

# Blakeman ready to start if needed

By Mike Kluck  
First Down Reporter

Nebraska's Clete Blakeman doesn't mind playing behind junior quarterback Steve Taylor, but he's ready to assume the starting role if the Cornhuskers need him.

Blakeman got his second career start as a Husker two weeks ago against Kansas, filling in for the injured Taylor and leading the Huskers to a 54-2 victory. But Taylor was back in the lineup last week against Oklahoma State, and Blakeman played sparingly.

"Steve is a great player, and I'd much rather be playing behind a great player like Steve than a mediocre player," Blakeman said. "I was satisfied with my play against Kansas and it was a great feeling to be starting at home."

Blakeman said Nebraska's offense might give him some more playing time in the future.

"We run the option, so we have an offense where the quarterback is doing most of the ball handling and he is going to take a lot of punishment, so it's tough for a quarterback to last the whole season," Blakeman said. "The last quarterback to last was Turner Gill, but he had Mike Rozier carrying most of the load.

"Steve is carrying most of the load and taking most of the (punishment)."

Blakeman said he keeps himself prepared throughout the season because of the possibility that Taylor may be injured.

"When the offense is in there, I am listening to every play call, so I keep in the game that way," Blakeman said. "I try to keep myself mentally involved in the game that way, which helps out a lot. It is tough, though, to come in for one series because you really don't get a feel for the game. But on the same token you have to know what is happening."

As the Huskers prepared for today's game with Kansas State, Blakeman said there should be no let down if he had to fill in for Taylor.

"Everybody on the team knows my type of play and everybody knows Steve's type of play and the team has confidence in both of us," Blakeman said. "It is hard to say about the playing time I will have because Steve's shoulder is fine now but if he gets injured I will be ready to go."

Although both quarterbacks run the same offense, Blakeman said his style of play differs from Taylor's.

"We don't run as many triple option type plays because Steve is so good at running them, but really that is about the



Doug Carroll/First Down

## Blakeman

only aspect that changes," Blakeman said. "My strengths are my knowledge of the offense and ability to run the offense."

Blakeman said he thought he had a chance to be Nebraska's No. 1 quarterback during spring practice, but he soon realized he would be playing a back-up role to Taylor. The competition between him and Taylor though has helped out the entire team.

"Steve and I really support each other," Blakeman said. "I'm not satisfied with being No. 2 and I don't think Coach Osborne expects me to be satisfied being No. 2. I'm always working to get better, and me working to get better makes

Steve work to get better, and it helps the two of us out and the team out."

Taylor said that he was impressed with the job Blakeman did against the Jayhawks.

"Clete does a good job as a quarterback and is very consistent," Taylor said. "He did a good job of leading the offense."

Blakeman said that the preparation for the Kansas State game is basically the same as all other games.

"There is an attitude among the players, that we all feel that we can't look past anybody," Blakeman said. "The preparation for myself is basically the same for every game."