebounds for Iroquois.

Next action for Menno will be a road game Dec. 30 against Andes Central. Iroquois will play McIntosh on Dec. 27 in Huron.

MENNO (1-4).....15 30 46 59
IROQUOIS (0-5).....4 4 4 14

MMC-Oglala Lakota Game Postponed

The men's basketball game featuring Oglala Lakota College and Mount Marty College, originally scheduled on Tuesday, was postponed due to poor travel conditions.

No makeup date has been set.

Next scheduled game for the MMC men is Jan. 3 at home against Nebraska Wesleyan. The Great Plains Athletic Conference contest is set for 4 p.m., and will be preceded by the women's game between the two schools at 2 p.m.

Iverson, Hamann Named To S.D. Basketball Hall

SIOUX FALLS — Basketball greats from Yankton and Vermillion are among the 16 individuals who will make up the 2015 induction class for the South Dakota High School Basketball Hall of Fame, announced today (Wednesday).

Chuck Iverson (Vermillion, 1969) and the late Ray Hamann (Yankton, 1931) will be among the honorees inducted at the sixth annual banquet, scheduled for March 28 at 2 p.m. at the Ramkota Hotel in Sioux Falls.

Also included is the late Leonard "Jimmy" Lovley, the state's only representative in the prestigious Helms Foundation Basketball Hall of Fame.

Lovley was a 1920 graduate of Elkton. He led the Elks to two state championships during South Dakota's one-class era. Lovley became the first All-American in Creighton University history, earning that distinction in 1923 and 1924. He was inducted into the Helms Foundation Basketball Hall of Fame in 1957.

The Class of 2015 also features Amy Burnett (Huron '91) of Austin, Texas; the late Lee Colburn (Brookings '69); Katie Dailey (Jefferson '81) of Canistota; Jim Dyer (Willow Lake '60) of Scottsdale, Ariz.; John Eidsness (Canton '66) of Pelican Rapids, Minn.; Mike Freier (Tripp '67) of Bloomington, Minn.; Jim Mitchell (South Dakota School for the Deaf '54) of Sioux Falls; Marv Rasmussen (Claremont '55) of Langford; Julie Jensen Rozell (Langford '91) of Redfield; John Sivesind (Sioux Falls Roosevelt '96) of Sioux Falls; Jim Tays (Gettysburg '50) of Hot Springs; Carla Alard-Watson (Bennett County '87) of Rapid City; and Vince Whipple (Rapid City '56) of Porcupine.

"This group continues the rich tradition of outstanding athletes inducted into the Hall of Fame," said executive director Dave Wagner. "Each of these players has made an imprint on South Dakota basketball history."

Recognized as a Team of Excellence will be the 1990 Wakonda girls. The Warriorettes of Coach Ron Flynn went 26-0 and won the Class B state title.

Banquet ticket information will be announced soon on the Hall of Fame website at sdbbhof.com.

QB Club Off Until Jan. 7

The Yankton Quarterback Club will not meet today (Wednesday) or on Dec. 31 due to the holidays.

Regular meetings will resume on Jan. 7.

The Yankton Quarterback Club meets Wednesdays at noon at the Elks Lodge, 504 West 27th Street, Yankton, during the fall and winter sports seasons.

The public is invited to attend.

Tackling Becomes A Lost Art As Offenses Rule NFL

BY PAUL NEWBERRY

AP National Writer

ATLANTA (AP) — Jessie Tuggle knows a thing or two about tackling. They didn't call him the "Hammer" for nothing.

When the retired linebacker gets together with other former players, one subject inevitably comes up.

These guys today just don't tackle like we used to.

"A kid has played in high school and played in college, so you assume when he gets to the NFL... that he knows how to tackle," said Tuggle, who was credited with more than 2,000 stops during his 14-year career with the Atlanta Falcons. "That assumption is not right."

It's not really surprising, either. In football, one of the essential elements of the game — tackling — just doesn't get a whole lot of practice time anymore. It's like a baseball infielder who doesn't take grounders before a game, or a hockey goalie who never faces 100 mph shots until it counts.

"We don't tackle live, not in practice," said Bob Sutton, defensive coordinator for the Kansas City Chiefs. "I don't think anybody in the league does."

The reasons for that are under-

standable. Tougher restrictions on full-contact drills have taken hold at all levels of football, mostly spurred by a heightened awareness of the devastating long-term damage that concussions can cause.

From high schools to colleges to the pros, the impact of that change is noticeable to everyone — especially those who are trying to avoid getting tackled.

"It's a lost art," said Falcons running back Steven Jackson, who had rushed for more than 11,000 yards in the NFL.

For pro teams, where the top players are making millions of dollars and rosters are limited to 53 players plus a small practice squad, one of the primary goals during the week is just making sure everybody is healthy for the game. Hitting in practice is simply not feasible, especially at this time of year when most teams are all beat up.

"Probably the most challenging thing is having your guys prepared and ready to tackle," Atlanta coach Mike Smith said, "because you don't have the opportunity to practice in pads."

There seems to be more hitting in practice at the college level, where the rosters are larger, but even then it's rare for a team to do full-scale tackling once the season begins.

At Georgia, like many schools, they

do most of their work using "thud" drills, where the defensive players — wearing helmets and shoulder pads — are expected to do everything they would do during a normal tackle except take the offensive player to the ground.

"There are a lot of fundamental drills that are actually harder to do than tackling," Bulldogs coach Mark Richt said. "Sometimes, you can just lay out, grab a guy, trip his heels, and that's considered tackling him. But when you're teaching to thud, you've got to have good body position, sink your hips, strike with your eyes up, then let the guy go. That takes more effort, more energy."

But most of the rule changes over the last decade or so were largely designed to increase scoring and penalize those who dole out especially brutal tackles. To some, that's made defensive players more hesitant to tackle the way they were always taught.

"They don't want you hitting with your head," Buffalo Bills linebacker Brandon Spikes said. "They want you to arm tackle."

Good luck with that. Since there's so much emphasis on offense these days, it's inevitable that many of the biggest, fastest, strongest players end up on that side of the line.

At 5-foot-11 and 212 pounds, Falcons safety Dwight Lowery is usually trying to bring down players who are bigger than he is.

"The athletes are different," Lowery said, with a knowing grin. "It would be interesting if you could take players from the past and bring them to the present."

For that matter, the old-timers never faced the sort of complex passing schemes that are the norm in today's NFL game. Teams used to line up most of the time with two running backs and a tight end, which essentially left all but two receivers jammed close to the ball. These days, teams line up with four or five receivers, intent of spreading the field as much as possible.

"There's so much more space in the game today than there was years ago," said Kevin Coyle, defensive coordinator of the Miami Dolphins. "Years ago, teams were lining up with two backs and they were pounding the ball and everybody was crowding around the ball. Occasionally, you would get the ball thrown outside quickly. Nowadays, half to three-quarters of the game are the perimeter plays."

It's much the same in college, where