

Matchup with Michigan excites CU's Neuheisel

BY SAM MCKEWIN
Staff Reporter

The first marquee game of the year for a Big 12 Conference team arrives Saturday, when eighth-ranked Colorado travels to Ann Arbor, Mich., to face No. 15 Michigan in a contest that carries major implications for both teams in the national-title picture.

"It certainly has been a game to talk about for the last three years," Colorado coach Rick Neuheisel said. "It's become a big game because both teams are putting their record on the line and risking a lot."

The two previous contests involving the Buffaloes and Wolverines have produced two of the more exciting finishes in college football, with both being decided on the last play of the game.

In 1994, Colorado used a 64-yard touchdown pass from Kordell Stewart to Michael Westbrook to pull out a 26-25 win in Ann Arbor. Last year, CU quarterback Koy Detmer came just short of connecting with Rae Carruth as Michigan held on for a 17-13 victory at Folsom Field in Boulder, Colo.

Playing a team like Michigan early in the season can be damaging to a team's national title hopes, Neuheisel said, but it provides a great experience, win or lose.

"This game is going to make our football team better, regardless of

winning or losing," he said. "It provides the kind of experience a coach is looking for right now."

CU opened with a less-than-sparkling performance in a 31-21 victory over Colorado State on Saturday. The Buffs trailed 14-7 at halftime, but scored 24 straight points in the third quarter. CU had trouble moving the ball, and ran for only 122 yards, totaling only 345 total yards for the game.

For Colorado to win in Ann Arbor, the Buffs will have to run the ball, Neuheisel said.

"We didn't do a very good job of running the football in the first game," he said. "We've got to get more yards per carry if we're going to establish the run this week and make it easier for us to pass the ball."

Michigan is playing its first game of the year, and Neuheisel said that might allow CU to establish a rhythm more quickly.

"That first game really establishes game tempo and allows you to be more comfortable with competition," he said. "It's really hard to simulate that in practice."

Another key to the game will be the field-position battle. Last year, Neuheisel said, the Wolverines controlled the field-position game, which helped them keep the ball for long periods of time and pin CU back in its own end of the field.

Neuheisel said it can't happen again.

"With Michigan, it's a chess game of field position," he said. "They do it about as well as anyone. Coach (Lloyd) Carr likes to use it to his advantage. If we're going to win, we can't lose that battle."

Michigan also has to decide on whom to play at quarterback - Scott

Driesbach or Jason Griese. Neuheisel said that with the similarity of the two, there is little worry about who will play first.

"It's not like preparing for two different guys," he said. "Both of them are the classical, drop-back kind of quarterbacks who do the same types of things."

Neuheisel recognizes the importance of an early season big game like Saturday's. He said he isn't concerned with the pressure that goes along with trying to keep a national title in focus.

"Pressure to win big games goes along with the territory of coaching," he said. "If you're not ready to deal with that, then you're in the wrong profession."

"We want to go up there and win," he said. "Hopefully, we can escape with a victory."

Broekzitter wins title in NU debut

From Staff Reports

Nebraska freshman Jeroen Broekzitter won his first cross country race in the United States Saturday at the Wildcat Invitational in Manhattan, Kan.

Broekzitter's four-mile time of 20 minutes, 44.19 seconds, helped the Cornhuskers to a third-place finish at the invite with 102 points. Only selected members of NU's cross country team participated.

Other Nebraska finishers included Lou Petricca (20th in 23:11.96), Jeremy Hayden (21st in 23:12.88), Marcus Witter (24:09.32) and Todd Tripple (27th in 25:34.78).

Host Kansas State won the meet with 32 points, while Fort Hays State finished second with 34.

On the women's side, NU freshman Deb Osteen finished fourth with a time of 12:27.80.

The Nebraska women's team finished second with 51 points, while the Wildcats won with 21 points.

Other Nebraska finishers included Melinda Mohr (eighth in 12:36.30), Kate Centerwall (ninth in 13:18.79), Liz Biehl (11th in 13:18.79) and Jill Adams (19th in 14:19.57).

Nebraska's next competition is Sept. 20, when the Huskers play host to the Woody Greeno Invitational at Pioneers Park in Lincoln.



Neuheisel

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NU fullback sparkles in return from injury

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hard on every play and how to be a good blocker."

Makovicka said Miller has the complete package at fullback with four years to play.

"Willie has a great future ahead of him at Nebraska," he said. "He can run the ball as well as anybody we've got on the team and he works hard."

Even the I-backs are standing up and taking notice of Miller's abilities.

"Willie has always been a hard worker for this team," Ahman Green said. "It's good to see that the hard work is finally starting to pay off for him. He's a fullback now."

Miller said he is not concerned about the number of carries or yards he records this season, as long as he improves.

"I want to be as total a fullback as possible," he said. "I'll work as hard as I have to to get there."

Notes:

NU I-backs Jay Sims and Dan Alexander, who returned to practice last week, will both be ready to play against Central Florida Saturday, Osborne said Monday.

DeAngelo Evans, who suffered a pelvic injury last season, also returned to non-contact drills, but will not play on Saturday, Osborne said. Evans traveled to Boston Sunday night for a re-examination of his injury.

"Doctors seem to think he's doing well," Osborne said. "He experienced some soreness, but I think that's to be expected. I think that worries DeAngelo a little bit. I think he needed some reassurance on it. But I don't think right now he's ready to play this week."

Green will start at I-back and will be backed up by Sims or true freshman Correll Buckhalter, followed by Alexander, Osborne said.

At fullback, Joel Makovicka will be backed up by Billy Legate followed by Miller and then Ben Kingston.

Left rush end Mike Rucker, who aggravated his pelvis in Friday's scrimmage, practiced Saturday and Monday.

"Mike Rucker has developed a pelvic problem," Osborne said at Monday's Extra Point Club luncheon. "It's very difficult for him to operate, to make cuts and to accelerate. Right now, he's really struggling. If we lose him and he's not able to continue, that will be a blow to us."

Redshirt freshman free safety Clint Finley, who dislocated his elbow earlier this fall, returned to practice Monday. Defensive tackle Jason Peter left practice early on Monday with a sore back. Peter's injury, Osborne said, is not serious.

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