

Sports

Blakeman glad to help; first home start a treat

By Mike Kluck
Staff Reporter

Nebraska quarterback Clete Blakeman hopes someday to be a defender of the law, but on Saturday he will defend the Cornhuskers' right to an undefeated season when he starts against Kansas.

Blakeman, who plans to enter law school next fall, will make his second career start when the Jayhawks travel to Memorial Stadium to face the 4-0 Huskers. The game begins at 1:30 p.m.

Blakeman said the starting assignment is rare because he has started only two varsity games during his four-year Nebraska career. He will replace Steve Taylor, who suffered a bruised left shoulder and a severe headache during the Huskers' 30-21 victory over South Carolina.



Blakeman

Blakeman said he is looking forward to his first varsity start in Lincoln. His only other varsity start came last season, when he led Nebraska to a 70-0 victory over Kansas in Lawrence, Kan.

"I'm just happy to be starting," Blakeman said. "It doesn't matter against who, but I'm excited about this coming weekend. It does mean a lot to be starting at Memorial Stadium. I have friends and family here, and the first start is something I have always looked forward to."

Blakeman said his preparation for the game is no different than usual.

"I don't put any extra added pressure on myself this week when I go about it," Blakeman said. "Mentally, it is still the same. The only thing different is the amount of snaps I'm taking with the number-one offense this week as compared to others."

Blakeman entered the South Caro-

lina game on the last play of the third quarter and led the Huskers to a 17-point fourth-quarter rally. He said that experience will help him handle any pressure he may feel against Kansas.

"At the time I came into the game, I was just hoping that I could come in and add a little bit to the team and maybe pump them up and get going. Looking back at it, it's exactly what happened," Blakeman said. "I think the team sparkled a little bit and we decided what we really needed to get done."

Blakeman fumbled during his first drive against South Carolina. He said he didn't let the turnover bother him so he would be ready for his second drive.

"When I came in the second time I was really keyed up, and I tried to concentrate on the offense and take one play at a time," Blakeman said. "When I came in, I thought it was a feeling where the team needed something and I could supply it. It was a tremendous confidence builder for me and I think for the other 10 guys in the offense."

"Being down we had to come back, and we did."

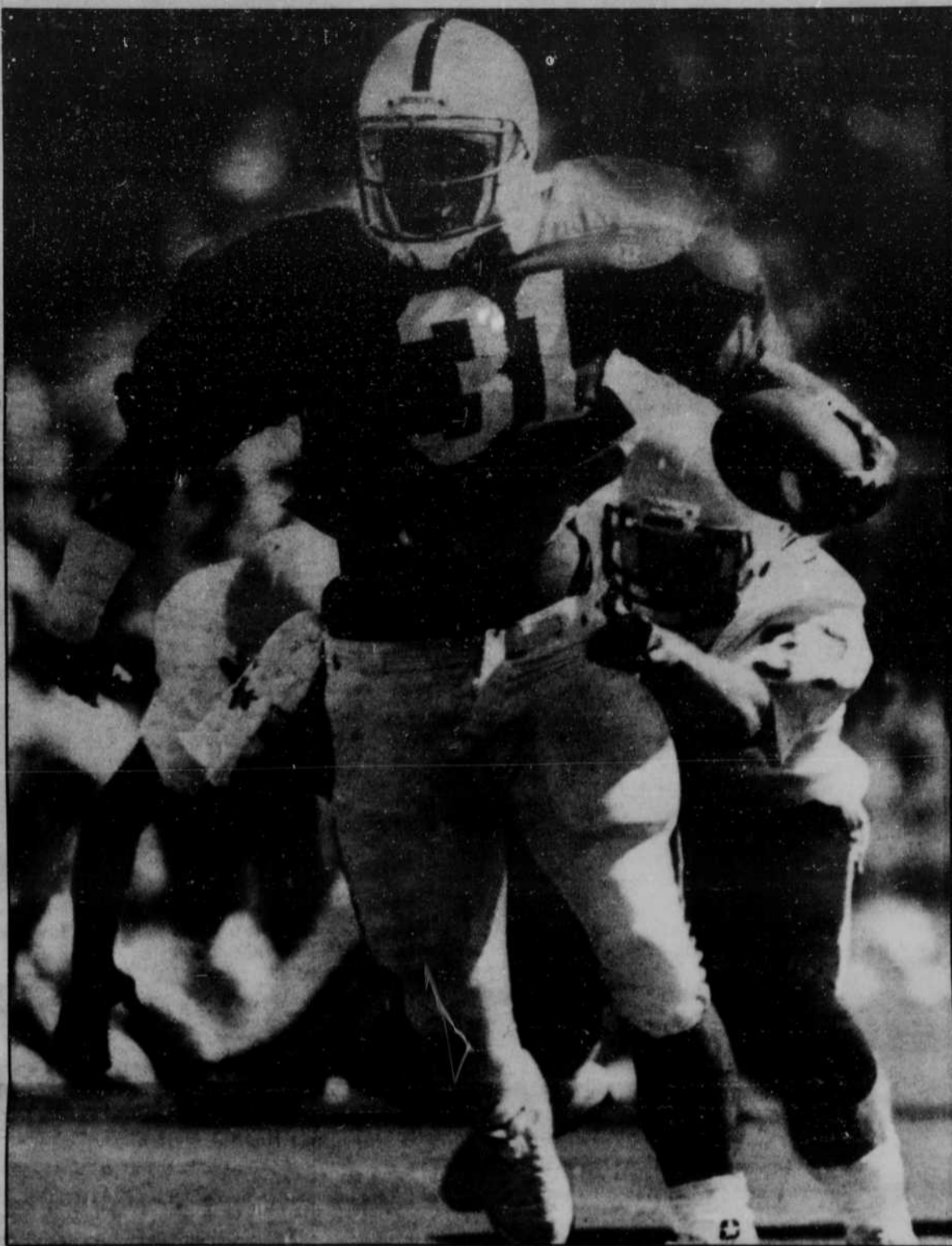
Blakeman said Nebraska's attitude changed after the South Carolina game.

"Saturday showed that certainly Steve is a great player and we're a great team with him, but I think it brought us all together last weekend," Blakeman said. "We realized that we lost our big play offensive man so us 11 would have to join together and get the job done."

Blakeman said it wasn't his performance alone that enabled the Huskers to post the come-from-behind victory over South Carolina. He said the entire Nebraska offense deserves equal credit for the win.

Blakeman said he thought Nebraska's offense controlled South Carolina's defense in the fourth quar-

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Andrea Hoy/Daily Nebraskan

Williams

Kansas coach expresses respect for Husker team

By Tim Hartmann
Senior Reporter

When Kansas football coach Bob Valesente says Nebraska is one of the best teams in the country, he means it.

"I'd rather play one of those NFL replacement teams than have to play Nebraska," Valesente said. "They're solid."

Kansas, 1-3, broke a 10-game losing streak Saturday by defeating Southern Illinois 16-15 in Lawrence, Kan. The win snapped the Jayhawks' second-longest losing streak in their 97-year football history.



Valesente

"Any time you win you are happy, especially when you break a losing streak like the one we had," Valesente said. "I'm not pleased with everything, but it's nice to win."

Kansas offensive tackle Bryan Howard agreed.

"I feel like somebody took an anvil off my head," Howard said.

Valesente said the win will give his team some confidence going into this week's game with the Cornhuskers, but that won't be enough.

"When you play a team like Nebraska, you have got to have a lot more than momentum," he said. "They have 20 years of redshirting and tradition behind them."

Valesente said he hopes to build a program at Kansas like the one at Nebraska.

"They have what I think is a complete program," he said. "They are very far ahead of us in regards to the redshirt program. They have been doing it for 20 years and we have only been doing it for one. It shows on the field in their experience, execution and the way they can dominate an opponent."

"We are in the process of building a program like that. I only redshirted 16 players last year and 18 players this season, but hopefully some day we will have a program like that."

Valesente said Kansas will not only be playing the likes of Keith Jones, Broderick Thomas and Neil Smith, but also will be facing Nebraska's tradition.

"We are not only playing this year's team, we're playing 20 years of tradition," he said.

The Jayhawks return their top two quarterbacks, senior Mike Orth and sophomore Kelly Donohoe. But Valesente said Kevin Verdugo, a 6-foot-4, 200-pound freshman, will start against Nebraska.

Verdugo directed a late scoring drive while throwing for 128 yards to lead Kansas past Southern Illinois.

The Southern Illinois game was his first start, Valesente said, "and he got the win, so that says something."

But Valesente knows that Southern Illinois is not Nebraska, and he said it will take a big effort from his team to beat the Huskers.

"It would take a lot of prayers and a lot of turnovers by Nebraska," he said. "It's a real credit to Tom Osborne and his staff that they keep this kind of program in operation."

Varsity debut is sweet revenge for freshman fullback Randy Williams

By Kent Endacott
Staff Reporter

Revenge is all the motivation Nebraska fullback Randy Williams needs.

Williams, a 6-foot-3, 225-pound freshman from Broken Arrow, Okla., is expected to make his varsity debut against Kansas Saturday. Williams said he wants to make it big at Nebraska to show his high-school football coach he was worth recruiting.

He claims his coach, Gary Harper, didn't like him and encouraged recruiters to stay away.

"My head coach back in high school went to the University of Oklahoma and played football for Oklahoma," he said. "The way he feels is if you're not good enough to go to Oklahoma, then you're not good enough to go anywhere. They were recruiting me, but he told them I wasn't worth their time. He told a lot of schools I wasn't worth their time."

"So a lot of schools started to back off. I was recruited by Alabama, Notre Dame, Penn State, Georgia and all of the Southwest Conference teams and all the teams in the Big Eight."

Harper denied that he had discouraged recruiters from pursuing Williams. He also refused to discuss the nature of his conflict with Williams.

"That is a lie," Harper said. "I did not discourage recruiters. The only thing I'm going to tell you is Randy Williams is a fine athlete."

And that's it ... If you want to know that truth, talk to the Nebraska coaches, they know the truth."

Nebraska on-campus recruiter Dave Gillespie said he never heard any stories to indicate Williams "was anything other than a good person."

Williams said his problems with Harper began in his junior year when he transferred to Tulsa County Alternative School after the Broken Arrow Senior High administration threatened to suspend him for skipping school. He returned to Broken Arrow for his senior season, led the team in rushing and was named the Frontier Conference's Most Valuable Player.

He also was included on several blue-chip lists.

By then, however, most schools had stopped recruiting him.

"He (Harper) told a whole bunch of coaches I was just a troublemaker, not worth their time, and I was uncoachable," Williams said. "I really don't feel like that was true. All my assistant coaches really liked me."

Oklahoma State Director of Athletic Recruiting Gordon Whitener said the Cowboys had lost interest in Williams because Oklahoma stopped recruiting him. But Oklahoma State started recruiting him again after school officials were contacted by his mother, Kathy Williams.

"His coach didn't like him and apparently didn't recommend

him," Whitener said.

In August, Oklahoma State released Williams from his national letter of intent because he didn't meet the college's academic admission standards. Williams, however, met the minimum 2.0 grade point average in core curriculum classes established by Proposition 48, which sets academic entry requirements for athletes.

"He was a very good player," Whitener said. "Two times he scored four touchdowns in one game from the tailback position. There was never any doubt about his athletic abilities."

Williams said he contacted schools to let them know he was available after receiving his release from Oklahoma State. He said he had to decide quickly because football practice was about to start.

He narrowed his choices to Nebraska and Texas.

Williams said he chose Nebraska because of its winning tradition and disciplined environment. He said his assistant high-school football coach, Phil Angieri, convinced the coaches he was worth a scholarship.

"The coaches were calling him up, asking him for references, saying, 'How is Randy? Is he really pretty good? Coach told them, 'If he's got the right environment, the coaches work with him and make sure he goes to school and every-

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