

NU faces tough schedule

OSBORNE from Page 29

Osborne said the biggest concern on the defensive line is finding a replacement for All-America middle guard Danny Noonan, who was drafted by the Dallas Cowboys. Pete, Kent Wells and Sean Putnam are the top three candidates to become Noonan's successor.

"We obviously have some fine players at that position," Osborne said, "but we're not as comfortable there as when we had Noonan. We're just a little less certain."

Osborne said he is also concerned about depth at linebacker and in the secondary. LeRoy Etienne and Randall Jobman are the top two players on the strong side while Steve Forch, Doug Welniak and Wiley will start the fall as the top three on the weakside.

In the secondary, Osborne said, there is also a lack of depth and a lack of players who have varsity game experience. Charles Frayer returns to his starting right corner-

back, as does Brian Washington to the strong safety spot. Mark Blazek, McCathorn Clayton, Tim Jackson, Jon Crippen and Jeff Tomjack are players Osborne said could fill some holes in the secondary.

Holes on the offensive line and throughout the defense will make Nebraska's 1987 schedule even more challenging.

Nebraska opens with a home game against Utah State on Sept. 5 and plays UCLA on Sept. 12. After an idle week, the Huskers travel to Tempe, Ariz., to play Arizona State. Nebraska is 0-2 at Sun Devil Stadium, having lost two Fiesta Bowl games there. The Huskers round out their non-conference schedule at home against South Carolina on Oct. 3.

Nebraska's season ends with back-to-back games with Oklahoma in Lincoln and Colorado in Boulder. The Colorado game is moved to Nov. 28 to accommodate TV coverage.

"I think we've got a chance to have one of the better teams we've ever had here."

McCormick to anchor offensive line

By Tim Hartmann
Senior Reporter

When names like Roger Craig, Doug DuBose, I.M. Hipp, Jarvis Redwine and Mike Rozier are brought up in Nebraska football conversations, names like Rik Bonness, Dave Rimginton, Dean Steinkuhler and Mark Traynowicz are sometimes overlooked.

If it had not been for exceptional talent Nebraska has had on the offensive line over the years, there probably would not have been so many standout running backs, said offensive line coach Milt Tenopir.

Keith Jones, Tyresse Knox, Micah Heibel, and the rest of this year's Cornhusker backfield will follow another solid front line, Tenopir said.

"We have the type of kids up front who are good football players and who are going to make things happen," Tenopir said.

Only one starter returns on the line, senior John McCormick, but Tenopir said there is plenty of talent.



McCormick

"You never are comfortable when you have inexperience on the line, but our line had an excellent spring," he said. "I have no qualms with our line at all."

McCormick, a second-team all-Big Eight selection by both The Associated Press and United Press International last season, will start at right guard and will also be the leader of the line, Tenopir said.

"John is a very steady player," Tenopir said. "He has been a mainstay for two years, and he is only the third three-year starter (on the offensive line) in the last 14 years for us. He is a leader by example."

McCormick has been included on some preseason All-America lists, an accomplishment that Tenopir said the senior from Omaha qualifies for.

"He doesn't have the height — he's only 6-1 — that some other big-name players across the country have," Tenopir said, "but you don't always measure football players in size."

Although Tenopir said he doesn't like to compare past and present line-men, he said that McCormick "is as steady as any lineman we've ever had here."

At the right tackle spot, two-year letterman Keven Lightner will start. Lightner, a 6-2, 285-pound senior from Hastings, is one of the strongest players in Husker history. He holds the school record for 756 pounds in the squat and he also has a 441-pound bench press.

Lightner will be backed by Corey Bill Hudson, a 6-3, 270-pound senior.

Injuries to senior John Nichols and sophomores Chris O'Gara and Jake Young weakened the center position in the spring, but they are now healthy, Tenopir said.

"Center should be a good position for us," he said.

Nichols, a 6-2, 265-pound senior from Littleton, Colo., is listed No. 1 at center on the post-spring depth chart, with Young right behind him. Young converted to a center from guard last season because injuries had depleted the center position.

"He did some outstanding things after he moved over," Tenopir said of Young, who will be a non-redshirted lineman.

O'Gara is the unknown player at the position, Tenopir said.

Two other players — sophomore Jeff Anderson and Notre Dame transfer Mark Antonietti "figure into our plans" at center, Tenopir said.

On the left side of the line, juniors Andy Keeler and Bob Sledge will start. Keeler, a 6-3, 265-pound guard, proved himself in the spring, Tenopir said.

Tenopir said that depth along the line was one of his concerns, and that he is depending upon some inexperienced players to provide quality back-up.

This season's line will try to help improve on last year's team average of 305.5 yards rushing per game. That was second best in the nation, but a nine-year low for Nebraska.

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