

Sports

Osborne may start freshman at KSU

By Mike Reilley
Senior Reporter

A depleted defensive end corps has led to the possibility of a freshman starting at that position against Kansas State Saturday, Nebraska football coach Tom Osborne said Tuesday.

Broderick Thomas, a freshman from Houston, has a "fair chance" of starting at defensive end opposite senior right end Scott Tucker, Osborne said at his weekly press conference in the South Stadium lounge. He also listed junior Brad Tyrer and sophomore Jeff Jamrog as possible starters.

Injuries to the top three defensive ends have forced the lineup shift, Osborne said. Gregg Reeves, one of the

original starters, injured his toe and is questionable for Saturday's game, Osborne said. Brad Smith, the other starter, broke his hand earlier in the year and contracted an infection underneath the cast. Osborne said the infection requires surgery, and Smith will miss Saturday's game.

Tony Holloway, a part-time starter, is still recovering from a knee injury and won't play either.

"It's a tough situation," Osborne said. "But we have confidence that the guys who are going to play can play."

Osborne said Thomas is "a very aggressive player."

"He has remarkable quickness for somebody that weighs 225," he said. "But he has a lot to learn, which some-

times worries you a little bit."

Thomas played defensive tackle during his high school days in Houston. He made the switch to defensive end when he came to Nebraska in August. Osborne said Thomas has made a lot of mistakes, but they are "usually pretty aggressive."

"He'll rush the passer sometimes when he's supposed to be covering the flat or he's supposed to be covering someone man-to-man and he'll go tackle the quarterback."

"He's one of those guys who may play the wrong defense and tackle the quarterback for a 12-yard loss or he may give up a touchdown. He makes the game more interesting to watch."

But, Osborne said, Thomas doesn't make mistakes on every play. He said Thomas has become "much more consistent."

"Defensive end is kind of like offensive line, where it seems to take longer to develop a player," he said. "It's remarkable for a freshman to be in his position now. If he didn't have exceptional physical skills he wouldn't be there."

Kansas State, the Huskers' next opponent, has "played quite well" at times this year, Osborne said. The Wildcats won their first game of the year last week when they beat Missouri 21-17.

"I'm not saying that Kansas State is

a top 10 football team or a national power, but they do have some good players," Osborne said.

He said the team's strength is in its defensive line. Kansas State's offense has been "sporadic" this year, Osborne said. The Wildcats run a variety of offensive formations, he said.

"It's hard to know what to prepare for," Osborne said.

Osborne said Kansas State will enter Saturday's game with confidence since it is coming off a win. He said the Wildcats will be emotionally ready to play.

"Kansas State isn't going to be playing for the Big Eight championship, but they'll be playing a game that is very important to their programs," he said.

Rebounds from slow start

NU's Spachman strives to maintain consistency

By Chuck Green
Staff Reporter

Chris Spachman isn't one to look too far ahead.

Spachman, a 6-5, 250-pound junior from Kansas City, Mo., is an all-Big Eight and all-American candidate at his defensive tackle position, according to Nebraska coaches.

But Spachman prefers to dwell only on the present.

"I can't look down the road too much," he said. "There's too much that can happen right now as far as injuries and younger players coming up and maybe beating me out."

"I'm not as concerned with the future as much as I am with the present," he said. "It's next week and the week after that that counts for me."

'It's been taking us a couple of series to get into the groove each week.'

Spachman was recruited by the Cornhuskers in 1982 while he was at Bishop Miege High School in Kansas City. He earned all-conference, all-metro and all-state honors as a senior at Miege under coach Bob Tavanaro.

Spachman started at left defensive tackle for the 5-0 Husker freshman team in the fall of 1982, then was redshirted in 1983. The next year, Spachman started every game for Nebraska as a sophomore except Oklahoma State, when he had a sprained ankle. But he did see limited action against the Cowboys, alternating with starter

Danny Noonan. Spachman was named to the Football News sophomore all-American team (second team) that season.

Spachman credits his success at Nebraska to the Husker football program in general.

"The entire program here has allowed me to play up to the best of my ability," he said. "The coaches and the facilities allow the players to do their very best. I had some pretty rough times as a freshman here. There were times when things didn't go as planned, but I overcame it all. I guess that's the objective of the whole thing — to overcome the hard times and wait for your turn to come up."

Spachman said his goal for the rest of his time at Nebraska is to "give a good performance week after week."

"I thought I started off pretty slow this season," he said, "but I feel like I've picked up a little the last couple weeks. I want to play well every week, because consistency is the name of the game here."

The Husker defense, Spachman said, "is coming on pretty well."

"We're getting a little better every week at what we have to do," he said. "We're coming out and seeing different (offensive) formations and plays other teams use to try to get us off balance. It's been taking us a couple of series to get into the groove each week. In the game Saturday (against Colorado), they scored on us about the second drive of the game, but they couldn't move the ball after that."

"I think the team overall is improving each week. We're a young team with lots of players coming back next year, but no one should look past the possibilities for this year. We can win the Big Eight and go to the Orange Bowl, and we can contend for the national championship."

Huskers need 'great effort' to win Big Eight title

Iowa State continues cross country dominance

By Steve Thomas
Staff Reporter

If the Nebraska men's cross country team is to claim an upper division finish Saturday at the Big Eight Championships in Columbia, Mo., it will take the team's finest effort, said coach Jay Dirksen.

Dirksen said the Big Eight is among the top cross country conferences in the nation, and his team has the potential to make a good showing.

"I don't feel like we've really performed up to our potential this year, and that makes it kind of tough," Dirksen said.

Dirksen described his team's performance this year as inconsistent. This can be blamed on problems with not having the entire team together for major meets, Dirksen said.

"We have only been together for two meets this year, and that makes it kind of tough," Dirksen said.

Despite the problem with fielding a healthy team, Nebraska was able to capture first place at the Illinois Invitational earlier in the year.

Dirksen said his team isn't blessed with great depth and relies heavily on three runners. Sophomore Bryan Clark has been Nebraska's top runner this year, with Gerard O'Callaghan and Jan Verster rounding out the other two spots.

"We're going to need a super performance out of our top three runners," Dirksen said. "Two of our remaining three will need to run well, but the burden is on the top three."

Dirksen said he would like to place three runners in the top 15 and two in the top 10.

He didn't hesitate in stressing the importance of Saturday's championships in comparison with previous meets.

"Our whole training program is

geared toward this meet and the district meet," he said. "We've looked to this meet all year. The other meets are pretty insignificant."

Dirksen said upsets were not out of the question, but named Iowa State as the solid favorite in the meet. Colorado, Oklahoma State and Kansas State should scrap for second place, he said.

"We could sneak in also, but it's going to take a great effort out of everyone," Dirksen said.

Iowa State

Iowa State will look to continue its dominance in the Big Eight for the third consecutive team and individual title.

Iowa State boasts five strong runners, according to coach Bill Bergan, but depth is a concern.

"We have a good solid team," Bergan said. "We just need to stay healthy this week because our talent really drops

off after our top five."

Bergan said Yobes Ondieki of Kenya will have a good shot at his third straight individual title.

Bergan said he expects a stiff challenge from Oklahoma State and Colorado.

"Oklahoma State has four runners that ran excellent in Arkansas last week," Bergan said.

Colorado

Team championships at the Missouri Invitational and the Marquette Invitational marked Colorado's season, but the chances of a championship on Saturday aren't good, said Colorado coach Jerry Quiller.

"Our number two runner (Mick Bannister) won't be running," Quiller said. "We felt like we could have snuck in second had everyone been able to run."

Quiller said his team is semi-solid, but not championship caliber.

"Iowa State is definitely the team to beat," Quiller said. "After that, it's pretty wide open."

Colorado's top runner, Danny Reese, should battle for individual honors, Quiller said.

Kansas State

After high expectations before the season, Kansas State coach Steve Miller said his team has struggled through the season.

"We've been horrendous. We haven't met any of our goals," Miller said. "We had a good feeling about our program before the season."

Miller said he relies on good balance with his top five runners. All five have experience and good track skills, he said.

"We can't win the meet Saturday, but we would like to finish in the top four," Miller said. "It's a big meet for us."



Dan Dulaney/Daily Nebraskan

Chris Spachman, 76, stands head and shoulders above the rest during third-quarter action against the Colorado Buffaloes Saturday at Memorial Stadium.