

sports

Coach says team needs fewer offensive errors

By Tad Stryker

If Nebraska is to beat Penn State for the third straight year, it will have to continue to bedevil the Nittany Lions defensively and make fewer mistakes on offense, Coach Tom Osborne said.

The Husker blackshirts, often confusing PSU with blitzes, have given up only two Lion touchdowns in the last two years. But this year the Huskers have to contend with a better Penn State team, Osborne said.

"We're going to have to play awfully well," he said, "because their offensive line is much better than it has been. They've got more speed than before. They've got more experience at quarterback and their receivers are better than they were."

"Defensively they're much better than they were two

years ago," he said, "and probably better than last year."

One of Osborne's major concerns is whether or not he will have a healthy defensive line to contend with all that improvement. Defensive tackle Henry Waechter is the most questionable starter for Saturday's game. He injured his ankle in the Florida State game.

Waechter returned to practice Wednesday, although he was not able to run afterwards with the rest of the team.

"I think he'll be all right by Saturday," Osborne said.

Linebacker Steve McWhirter, who strained his knee in the Iowa game, will be out for "probably at least a couple more weeks," Osborne said.

After the Florida State game, Osborne said he hoped the Huskers' intensity will be at a similar pitch when Nebraska takes the field against the Nittany Lions, and that they don't hand Penn State a bunch of scoring opportu-

nities. The Huskers lost four fumbles against Florida State.

Another aspect of the game that has not yet proven to be a major strength for the Huskers is passing. Osborne said he's not too concerned about that, for now.

"How many passes did we throw in the last game, seven?" he asked. The Huskers completed three of seven attempts. "I'd say we haven't really had a chance to evaluate it yet."

"I don't know that you can condemn the passing game," he said, pointing out the limited opportunities for its usage.

The ninth-year head coach said he doesn't know yet whether the Huskers have a "good or bad" passing attack, but contended it has certainly not hurt the offense.

"I'll take three out of seven with no interceptions over 25 out of 40 with five interceptions any day," he said.



Photo by Mark Billingsley

Nebraska cornerback Allen Lyday (18) and linebacker Steve Damkroger (35) attempt to recover a Florida State fumble late in the first quarter of Nebraska's 34-14 win against the Seminoles last week. The Cornhuskers play third-ranked Penn State Saturday. Kickoff is set for 1:30 p. m. in Memorial Stadium.

Fans questioned say Penn State will win

By Jeff Goodwin

A random survey of Penn State students and football fans conducted by the Daily Nebraskan shows they are confident not only of beating Nebraska Saturday, but of making a run at the national championship.

Jean Smith, a secretary with the Pennsylvania Transportation Institute, picked Penn State to win. "Absolutely, we'll win," she said. "We like to play people like Nebraska and Notre Dame. It shows that Penn State can hold its own with anybody."

She said Penn State fans were "very disappointed about the game not being on television." Adding to their disappointment is the fact they will be watching the Jackson State-Mississippi Valley State game instead, she said.

Smith said she was "looking forward to seeing USC get beat and having Penn State play Oklahoma in the Orange Bowl for the national championship."

John Jaworski, a sophomore from Lancaster, Pa., said Penn State lost to Nebraska the last two years.

"If we're going to beat them, this is the year. This is the first chance they (Penn State) will have to show their power," Jaworski said. "They'll be ready."

Rob Miller, a freshman from Pittsburgh, also thinks Penn State will win.

"Nebraska's performance so far this year has not been that good," Miller said. "This game will be the first step in getting some respect for our team but we still have to play Notre Dame and Alabama at the end of the year."

Most of those surveyed said there was a great deal of excitement about the game.

Steve Stone, a senior from Easton, Pa., said enthusiasm was high among the people he knows.

"I don't think anybody expects us to lose," Stone said. "Everyone I've talked to expects us to win every game this season."

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Redshirt changes unforeseen

Osborne praises value of extra year of maturity

By Pat Beecham

Although the practice of redshirting may draw criticism from other people, Nebraska has had success with the program and it doesn't appear Husker Coach Tom Osborne will make any drastic changes.

"Once in a while you get criticism," Osborne said. "But you get criticism for everything you do. But nobody has to redshirt, the final decision is up to the players."

Redshirting is the process where a player goes through a season participating in practices, but doesn't play in any games, thus gaining an extra year of eligibility. Not only is this advantageous to the player's athletic development, it also is helpful academically.

"Redshirting has somehow gotten a negative connotation," Osborne said. "People will say, 'Well if you go there they'll redshirt you.' But it just means a player gets five years of his education paid for instead of four."

Nebraska's starting safety Jeff Krejci, who was redshirted after his freshman year, echoed Osborne's thoughts. "It helped me because there was a guy named Russell Gary playing ahead of me. Plus it takes five years for most ball players to graduate anyway," Krejci said.

Osborne said Nebraska redshirts 50 to 60 percent of its players. But he added that whether a player is redshirted depends on the position he plays and what the depth chart looks like for that position.

"Some players are good without a redshirt year," Osborne said. "It depends on what position they play. On the offensive line, there are few players without a redshirt year. They need that year to mature mentally and physically. As a freshman, they may be big and strong but we use a lot of audibles and line calls and these take time to learn."

One position Osborne said would be possible to play without a redshirt year is receiver. But Husker split end Todd Brown, who was redshirted as a freshman, said he benefited from his redshirt year.

"In my case it was good because of the situation with the depth chart," Brown said. "I got to play a little the next year and lettered. But that redshirt year helped me learn things a lot faster."

The NCAA passed in 1978 a rule allowing freshmen to be redshirted. Brown and junior linebacker Steve Damkroger were two freshmen redshirted that year. Damkroger said even though being redshirted isn't glamorous, it is helpful.

"It was a learning experience," Damkroger said. "Freshman year is probably the best year to redshirt. It's a long season anyway because you only play two or three games, so you might as well."

Krejci also said being redshirted gives a player a good chance to develop more.

"It can be a great asset if a player really works hard,"

Krejci said. "Most players need to mature in the upper body and mentally after just a year and this gives them a chance."

"If we have players who are pretty good — Jeff Smith and Neil Harris come to mind — and could probably contribute but not play a whole lot, we usually redshirt them," Osborne said.

"A redshirt year can also be the difference between playing a lot for three years, or playing a lot for two years," Osborne said. "It's not a great year, just working with the scout team and not playing, but a redshirt year never hurt anybody."

Brown is one player who benefited by playing more with the varsity team because he was redshirted.

"The coaches left it up to me, so I sat down and thought out the options," Brown said. "Being redshirted, I could play four years of varsity and be a four year letterman, which would be kind of nice. Plus it usually does take five years to graduate."

Nineteen of Nebraska's 22 starters were redshirted, which gives some indication of the success of the program. Dave Rimmington, one of the players who was not redshirted, sat out a year because of knee surgery and was granted a hardship case. Jimmy Williams and Nate Mason are the only players among the starters not to have been redshirted or have a hardship case.