

Engelbert numb to pains of last season



Robin Trimarchi/DN

Nebraska middle guard Pat Engelbert loosens up before practice Wednesday. The senior co-captain has returned to full-strength after being hampered with a neck injury most of last season.

By Todd Cooper
Senior Reporter

When Nebraska middle guard Pat Engelbert lines up against Washington on Saturday, he won't feel the pain of last year.

Neither the doubt from last year's losses nor the pain from a neck injury last season will enter his mind.

Just more than one year ago, shortly after the Cornhuskers' 1990 season opener, Engelbert was in the middle of a pile-up and his neck was jammed.

"I was caught in the bottom of a pile in practice during the week after the Baylor game," the senior from Columbus said. "My neck jammed and the pain shot down into my right shoulder.

"It got to the point where if I hit it just right, it felt like my shoulder was going to explode." Trainers determined that Engelbert had damaged nerve endings in his neck.

"Any extensive movement would send a painful shock down his arm," assistant trainer Jerry Weber said. "That he was able to play the whole season with that pain shows how tough Pat really is."

Defensive coordinator Charlie McBride said he didn't realize how much pain Engelbert was going through.

"Pat never complained," McBride said. "In fact, he never complains about anything."

"Pat's the kind of guy that's very competitive on the inside and very quiet on the outside."

But Engelbert said he felt the pain he was masking.

"For a while I was worried," Engelbert said. "It was hard to lift a milk jug, which is about four or five pounds."

"I could get it off the table but when I tried to get it to shoulder height, I couldn't do it."

More than anything, Engelbert said, that shoulder weakness affected his pass rushing throughout the season.

"I had to use uppercuts instead of some of your more basic moves, which weren't nearly as effective," Engelbert said. "I had to hit people just the right way so I started being a little cautious."

"It became psychological."

But the physical pain had its moments, Engelbert said.

"There were times where I'd go a week without any pain," Engelbert said.

It would return at the most inopportune

time, Engelbert said.

"I remember it was the last play of practice — in fact, we were redoing the last play — when I slipped and a guy kneed me on the head," Engelbert said. "It felt like my shoulder was going to burst."

McBride said Engelbert was at most 75 percent healthy last year.

"He started to come around by the Georgia Tech game," McBride said. "He had just a great — probably his best — performance of the year against them."

"He was one of our few highlights."

Engelbert had six solo tackles, including four behind the line of scrimmage for 21 yards in losses. One of those was a quarterback sack. McBride said Engelbert carried that momentum into this season.

Engelbert worked daily, rehabilitating his shoulder, which he said was healthy by the end of the summer.

"He came in in good shape this year," McBride said.

And he was ready to revenge last year's losses.

If he could, Engelbert said he'd replay those three losses, to Colorado, 27-12, Oklahoma, 45-10, and Georgia Tech, 45-21.

"As a whole, I wish we could play the Colorado and Oklahoma games over," Engelbert said. "The Colorado game was a game we should have won, and the Oklahoma game — that was just a bombardment."

"We didn't respond to the call."

Engelbert, who had a nine-yard sack and two other tackles against Colorado State last week, said the Huskers will answer the bell this week.

"I think we're playing pretty well right now," Engelbert said. "The attitude is good, the enthusiasm is good."

"I guess I feel as good as I can feel."

And that's a heck of a lot better than when he entered Nebraska's three big games last year, he said.

Barring any more injuries, McBride anticipates great things from Engelbert, not only Saturday night, but down the road too.

"There's not a better nose (guard) in the Big Eight than Pat," McBride said. "There's all this talk about this (Joel) Steed guy from Colorado."

"But when you add the tackles up at the end of the year, the guy who's going to be around the ball the most is Pat Engelbert."

Huskers stay with tough foes

By John Adkisson
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska volleyball team can't quit tangling with the Top 10.

A week after losing at home to third-ranked UCLA, the 7-1 fifth-ranked Cornhuskers will take to the road to play No. 9 Brigham Young and No. 10 New Mexico in the BYU/Mizuno Challenge at Provo, Utah, this weekend.

In BYU, Nebraska will see a team which Husker Coach Terry Pettit calls "top-level." The Cougars lost two matches to Nebraska last year, but were able to take a game from the Huskers in the NU Coliseum.

"They serve tough, and they're going to be tough to beat on their home floor," Pettit said.

Cougar Coach Elaine Michaelis said she isn't looking forward to playing Nebraska coming off of the loss to UCLA.

"I don't like it one bit," she said. "I would

expect Nebraska to be extra-sharp after losing that match."

Two All-Americans from last season, Nebraska's Janet Kruse and BYU's Tea Nieminen, will not be on the court. Nieminen is out for the season with a knee injury, and Kruse is "day-to-day," according to Pettit.

Pettit said 3-2 New Mexico is "a ball control team with dynamic players." The Saturday meeting will be the first-ever between the two schools.

As for the Huskers, Pettit said he saw several positives from his team despite the four-game loss to UCLA.

"In that match, I saw that we have the potential to be an excellent blocking team," Pettit said. "And (sophomore) Nikki Stricker was able to set a match like that in front of a large crowd. She got better as the match went on."

Teams looking to repeat sweep

By Benji Greenberg
Staff Reporter

Both the Nebraska men's and women's cross country teams will be trying to keep their winning streaks going Saturday in the Woody Greeno/Nebraska Invitational.

Both teams won team titles at the Doane Invitational last week and Coach Jay Dirksen likes his teams' chances of repeating this week.

"This weekend will give our whole team some form of competition," Dirksen said. "It's a big field and it will be good to get a meet under our belts before the Minnesota Invitational in two weeks."

The women's team, ranked 18th in the nation, will be led by senior team captain and All-American Lisa Graham and two-time returning junior All-American Fran tenBensel.

"Our women's team is strong, with the top seven returning runners from last year and some outstanding newcomers who should help us," Dirksen said. "We're experienced and we should do well in the conference and nationals at the end of the year."

The men will be without senior captain Pat Day because of injury, and will look to sophomore David Itteffa to lead a young, but talented team, Dirksen said.

Student basketball ticket sales to start

From Staff Reports

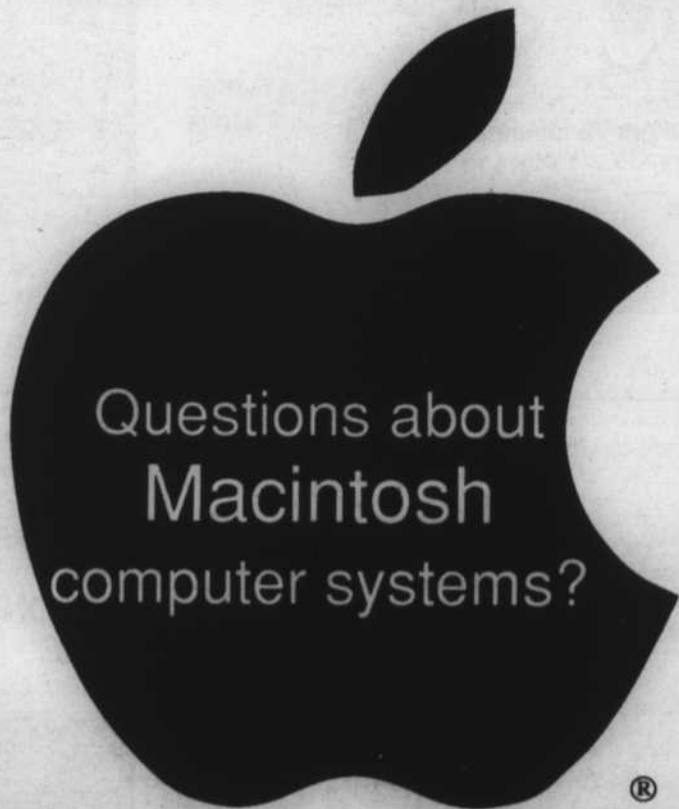
UNL students may purchase tickets next week for the upcoming men's basketball season, according to Cornhusker athletic ticket manager Joe Selig.

Tickets may be purchased from 8:30 a.m. to

4 p.m., Monday through Friday, at the Athletic Ticket Office, 117 South Stadium.

The cost of a student ticket is \$35 and spouse tickets are \$70. A student ticket does not include the four home games played over Christmas Break. However, tickets for those games will be on sale at a later date with special student rates.

Apple Rep Day



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