

Rodgers looking forward to new season despite injury

By Kelly Anders
Staff Reporter

Nebraska I-back Terry Rodgers has spent the last five months recovering from a knee injury he suffered last fall, but it hasn't hurt his confidence.

Rodgers is confident that he will be ready to play when the Cornhuskers open their season Sept. 9 against Northern Illinois. He said he is confident even though a severe injury to his left knee shelved him for

much of last season.

Rodgers, the son of former Nebraska wingback and Heisman Trophy winner Johnny Rodgers, suffered his injury while completing a practice option drill last November.

"I got the ball, made a cut and it went out," Rodgers said.

Rodgers said the injury has forced him to spend at least two hours a day doing knee-stressing rehabilitation exercises. He said those exercises include running stairs, doing squats

and working out on a leg machine.

Rodgers said he also attends meetings and practices so he does not fall behind the other Nebraska running backs. The backs that will compete with Rodgers in the fall include Ken Clark, Leodis Flowers and George Achola.

"I have to go so that when I return in the fall I'll know what I'm doing, know the majority of offense, and be up with the other players," Rodgers said.

Rodgers said he hopes his work

pays off.

"Hopefully, my leg will be all right and I'll be ready to come back," he said. "If I'm able to contribute, I will."

Rodgers said half of his battle was won before he started the rehabilitation process. He said recovery involves mental and physical aspects.

"I've been mentally ready to come back all along," Rodgers said. "I'm not physically ready at this point, though."

Rodgers said his knee hurts when he does sidebacks, which are exercises done on a leg machine. Otherwise, he said, his knee doesn't bother him.

Rodgers said he feels good about his return.

"I feel positive about coming back and I'm looking forward to next season," he said. "I've been working out hard. If my leg is 100 percent and feels like I want it to, I'll be able to play. It's just a question of getting to that point."

Osborne says mid-spring intensity decline has struck

By Nick Hodge
Senior Reporter

A lack of intensity and concentration led to poor execution during Nebraska's scrimmage Saturday at Memorial Stadium.

Nebraska coach Tom Osborne said offensive turnovers, penalties and missed tackles prompted him to believe that a traditional mid-spring practice intensity decline has struck the Cornhuskers.

"I think that, offensively, they moved the ball, although a lot of times they weren't very precise," Osborne said. "We probably had a few more mistakes than what we've had. The good part was they, for the most part, moved the ball pretty well. The bad part was that the execution at times wasn't very good."

"Defensively, I thought that maybe we didn't tackle quite as well as the previous two or three scrimmages. There were quite a few misses that contributed to some of the bigger plays."

Osborne said Nebraska's inconsistency makes him think that it's a good thing there are two weeks remaining in spring practice. Spring drills conclude April 29 with the playing of the annual Red-White game.

"So, it looks like we better keep practicing," Osborne said.

Nebraska defensive coordinator Charlie McBride agreed with

Osborne's assessment of the defense. "It was really not inspiring," McBride said. "The thing that did disappoint me was bad tackling. We made a lot of grabs. No tackles."

McBride said he has been encouraged by the improvement shown by some younger members of the Husker defense. He said defensive backs Curtis Cotton, Steve Carmer and Tyrone Byrd have all proved that they can play.

A spring practice-ending knee injury to senior middle guard Junior Monarrez has brought further concern to an already questionable area of the defense, McBride said.

"It's going to hurt Junior. That's the only thing that's going to happen," McBride said. "He needs to be there. Right now, I'm really pleased with the way Pat Engelbert's playing. I tell you what: That kid right there, if he works on his strength over the summer, is a guy that's got quickness and speed, intelligence and things like that. He's going to give those guys a run for their money."

Engelbert, a 6-foot-3, 240-pound redshirt sophomore from Columbus Scotus, is listed behind senior Mike Murray and Monarrez on the depth chart. The Huskers' top units scored three touchdowns and added three field goals. Sophomore quarterback Keithen McCant scored the scrimmage's first touchdown on a three-yard run. McCant later suffered a

slight shoulder separation and will miss at least a week of practice, Osborne said.

Senior quarterback Gerry Gdowski hit senior split end Morgan Gregory on a 30-yard scoring strike. Sophomore I-back George Achola added a 1-yard touchdown run.

Placekicker Gregg Barrios was

good on two field goal attempts and an extra point. Barrios connected on a 35-yard field goal and a 33-yarder. Placekicker Chris Drennan also added a 35-yard field goal and two extra points. Drennan missed his attempt of a 33-yard field goal.

Senior I-back Ken Clark led all rushers by gaining 65 yards on 10

carries. Gdowski had seven carries for 56 yards, including a 29-yard run on the scrimmage's first play.

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