

Little-known football player fills a big role

By Chris Hopfensperger
Staff Reporter

Mike Stigge might as well be known as the unknown player with the amount of press he gets, but he plays one of the biggest roles on the Nebraska football team.

Stigge is the Cornhuskers' punter. Although kickers don't share in the limelight, they know how important their role is to the team, Stigge said.

"We have our place, where we're supposed to be," he said. "We know what we're supposed to do."

"Everybody's got a job on the team, and everybody has to do their job. Our job is to kick the ball and do what the coaches want us to do with it. You just have to know what your job

is and do what you have to do."

Stigge said the importance of the kicking game is overlooked until something big happens.

This year, it happened during Nebraska's 27-21 loss to Colorado. Stigge's punts were returned twice in that game, for 47 and 55 yards, to set up two Buffalo touchdowns.

"[The kicking game] is really important, as you can see from the Colorado game," Stigge said. "That probably made the difference in the game, a couple of punts."

"There's three things to the game of football, and that's the offense, the defense, and the kicking. Kicking makes up a third of the game. A lot of big games are made in the kicking game, and that can be the difference in the game."

Stigge, a redshirt freshman, edged senior Scott Beckler for the starting punting job after averaging 41.5 yards on four kicks in the 1989 Spring Game. He will get his second chance of the season to kick before a national-television audience when Nebraska faces Florida State in the Fiesta Bowl Jan. 1 at Tempe, Ariz.

Stigge said pressure for punters does not come from the defensive players that are trying to cram his kick down his throat.

"You're the man back there. You have to get the ball off. You have to concentrate," Stigge said. "A lot of times you just focus on the ball."

"When you're kicking you don't see the guys coming because you're watching the ball -- you're supposed

to be watching the ball. If you're really concentrating you can't even see them coming."

"You just have to get the ball off, get it kicked, and put it where the coaches want you to put it."

There is one responsibility the kickers have that Stigge failed to mention. It is the punter's job, as the safety man, to make the touchdown saving tackles when the return man manages to weave through the rest of the defense.

"That's not really our job, but we're back there just in case," Stigge said. "Something might happen, and you're back there to finish the job."

"That's why we're back there as the safety man. It's not all that bad. When you have to do it, it's probably not good."

In the game against Colorado, Stigge was left with the job of keeping split end Jeff Campbell out of the end zone. He did just that, as he fought off his blocker and pushed Campbell out of bounds for his single tackle of the season.

"He got down there fast," Stigge said of Campbell. "I was just lucky to get the position I did and get him out of bounds."

Before coming to Nebraska, Stigge was an all-state defensive back at Washington (Kan.) High School. He earned 14 varsity letters in high school, including four in football and track, and three in baseball and basketball.

Stigge's first love, however, is football -- no matter how much, or how little, recognition he is getting.

PREVIEW from Page 6

thusiasm on the road and win some of those close games that we did not seem to be able to finish last year."

Kansas State coach Lon Kruger also is looking for a stronger finish this year. The Wildcats, 19-11, finished their 1988-89 campaign by losing their last two contests.

Kruger said Missouri's success will evolve around guard Steve Henson, who has made 85 consecutive career starts.

"Having Steve should be an advantage with so many newcomers coming to the team," Kruger said. "That's the case any time you have a point guard returning, but especially when that point guard is Steven Henson."

Henson will be joined by veterans Lance Simmons, Reggie Britt, Billy Ray Smith and John Rettiger. Kruger said the Wildcats deep cast of returning players will work to his team's advantage.

REDBIRDS from Page 6

"But I don't think that's necessarily going to be a factor. I think the fact that they're the No. 1 seed and fourth in the country is the factor. It's going to be a challenge for us, and we look at it as a great opportunity."

"It's important as a team to play the best in order to be the best."

The Redbirds are led by senior setter Stacey Anderson, who was named the Gateway Conference Player of the Year. Anderson leads the team in service aces with 35 and digs with 341. She averaged 11.67 set assists per game this season.

Middle blocker Angie Rolf also was named first-team all-conference. Rolf is the Redbirds' leading blocker averaging 1.01 a game. She totaled

Sports Illustrated tabs Nebraska seventh in the Big Eight

The Nebraska men's basketball team is picked by Sports Illustrated to finish seventh in this year's Big Eight race.

The magazine said that Nebraska "is thin almost everywhere, especially now that Beau Reid, the Cornhuskers' top scorer last season, may miss this season

after suffering a knee injury in a summer pickup game."

Reid tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his knee and is not expected to return until at least January.

Sports Illustrated chose either Missouri or Oklahoma State to win the Big Eight title, followed by

Oklahoma, Kansas, Kansas State, Iowa State, Nebraska and Colorado. The magazine said Missouri should win the title, but may fall victim to the NCAA infractions committee.

The Tigers reportedly are being investigated by the NCAA for alleged recruiting violations.

"We had a chance to play a lot of people last season," Kruger said. "This group of players has a much better idea of what to expect this season, and I think they'll approach it in a strong frame of mind."

Iowa State coach Johnny Orr said he has a strong frame of mind about center Victor Alexander. Alexander, a 6-9, 265-pound junior, averaged 19.9 points and 8.8 rebounds per game last season.

"Victor is as good as anybody in

the league," Orr said. "If he continues to improve, he should be considered one of the top players in the country."

Orr said he also is excited about Phil Kunz, a 6-9 center who transferred from Illinois, and Kirk Baker, a junior college transfer who should step in at forward.

Kansas' top newcomer is forward Ricky Calloway, a 6-6 senior who transferred from Indiana. Calloway helped the Jayhawks defeat second-

ranked Louisiana State and top-ranked UNLV enroute to capturing the preseason NIT team title.

Joining Calloway in the starting lineup are guards Jeff Gueldner and Kevin Pritchard, forward Mark Randall and center Pekka Markkanen. In addition, guards Mike Maddox and Freeman West are expected to see extensive playing time this season.

Kansas coach Roy Williams said his team's high number of returning players prompts optimism.

Williams said Kansas also will have another advantage this season because it can compete in the NCAA Tournament. The Jayhawks were prohibited from competing in last year's tournament because of NCAA violations.

"There's a bigger carrot at the end," Williams said. "Last year they played for personal pride, knowing there was nothing at the end, and they played every game like it was their last."

Colorado coach Tom Miller said he hopes this is his team's last year of struggling. The Buffaloes, who along with Nebraska have been notorious cellar dwellers in the past, finished with a 7-21 record last season.

Miller said he hopes his team continues to perform the same way this year that it did at the end of last season. Colorado closed out its season by dropping a double-overtime decision to Oklahoma and suffering a 1-point setback to Missouri.

24 solo blocks and 81 assisted blocks this season.

Outside hitter Tracy Young, a second-team all-conference selection, leads the team in kills with 360 in averaging 3.56 per game and posting a .247 hitting percentage.

As a team, the Redbirds averaged 14.66 kills per game in hitting .244. Opponents averaged 13.34 kills per game and rolled up a .192 hitting percentage.

Nebraska posted a .316 hitting percentage while averaging 16.97 kills per game, while opponents have hit .156 and averaged 12.63 kills.

Notes:

• Approximately 2,000 tickets remain for Saturday's match. Tickets

can be purchased at the South Stadium ticket office at a cost of \$5 for adults and \$3 for students. University of Nebraska-Lincoln students who show their student ID cards will not be admitted free.

• If the Huskers win, the Coliseum also will be the site of Midwest regional semifinal and final matches. Tickets would be sold at the Coliseum immediately following Saturday's match -- provided the Huskers

win. The semifinals would be played Dec. 8 at 5:30 and 7:30 p.m., with the finals played Dec. 9 at 7:30 p.m. Two-day tournament passes will be sold for \$10.



Fiesta Bowl

with

Nebraska



AAA TRAVEL AGENCY
2900 "O" St.
Lincoln, NE

\$335.00

call
474-2229

Double Occupancy

Three nights at the Scottsdale Hilton

Reserved seat game ticket

NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

Additional nights for only \$56 per person double occupancy

Triple package price \$305/person Quad \$275 per person

Choice of arrival dates 12-29-89 or 12-30-89



TOTAL HAIR DESIGN



*Cuts
Colors
Perms*

Stop By Or Call For An Appointment

HAIR EXPRESS
by Sherrill

Gunny Complex
245 N. 13th St.
475-5550