

Daily Nebraskan file photo

Nebraska wingback Von Sheppard eludes Missouri's Darin Grossich. Sheppard will compete with Hendley Hawkins, Dana Brinson and Jamie Worden for the starting wingback job.

Sheppard's uncertain status leaves a gap at wingback

By Mark Derowitsch
Senior Reporter

If quarterback Steve Taylor can pass with consistency, Nebraska will have one of its best passing attacks ever.

At least Cornhusker wingback Dana Brinson said he thinks so.

"Overall, this is one of the best groups of receivers that Nebraska has had in awhile," Brinson said. "Since we have been a running team in the past, it would be beneficial to put the ball in the air more since we have a lot of good receivers. It would balance our team if we used our passing attack."

Nebraska football coach Tom Osborne said the only question surrounding Nebraska's receivers is the availability of wingback Von Sheppard. Sheppard injured his knee during the

Huskers' 30-10 victory over Oklahoma State last season.

"We're hoping Von will be able to play," Osborne said. "He could be ready at the start of the year or three or four games into the year."

Hendley Hawkins replaced Brinson as the No. 1 wingback after spring practice, but Brinson said he wants to earn his starting job back. Brinson was Nebraska's leading receiver last season with 14 catches for 208 yards.

"It won't be easy to do," Brinson said. "But I have made up my mind to do it. I have to come into fall with my confidence up and just apply myself to take over and start. It will be good competition and the best man will win."

"Hendley has a good spring and Dana has a lot of ability," Osborne said.

"But Dana didn't have quite as good a spring that we would have liked to."

At split end, sophomore Morgan Gregory will compete with senior Rod Smith for a starting job. Smith averaged a school-record 18.9 yards per punt return last year, while Gregory started for last season's 4-1 freshman team.

The Huskers also return tight ends Tom Banderas and Todd Millikan. Millikan led Nebraska in touchdown catches with four, while Banderas was hampered with leg injuries last season.

"Banderas was injured most of the time last year and Millikan had a good year all the way through. (Keith) Neubert has a lot of raw ability," Osborne said.

Neubert, who spent four years as a center with the Nebraska basketball team, ended spring practice as the No. 3 tight end.

McDermott has dual role

By Michelle Willnerd
Staff Reporter

A new challenge will be awaiting Nebraska tennis coach Kerry McDermott when the Cornhuskers open their season this spring.

McDermott, who is now in his seventh season as Nebraska men's coach, will also coach the Nebraska women's tennis team. He succeeds Kathy Hawkins, who resigned following the Cornhuskers' fifth-place finish in the Big Eight last year.

"It will be fun and a challenge," McDermott said. "I'm very anxious to get the programs to the top."

McDermott said he will build the Nebraska men's team around veterans Steve and Stuart Jung and Robert Sjolholm. He said Steve Jung, who qualified for the NCAA championships as the Huskers' No. 1

singles player last year, won the singles title in the National Amateur Circuit Tennis Tournament in Erie, Pa., this summer.

Steve Jung also teamed with his brother, Stuart, to win the tournament doubles title.

"This tournament featured some of the top college players in the nation," McDermott said.

McDermott said Sjolholm, a junior from Aland, Finland, is capable of capturing a conference title.

He said the rest of the Nebraska men's team is even in terms of ability.

"This is the best tennis team there has been at UNL," McDermott said. "This is going to be our year; no more wishing."

McDermott said the Nebraska women's tennis team also will be

solid. He said it is difficult to predict where the Cornhuskers will finish in the conference race.

"It should be better," McDermott said. "We could always surprise a few people."

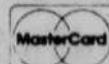
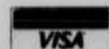
McDermott said the women's recruiting class is still incomplete because he is waiting for test scores to see if two potential recruits will be eligible. He said the two recruits who have not yet signed are from Hungary and Columbia, South America.

McDermott said the Cornhuskers have signed Nancy Tygum and Maghan Quinn, both of Wisconsin. He said Tygum won the father-daughter division of the U.S. Open Tennis Tournament, while Quinn is ranked ninth in the 18-and-under Northwest section category.

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