

NU wingback ready for Huskies, again



Nebraska fullback Omar Soto stretches for extra yardage against Colorado State on Saturday. Soto has gained 164 yards on 12 carries this season.

Michelle Paulman/DN

By Todd Cooper
Senior Reporter

Nebraska wingback Vincent Hawkins knows Washington's football team better than most Cornhuskers.

Although Nebraska hasn't faced Washington since before all of the current Nebraska players were born (1967), Hawkins has mild experience against the Huskies.

The transfer out of Spokane Falls (Wash.) Community College rushed for 140 yards against Washington's redshirt freshmen in 1988.

"I don't know if they'll recognize me," Hawkins said. "But I'll probably notice some of them, if they're still around."

Hawkins said he remembers the Huskies simply because it was his collegiate debut.

"I was nervous — I remember that," Hawkins said. "I was jittery, but it turned out well."

"We ended up winning, and I had a pretty good day."

Hawkins said he hopes the Huskers have a pretty good day Saturday — good enough to overcome last year's three late-season losses.

Although Hawkins didn't play in those defeats, he said he empathizes with the returners.

"I kind of share with the other players," Hawkins said. "But it's exciting. In one sense, it's good that we haven't won a big one in a while."

"We want to go out and win and give the coaches and the fans some-

thing to get excited about."

Hawkins said Husker fans may be thrilled by big plays against Washington's 5-3 defense Saturday.

"We're always looking for big plays," Hawkins said. "They're going to have to cover us man-to-man on our routes."

"But we feel like we can line up and play tough against them."

Hawkins said he hopes he plays as strong Saturday as his performance in 1988. Like that debut, Washington marks his first "big" game as a Husker.

"This time, this game, I'm going to be less jittery and play even better," Hawkins said.

"I may not rush for over 100 yards but I'm looking to do a lot more things."

● Free safety Jamie Weyers, who tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his knee during a fourth-quarter interception Saturday, is out for the season.

● At his weekly press conference, Osborne said he hopes Nebraska fans are enthusiastic Saturday night.

"Bobby Bowden and other coaches have said (Memorial Stadium) is probably one of the finest places in the world to play a game," Osborne said. "In no way do we want any outlandish incidents; we want people to be treated with respect."

"And I admire our fans for that." But, he added, "I wouldn't mind a little more enthusiasm this week."

Washington lineman predicts physical game on Saturday

By Jeff Singer
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska-Washington game Saturday will feature on one side Nebraska's offense, an offense first in the nation in total, rushing and scoring offense that hasn't needed a punter yet.

On the other side, Washington defensive tackle Steve Emtman and the Husky rushing defense.

Emtman, the Pac-10's co-defensive player of the year last season, anchors a unit that was ranked first nationally in rushing defense last year.

What's worse for the Cornhuskers, Emtman said, is that Washington's defense has improved since 1990.

"We have more potential than last year," he said. "We'll be able to do more things this year because we're a lot faster and stronger."

Emtman, a 6-foot-4, 280-pound preseason consensus All-American, said the Huskies still have improvements to make, though, and will have their work cut out for them in Saturday's battle with ninth-ranked Nebraska.

"We're going to have to tone down Nebraska's offense and help bring their punter onto the field a little more often," Emtman said. "This is definitely going to be our most physical game of the year."

Emtman said the publicity and hype for Saturday's game will not be a factor for the Huskies.

"National television doesn't do much for your performance on the field," he said. "What

counts is the 22 guys out on the field."

Emtman earned second team All-American honors last season as a sophomore, and was recipient of the Morris Trophy as the Pac-10's best defensive lineman. He said those awards are nice, but are not much of a concern.

"I don't worry too much about winning awards out there, since they're a team effort anyway," Emtman said. "The thing I do worry about is going up against guys like (Nebraska right guard) Will Shields."

Last season, Emtman recorded 55 tackles, 29 of them unassisted, and recovered a fumble. He was the leading tackler among Washington defensive linemen.

He could become Washington's first three-year all-conference player since 1970-72.

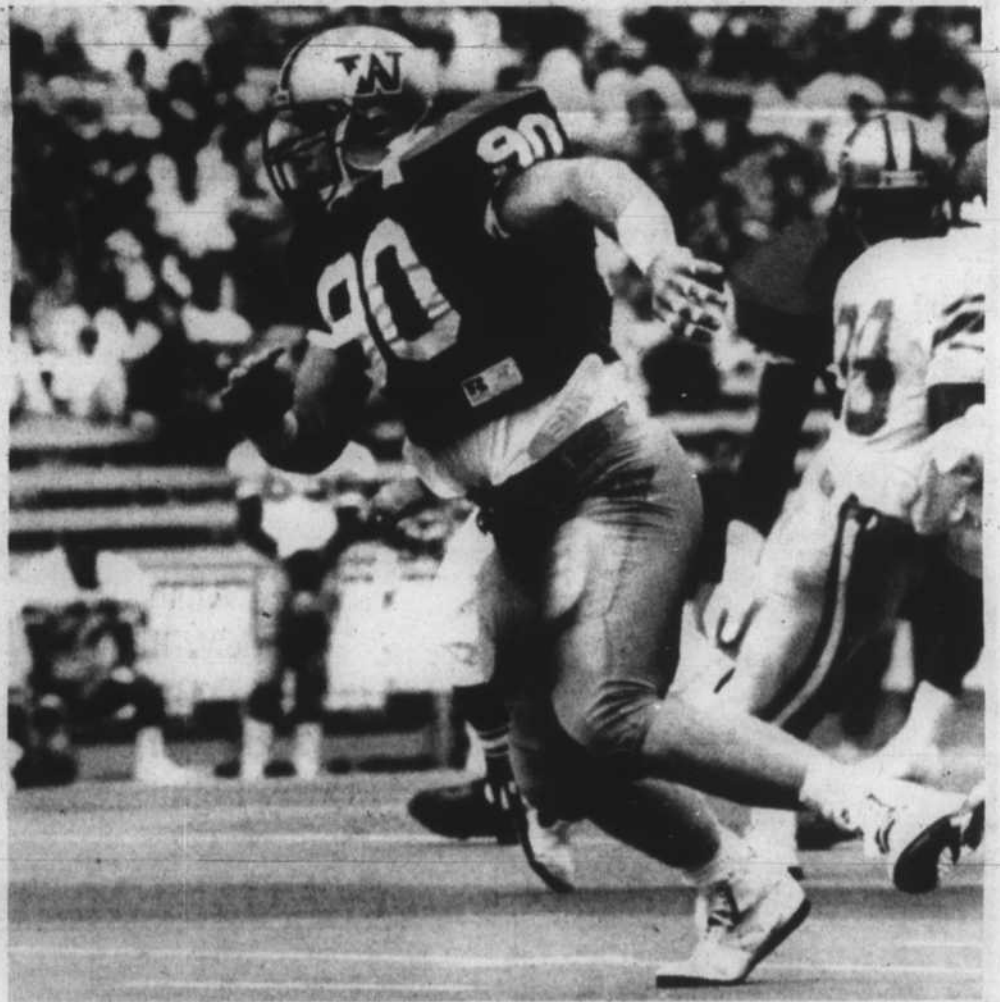
Emtman said the No. 4-ranked Huskies need to take their games one week at a time, and not look ahead to making a second-straight trip to the Rose Bowl.

"Right now, the only thing we can look at is playing Nebraska and not the Rose Bowl," he said. "We got caught last year looking ahead against UCLA, and they came in and beat us pretty good."

The 25-22 loss to the Bruins was the only setback in the Huskies' conference schedule. They went on to beat Iowa 46-34 in the Rose Bowl.

Although he doesn't like to talk about it, Emtman said the Huskies have a good chance to bring home a national championship this year with a good team effort every week.

"But we need to beat teams like Nebraska first," he said.



Courtesy of Washington Sports Information

Washington defensive tackle Steve Emtman chases down an opposing ball carrier. The All-American candidate will lead the Huskies against Nebraska.

Players' stories shouldn't be dismissed

College athletics, particularly the big-money sports like football and men's basketball, contain an unfortunate tradition.

The tradition is that of believing the stories of coaches and athletic officials over athletes during controversies.

Before this year's football season even began, another such incident occurred.

Robert Smith, a sophomore pre-med student and football star at Ohio State, gave back his athletic scholarship in favor of academics. The reason he gave was insensitivity toward schoolwork by Buckeye coaches and administrators.

Smith was — is — a talented player.

Last season as an 18-year-old freshman, he rushed for 1,126 yards, shattering former Ohio State Heisman winner Archie Griffin's freshman record, set the same year Smith was born.



Chuck Green

He averaged 6.4 yards per carry and a bright future in the National Football League looked likely.

But, according to Smith, that NFL dream was put on hold by Ohio State

coaches, particularly Buckeyes offensive coordinator Elliot Uzelac.

According to a story in Sports Illustrated, Uzelac came into Smith's dormitory room Aug. 15 and told him to turn the lights out.

Smith, who was studying for a summer chemistry course, argued that he had more of his textbook to read, but with no luck.

That was only the beginning. Nine days later, Smith had quit the team, citing several reasons.

Among them:

● That Ohio State coach John Cooper and Uzelac did not care about their players' academic endeavors.

See GREEN on 8

Big Eight names Thater player of week again

For the second time in three weeks, Nebraska volleyball player Stephanie Thater has been named the Big Eight's Player of the Week.

The 6-foot-2 junior middle blocker from Union, Mo., broke two records during last weekend's Runza Invitational.

Thater, an All-Big Eight and second-team All-America selection last season, recorded 62 kills, 25 blocks, 24 digs and a .373 hitting percentage in the three weekend

matches, and set Nebraska records with 31 kills and 13 blocking assists during the Cornhuskers' four-game loss to No. 3 UCLA.

Thater, who leads the Big Eight with a .379 hitting percentage, moved into 10th place on the all-time Nebraska kill list with 541 and into fifth place with 298 career blocks.

She leads the conference in both categories.