

Crowd pumps up kicker Drennan

By Lori Griffin
First Down Reporter

Stepping on Memorial Stadium astroturf for the opening kickoff before 76,000 screaming fans may bother some place kickers, but not Nebraska's Chris Drennan.

Drennan, a redshirt sophomore from Cypress, Calif., said he looks forward to running onto the astroturf at Memorial Stadium because he considers every fan to be his friend.

"I really love to come out here and kick when all of the fans are here," Drennan said. "I know the home games, especially. I feel like I have 76,000 friends here in the stadium and they are all pulling for me, too and helping me make that kick."

Drennan said that he thinks that there is no pressure from fans. He said that he gets excited when he knows that the fans are excited.

Drennan came to Nebraska in 1985, after being recruited by Air Force, Brown, Oregon, Oregon State and California-Berkeley. He said that he was also recruited by every school in the Big Eight with the exception of Missouri.

Drennan said that he had a specific judging process that he went through when he was looking at schools.

"I was looking at the football program because that is what I was being recruited for," Drennan said. "But I also want to look at academics on a same level as football."

"I was trying to find a happy medium between the two as far as academics and football. Of course the coaching staff can speak for itself. I think that Nebraska was the best choice, by far."

Drennan said that he was a typical freshman when he entered Nebraska.

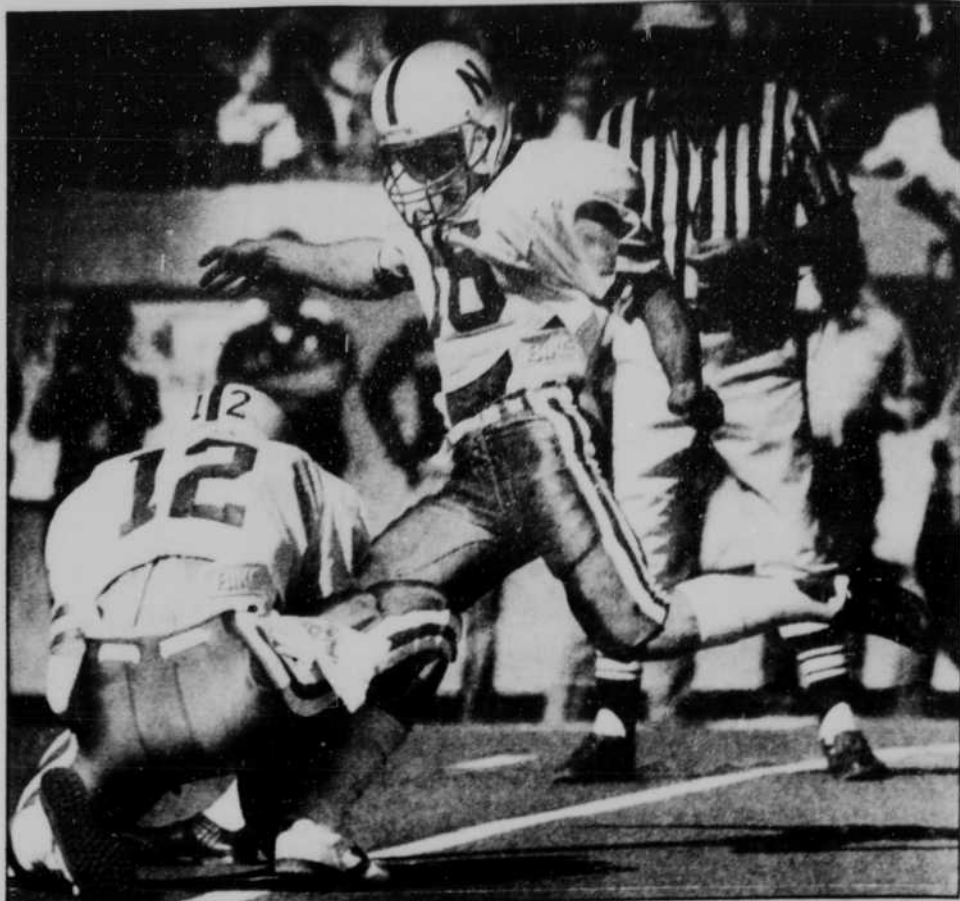
"I think when you come in as a freshman you're a little star struck," Drennan said. "It's such a big change from high school football, you're coming in and everybody has that chance to be with the varsity and think that they really can do it."

"Once they (freshman players) get here they see how much of an adjustment it is just to handle the academics," Drennan said a freshman player has to be able to learn how to budget his time before he can consider what his future will be. He said most recruits tend to look at the athletic part of the scholarship and not the academic end.

"I think that you should grow as a person and evaluate what you are truly here for and that is academics," Drennan said.

Drennan said that his main goal at Nebraska is to complete his degree in accounting. He said that he has a 3.0 grade point average.

Drennan said that it would be an honor to be nominated an academic all-Big Eight player.



Andrea Hoy/First Down

Drennan

"I'm sure it would be a great honor to be an academic all-Big Eight because then it would show that you are really something more than just an athlete," Drennan said. "To be nominated as an Academic All Big Eight would almost be as much of an honor, if not more."

Players can not be set in their goals, Drennan said, and he said that he did not have any goals when he came to Nebraska.

Drennan said he has not set down and thought about too many personal goals for his career at Nebraska.

"I look to each game and I just hope that I am able to do the job when I am called upon," Drennan said. "I am somewhat of a perfectionist when it comes to athletics or my school work and so I guess that makes me concentrate a little more on being consistent."

"I think that is really important in a kicker," Drennan said.

Drennan said that a goal of his was to become the starting place kicker — a goal which he accomplished this year when sophomore Greg Barrios decided to redshirt.

Dan Young, who coaches the kickers, said that Drennan received the starting nod before the Utah State game. He said that Drennan was much more consistent as far as kickoffs than Barrios was.

Young said Drennan has improved since

fall practices began. He said that Drennan has a strong leg. Young said that the strong leg that Drennan has is evident by kickoffs that have sailed into the end zone and have not been returned.

Drennan said that he worked out in Lincoln over the summer and that he believes this is what helped him to improve.

Drennan said that he spent at least an hour working out everyday this summer. He was also employed in the Lincoln area.

Drennan said that practicing in Memorial Stadium this summer helped him to become accustomed to it. He said that if he would not have been in Lincoln this summer then he might have ran into difficulties.

"You don't get experience at home," Drennan said. "The stadium feels like home to me now."

Young said that Drennan is more than just a kicker. Drennan was the backup punter for the Oklahoma State game last Saturday.

Young said that Drennan also made a key block in the Arizona State game Sept. 26. Drennan made the block that allowed quarterback Clete Blakeman to get a pass off a fake field goal attempt. Blakeman completed the pass to set up a Nebraska touchdown.

"Chris is a gutsy little player," Young said. "He has been contributing a lot to our football team."