

Bell adjusts smoothly to wingback at NU

By Kyle Schurman
First Down Reporter

Although Nebraska wingback Richard Bell never played wingback in high school, he has adjusted to the position "real well," according to Cornhusker receivers coach Ron Brown.

Bell played running back and tight end through his junior year in high school, and then switched to quarterback in his senior year. He said Nebraska was the only school that recruited him as a wingback.

Bell played quarterback for John Muir High School in Altadena, Calif. Brown said Bell developed his athletic abilities during his high school days.

"You have to be a good athlete to play quarterback in high school and he was certainly that," Brown said.

Bell, a redshirt sophomore, said he made the switch to quarterback during his senior season because his coach told him he was needed more at that position.

"My coach asked me to switch because we didn't have a quarterback who could get me the ball," Bell said. "I was one of those athletes who could do a lot of different things."

Bell threw for 1,560 yards and rushed for 1,490 more as a senior. He said making the switch to receiver was tough because he was "used to handling the football on every play." He said he likes playing receiver, though.

Bell said to improve at receiver he needs to perfect his blocking techniques and learn the plays better. Bell has an advantage over the other wingbacks in blocking because he is the biggest wingback at 6-feet and 195 pounds. He said learning the plays will help him even more with his blocking.

"If I know the plays then I'm not hesitant about who to block," Bell said. "I can just go after them."

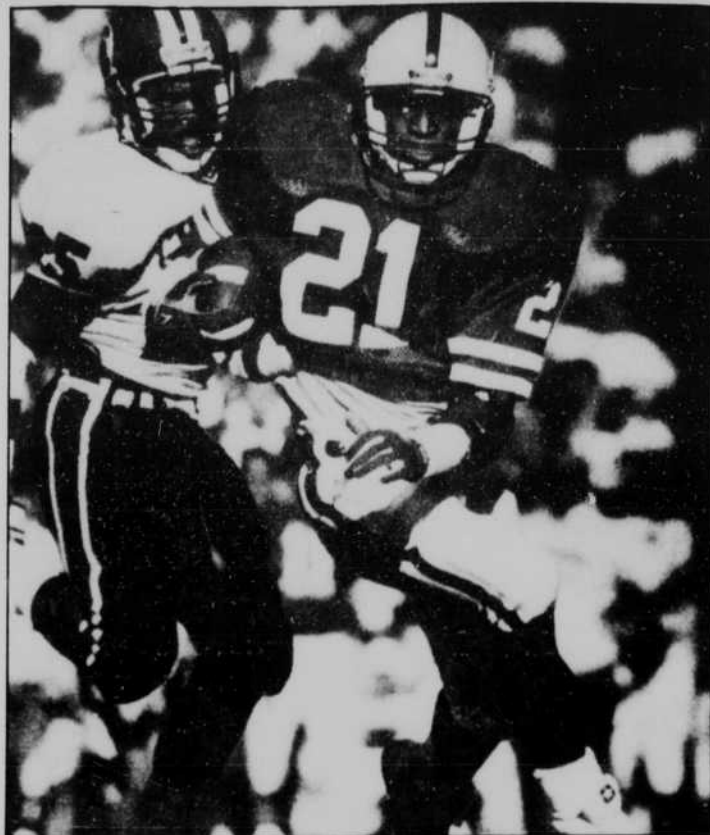
Downfield blocking helped Bell to score his first touchdown as a Husker. Bell scored on a 78-yard pass from quarterback Steve Taylor late in the first half of Nebraska's 30-21 win over South Carolina. Split end Morgan Gregory threw a block downfield that allowed Bell to score.

"Downfield blocking is part of the offense," Bell said. "A lot of long plays happen because of the downfield blocking."

Brown said Bell's success has been no surprise because of his physical attributes.

"It's been no surprise seeing what he has done because he is such a great athlete," Brown said. "He has picked up the system real well and he has a lot of poise and confidence. But he has been waiting his turn."

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Doug Carroll/First Down

Nebraska wingback Richard Bell eludes a South Carolina defender en route to a touchdown.

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