

The Glory Years

1981

The Huskers moved into the West Stadium Strength Complex located under the West stands.

Nebraska merged the North weight room located in Schulte Field House with the Circuit room from the South Stadium into the West Stadium Strength Complex. At 13,300 sq. ft., it was the largest weight room in the country at the time with the closest being Oklahoma and Indiana with 6500 sq. ft. each.

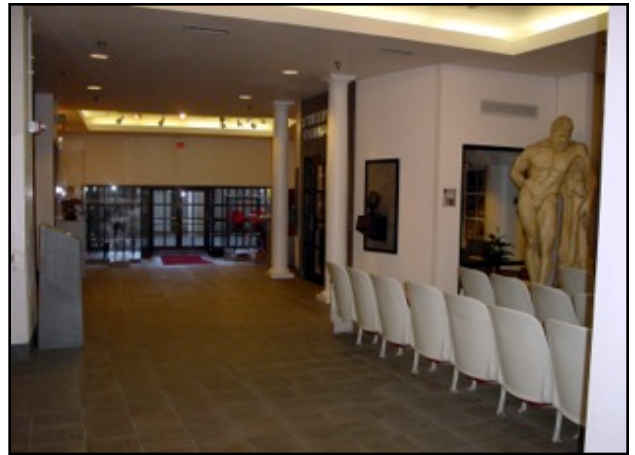
Bob Devaney said, "As long as I'm the Athletic Director we will continue to provide the best opportunity for our student-athletes to develop themselves physically. It has cost us a great deal of money but I feel it has been very worthwhile for our athletic programs." The space was completed at a cost of \$206,000 not counting new equipment.



The West Stadium Strength Complex opens.



West Stadium Entrance BEFORE.



West Stadium Entrance AFTER.

1981 - April 1

Randy Gobel was hired and quickly became one of the significant strength and conditioning hires in history for Nebraska. In addition to his strength coaching abilities he had expertise in facility development that gave me a much needed help.

1981

Nebraska Neon sign Company donated the huge sign above the record platform. Combine running stretching and lifting if you dare to be great.

1981

Coaches had to average two hand held 40 yard dash times before the invention of Electric timing. It was not possible to get an accurate time in the shorter 10 yard dash with hand held watches. The electronic timing system developed by the Nebraska engineer Dr. Mike Reilly.



Hand-held Timing.

1982

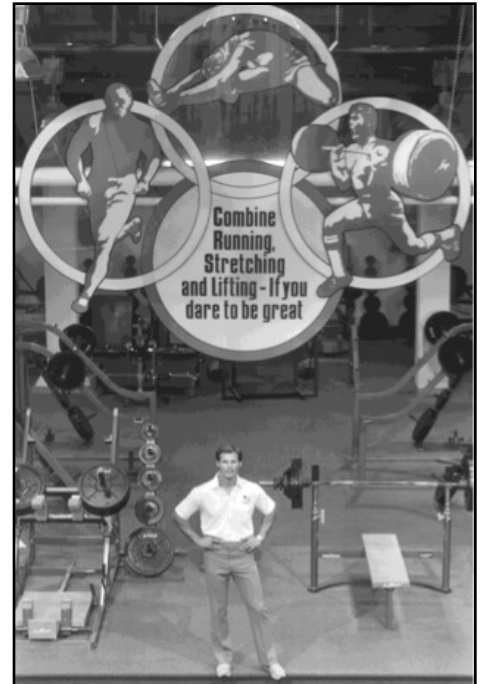
I created the Husker Power Club to support the Nebraska Strength and Conditioning program and staff. With the help of a dedicated board of directors, the Husker Power Club raised over 2 million in support of the Nebraska Strength Program. Many generous Husker fans made this possible.

1982 – May 5

Jane and I had our first child. Jay Robert Epley was born while I was at the NSCA National Conference in Atlanta. He would grow up to be a Certified Strength and Conditioning Coach/ Personal Trainer/Postural Restoration expert.

1983

Nebraska is the first school in the country to have an Outland Award winner three years in a row with Dave Rimington winning twice followed by Dean Steinkuhler.



Dare to be Great

The images are likenesses of I.M. Hipp running, Jane Epley stretching, and Rod Horn lifting.



Husker Power Club.

Jerry Schmidt, a student strength coach from Harvard, NE is shown with Lawrence Pete. Jerry developed into one of the top strength coaches in the country as he became the strength coach at Oklahoma State, Notre Dame, Florida, and Oklahoma before becoming the Head Strength Coach for Texas A & M in 2018.

Middle Guard Lawrence Pete became the first husker to ever bench press 500 lbs.

1984

Wm C. Brown published, my book, "Dynamic Strength Training for Athletes".

1984

I-Back Jeff Smith never missed a workout in his entire Nebraska career and was named Lifter of the Year after he gained 20 lbs. and increased his vertical jump 8".

1985

Linda Ybarra was hired as Husker Power Secretary and Administrative Assistant.



Linda Ybarra was hired as the Husker Power Secretary.

1985 - March 11

Nebraska created an athletic training table for male athletes in the West Stadium making the space large enough for an academic study hall. Head Trainer George Sullivan oversaw it and Nutritional analysis was provided by a Registered Dietician, Julie Gallagher from the International Center for Sports Nutrition in Omaha which was headed by Dr. Ann Grandjean. Seating Capacity was 220 and 330 meals/day were served. Female athletes ate at a separate dining hall until 1988.



Jerry Schmidt



Jerry Schmidt with Lawrence Pete



Jeff Smith receives his Lifter of the Year Award.

1985

A performance Index and strength Index were developed by numbers guru Dr. Chris Eskridge with help from Mike Arthur for Husker Power, Inc. The University of Nebraska became the first college to use the Index to evaluate performance and to motivate athletes. Husker Power, Inc. became EPIC Athletic Performance in 2006. The EPIC Athletic Performance Index helps coaches at all levels identify talent and is used to motivate athletes to improve their performance.



Dr. Chris Eskridge (white)
and Mike Arthur (red)

1985 March 5

Jane and I were blessed with a daughter – Jenna Shea Epley. She later received a Ph.D in Nursing Practice while having three sons with husband Chase Beideck who now is a strength coach for Nebraska Track and Tennis.

1988

Nebraska Female student-athletes were allowed to eat at the newly expanded training table 50 years after the first training table opened in 1938.

The Cook Pavilion was built with a full size indoor field. Dan and Gail Cook contributed to the Cook Pavilion along with Dan's father George Cook. Dan and Gail also contributed greatly to the Nebraska Strength Program.



Dan and Gail Cook

1988

The West Stadium Strength Complex was expanded connecting the training table on the South end of the West stadium with the Strength Complex on the North end. . The Husker Power office was in a trailer in the parking lot north of the stadium until construction was completed. The new space, including storage hallways and office space, was 30,000 sq. ft.



West Stadium Strength Complex was expanded.

1988

Husker Power celebrated 200 wins in Football with a victory over the Oklahoma Sooners, 7-3.

With the help of my six year old son J.R., we created a line of equipment for children called “The Future Force”.



J.R. Epley at six years old helps test new equipment



Future Force for children

1990

Curtis Cotton a defensive back won the Lifter of the Year Award. Curtis was one of the strongest players in history with the hang clean record of 812 points for lifting 406 lbs. 812 is the highest index for any lift every by a Husker.

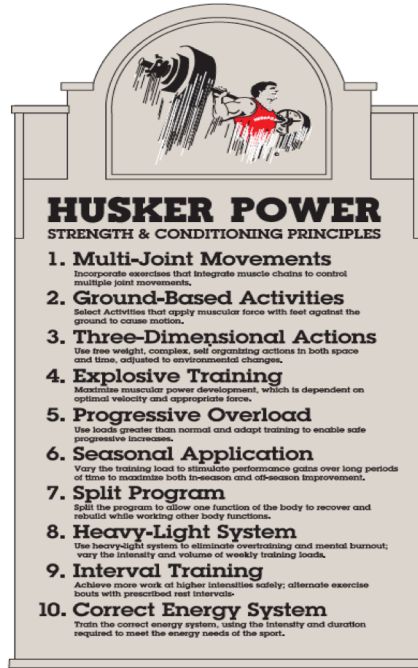
1991

Mike Arthur released the 10 Principles of Performance which were updated in 2015 and placed in all three Husker weight rooms for student-athletes.

If a coach is doing drills or lifts that do not meet the criteria in these principles they should ask themselves to justify what they are doing. They may be putting their athletes at risk. Coaches that aren't following these principles could find themselves working hard to climb the ladder of success only to find the ladder is leaning against the wrong wall.



Original 10 Principles



Principles were updated in 2015.

1991 - January 17th

This ring put Nebraska back on track after falling from the top ten. In 1990 the wheels fell off for Nebraska football.

A 9-3 record doesn't sound bad for most programs but finishing out of the top 10 after twenty straight years caused some serious finger pointing. Many players had bad attitudes on the team and punishment didn't seem to help.

Coach Osborne was out of town recruiting when I held up "the ring" but at first the I didn't say anything and just held the ring. The room got very quiet then I said, "I have a plan to help you earn a Championship ring but I need your help. We need to make some changes and they have to come from you."



"The Ring"

"Starting tomorrow you come to train because you want to, if you choose not to come, don't come back. If you miss more than once you're done there will be no more punishment for missing lifting or running."

Nebraska was averaging 40 players missing the workout each day. A few players got to the point they were choosing the punishment rather than doing the workout.

Yelling at the players was not working and punishing them didn't work. The only way for the program to work is for the players to want to do things right.

Testing at the conclusion of the six week winter conditioning program usually produced 15-18 new school records each year. This time the players broke 78 school records. No one had ever seen this kind of improvement before. The freshmen in that meeting 1/17/91 continued to work hard through their careers and won a national championship ring their senior year after four straight Big Eight championships.

The Nebraska players went 6500 workouts but lost two players. Nebraska developed great unity and a tremendous attitude and their success on the field was unmatched over the next few years winning three national championships in a four year period.

1991

NCAA legislation permitted voluntary training time due to a lobbying effort by strength coaches around the country. NCAA legislation was amended to permit unlimited, voluntary training time under the supervision of the strength and conditioning staff. This was a big turnaround for strength coaches who just eleven years earlier were not allowed to stretch their teams on gameday.

1991 - June

Coach Osborne asked me to come up with a way to maintain the discipline the players had demonstrated during the winter program. I developed a penalty point system for football players that was patterned after the system used in conjunction with a person's drivers license. One point for missing a workout, three for missing a practice. If a player accumulated 3 points they had to see the Head Coach. Their parents were notified if they got 4 points and they missed a game if they got to 5 points.

The problem was that it was such an honor to be in Coach Osborne's office with him that it didn't work like punishment when a player got to 3 points.

This led to the development of the Unity Council by Dr. Jack Stark the next year.



Dr. Tom Osborne

The council was made up of players from each position. Players with too many penalty points would go before the Unity Council to explain themselves. The council would decide which players would need to miss a game and what punishment would be used.

1992

Dr. James O'Hanlon, UNL Dean of Teachers College presented to me the Teachers Bell Award for 17 years of teaching weight training and conditioning classes.

1992

Kevin Coleman was the National Shot Put Champion in 1992 and 1993. Kevin was one of the strongest athletes in Nebraska history. He became a member of the Husker Power Strength and Conditioning Staff following his tremendous track career. He later married Courtney Carter who was Nebraska's first female strength coach.



Kevin Coleman

1993

I was named Assistant Athletic Director of the Nebraska Athletic Department by Athletic Director Bill Byrne.

1993

Bob Devaney served as Nebraska Athletic Director from 1967 to 1993 and was replaced by Bill Byrne who served as Athletic Director from 1993 to 2002.

Bob Devaney retired as Athletic Director but the strength and conditioning industry will always be grateful for him taking a chance hiring the first college strength coach when no other athletic director would.



Bob Devaney served as Nebraska Athletic Director from 1967 to 1993.



Bill Byrne served as Nebraska Athletic Director from 1993 to 2002.

1993

Bill Byrne was hired to replace Bob Devaney as Director of Athletics and did a tremendous job with the Nebraska Athletic Department and staff. He served as the athletic director at University of Nebraska for 11 years from 1992–2003. His teams won 8 national championships and 82 Big Eight and Big 12 Conference championships. His athletic program compiled seven straight top 25 finishes in the standings of the NACDA Director's Cup. He resigned from Nebraska on December 2, 2002.

1993

I was named to the Nebraska Hall of Fame with the Lyell Bremser Merit Award and received a 25 year watch from UNL Chancellor Graham Spanier.



25 year watch from Chancellor



Nebraska Hall of Fame – Lyle Bremer
Special Merit Award

1993

Husker Power started using Metabolic Circuit training as an advanced lifting program. This program was originally called the Survivor Circuit but created too much lactic acid. After some tweaking by Dr. Bill Kraemer the leading NSCA researcher, the program was re-introduced to Nebraska athletes with great success.

1993

Athletic Director Bill Byrne allowed me to create the Performance Team to oversee 23 sports with a staff of 20 and a budget of 1.3 million. The budget included the Training Table which I termed the Performance Buffet and assembled 9 nutrition staff including Dave Ellis as the first full-time Nutritionist in college athletics in 1994.

June 23, 1994

Dear Head Coach:

I'd like to keep you abreast of an exciting change affecting our athletic nutrition program.

I have asked Boyd Epley to serve as Assistant Athletic Director and direct a Performance Team which combines the nutrition program with the strength and conditioning program. We will discontinue nutrition counseling three days a week from the International Center for Sports Nutrition in Omaha as Boyd will hire a full-time Performance Nutritionist. ICSN Director, Ann Grandjean, will continue as an adviser. Boyd will add Dr. Jack Stark's motivation and visualization services to the Performance Team.

I'm excited about the Performance Team. It will be the model for other programs nationally, and I'm sure the Performance Team will have an impact on our recruiting as well as our athletes' performance. Boyd will be having annual meetings with you to discuss how the Performance Team can better serve the needs of your sport.

Sincerely,



BILL BYRNE
Director of Athletics



Bill Byrne let me establish the Performance Team.



Nebraska's First Performance Team.

1994

I worked with Tom Proffitt of Hammer Strength to create the Hammer Jammer the first of many ground based pieces of strength training equipment. The term “triple extension” spread across the country.



The Husker Power Club has a demonstration each homecoming for members



The Hammer Jammer develops the Triple Extension

1994 June

During the summer conditioning program I had Randy Gobel put 1:16 seconds on the game clock each workout and added an extra minute and sixteen seconds of work to the summer program to motivate the players. The extra work wasn't much but it served as a reminder they needed to close the deal if they ever got that close to winning a national championship again. This tactic worked as the Huskers were unbeatable in the fourth quarter the next year and came from behind to win the national championship over Miami. They also won another national rushing title.

1994

Donta Jones a defensive end won his second straight Lifter of the Year Trophy. 1993-1994. Center Rik Bonness was the first to do so in 1974-1975 and Kyle Vanden Bosch did it in 1999-2000.

1995

Mike Arthur was named the National Strength and Conditioning Coach-of-the-Year by the Professional Football Strength and Conditioning Coach's Association.

1995

Huskers win the National Championship over Florida as they physically dominated the Gators.

1995

I created the half rack with Rick Lewis of Wynmor which led to the development of the first Half Rack. The Half Rack is now made by several companies but Jeff Connor of Power Lift made the Half Rack the most economical rack for schools across the nation

The Half Rack features two posts instead of the traditional four posts.



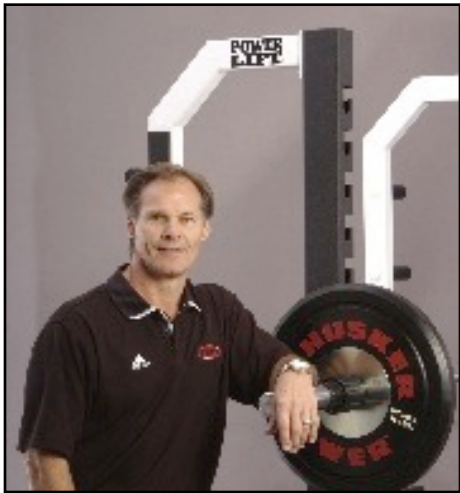
Husker Power Rack.

1995 - December 16

Nebraska Women's Volleyball team win's their first national title against Texas. The Husker's were 32-1 during the 1995 season.

1995

Mike Arthur and I created the Performance Pyramid which features Belief and Unity as it's cornerstones. Legendary Basketball coach John Wooden was famous for making a Performance Pyramid. This one features all the components necessary to "Make the Play".



Half Rack.



Nebraska Performance Pyramid



Nebraska was first to have Half Racks – there are nine shown in this photo.

1996 - January 2

Huskers win the National Championship over Florida in the Fiesta Bowl as they physically dominated the Gators 62-24. Nebraska offensive line coached by Milt Tenopir and Dan Young doesn't give up a single sack all season.



The offensive line gave up NO sacks in 1995 season.

1996

Husker Power Locks were developed at Nebraska to have a durable but fast way to secure Olympic plates. They are guaranteed for life.

1996

Courtney Carter became the first full-time female strength coach at Nebraska. She later married Assistant Strength Coach and former National Shot Put Champion Kevin Coleman.

Karen Cook was hired as the Husker Power Secretary/Receptionist.

Jeff Connor creates Power Lift equipment and asks me to endorse the new line. *Powerlift.com* Power Lift quickly becomes the top equipment for colleges and high school strength programs. The Half Rack developed at Nebraska, becomes the most popular rack made in America.

Rodger DeGarmo was hired as the Husker Power technician for Olympic lifts after assisting with the Olympics Games in Atlanta and headed up the Bob Devaney Sports Center strength training program and facilities.

Charles Heston stops by to see the world famous strength complex.



Moses stops by to see the Strength Complex



Courtney Carter is the first full-time female strength coach for Nebraska



Karen Cook - Husker Power Secretary/Receptionist



Hammer Strength

1996

Hammer Strength/Life Fitness worked with Husker Power staff to create and the Romanian Deadlift (RDL) unit and the Ground Based Push/Pull Stations

Six Hammer Strength Push Pull machines were developed to provide Ground Based training for Nebraska.

1997

Tressa Thompson won the 1997 Indoor National Shot Put Championship, the 1997 Outdoor and 1998 Outdoor National Shot Put Championship for Nebraska.

1997

Huskers win National Championship over Peyton Manning and Tennessee. Osborne collects a third championship in four years and a trip to the White House.



Hammer Strength Push Pull.



Coach Osborne wins three in four years



Tressa Thompson – three time National Champion.



National Championship ring presentation in the stadium



President Clinton

1998

January 2 - Tom Osborne retires from coaching after posting 255 wins and three national championships.

During Tom's retirement speech he mentioned the Husker Power program. Osborne said, "There was significant amount of innovation here. As you know Boyd Epley was the first full-time strength coach. And that was something that came after two 6-4 seasons where Bob Devaney was pretty receptive to new ideas. So I took Boyd in there and said to Bob, this guy says he can make us better and Bob was willing to listen then Boyd did his part. We started an off-season program and a strength and conditioning program that really led to some very good things. I think we did a better job of developing people than most anybody around the country. And it was very meaningful."



Tom Osborne retires as Coach.

1998

September 12th - Husker Power celebrated 300 wins in football with a victory over California 24-3 (Head Coach Frank Solich presents ball to Boyd Epley). A commemorative coin was given to all current and former Nebraska Strength Coaches thanking them for their contribution to the most successful strength program in history.



Nebraska National Championship Rings for Football.



Frank helps celebrate 300 wins since Husker Power was started.

1999

I was very honored to be named as one of the top 100 persons to most influence college football in the 20th century by Lindy's National Football Annual.

1999

The Cook Pavilion gets new Field Turf field. One of the first in the entire nation to have it.

1999

Cookie belcher sets the Basketball Index record at 2386 points and Nicole Kubik scores the best for women at 1913.

2000

Football players in Winter Conditioning gain 1120 lbs. of Lean Body Mass.

Mike Arthur and I were named as Executive Board Members for the Collegiate Strength and Conditioning Coaches Association.

Tom Osborne asks me to participate in the Legends of the Game Video project.

The freshmen football players came to my house during fall camp for a bonding session with the Husker football coaches.



Freshmen football players party at my house during fall camp

2001

January 25th - Nebraska Hammer Thrower, Melissa Price set an All Sport record for women on the Squat with 345 lbs. for 563 points.



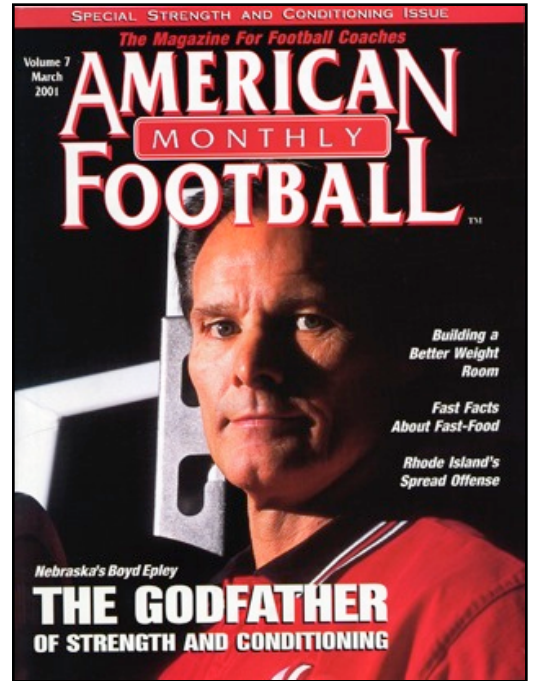
Phoenix College weight room

2001

The Strength Center at Phoenix College in Phoenix, Arizona is named the Boyd Epley Strength Center. I attended there in 1966-67 and was part of two National Championships in Track.

2001

American Football Monthly magazine gave me the title of "The Godfather of Strength and Conditioning"



The Godfather on the cover

2001

Jon Clanton became the first Husker to score over 1000 points and any of the six performance tests. His 1018 for his 3.97 Pro Agility Run remains the best ever on any test for a Husker.

2002

Epley commissioned Rivers Metal of Lincoln, NE. to develop eighteen Transformers exclusively for Nebraska. Randy Gobel worked closely with their engineers and added wood platforms to give Nebraska a tremendous advantage in safety and efficiency. No other school in the nation has anything that compares to the Transformer.



Randy Gobel helped create the Transformer



The Transformer sets the standard for safety as demonstrated by Jake Anderson



The 2002 West Stadium Strength Complex has 18 Transformers

No other school in the nation has anything that compares to the Transformer. These machines allow athletes that train with free weights to have unprecedented safety while doing it. The safety levels move electrically which provide the most efficient way to train. The Nebraska athletes have named the machine the "Transformer" since it transforms from a squat machine into a hang clean machine with the touch of a button. These electric machines also allow for the best environment for teaching proper lifting technique for both the explosive Olympic movements and the slower strength lifts.

2002

I worked with Hammer Strength to create the Push Pull Circuit for core strength.

Brendan Stai did 42 repetitions on the bench press with 225 lbs. to lead the all NFL prospects his senior year.

Nebraska Athletic Director Bill Byrne moves to Texas A&M and Steve Pederson is hired as Nebraska's Athletic Director.



Push Pull Circuit