

ASU players thinking defense, turnovers Linebacker calls for best game

By David Moyer
Staff Reporter

R-E-S-P-E-C-T. Aretha Franklin sang it, and Arizona State linebacker Darren Woodson is saying it.



Woodson

game of the year."

Arizona State is coming off an upset win against Southern Cal and has found its way to a No. 24 ranking with a 2-0 record. Woodson said the win was an important one for the Sun Devils, a win which gave Arizona State respect for the 16th-ranked Cornhuskers, who will come to Tempe, Ariz., this weekend.

"This year is a little bit different than last season," he said, referring to the Sun Devils' 4-7 finish in 1990. "It's great to be 2-0, we have more confidence and we are playing better."

Woodson started eight games in 1990 and was tied for third on the team with 73 tackles, eight of which combined for losses of 52 yards.

Now Woodson and his teammates

will have to tackle the Huskers and I-back Derek Brown. Nebraska leads the country with 427 yards rushing and 597 yards total offense per game. Brown has compiled an average of 132 yards a game, which puts him 10th nationally, and the Huskers 50.3

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We have as much respect as possible for Nebraska. They will play better than last week for sure, so we are going to have to come up with our best game of the year.

Woodson
Arizona State linebacker

points per game average also leads the nation.

"You don't stop the running game of Nebraska," he said. "You just have to try and limit them. We'll wait and see what happens on Saturday."

If Arizona State can contain the Huskers on offense, Woodson says the Sun Devils have a good chance of winning. A win over Nebraska would give the Sun Devils their second straight win against a ranked team.

"It's important that we beat them

for our program," he said. "Any time you beat a team like Nebraska, you instantly get nation-wide respect."

Woodson said his teammates know it is going to be tough, and therefore they aren't going to base the season on whether or not they win.

"If we can go out and play our best and give it our all, then that is all we can ask for," he said. "If we do that and don't win, there won't be a lot of disappointment."

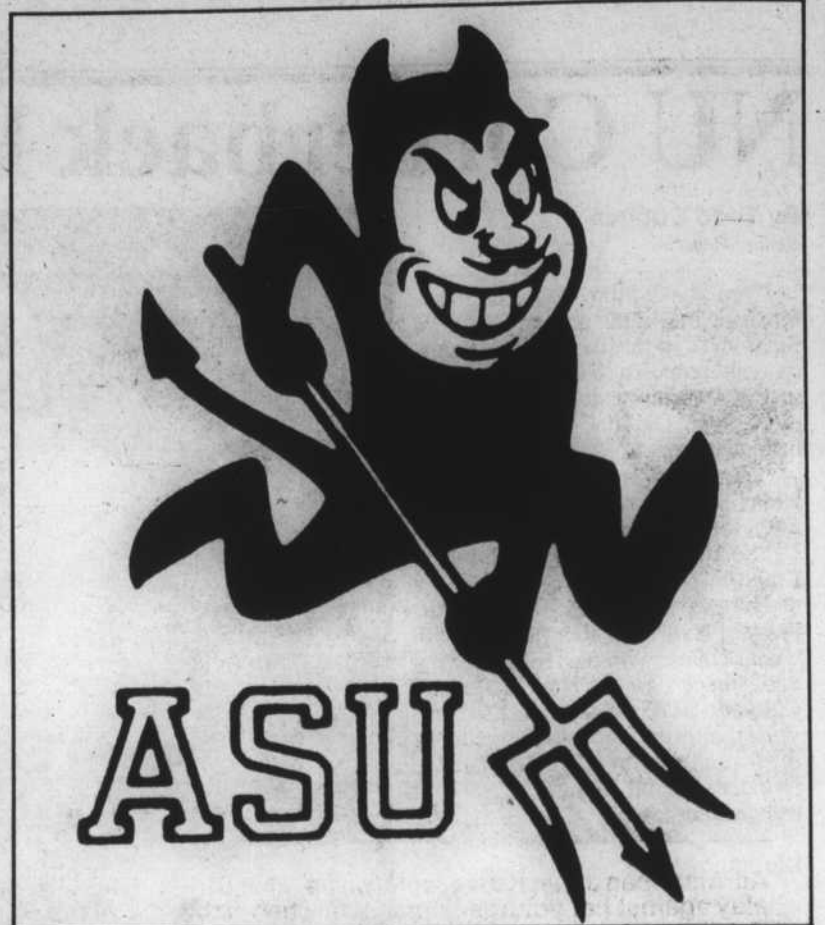
Woodson said he knows how good the Huskers are, and for that reason, he said he expects Nebraska to play hard.

"I've seen the films and watched them play this year, and Nebraska has a really good team," he said. "They will be tough to beat."

Recently though, many good Nebraska teams have ventured into Sun Devil Stadium, only to come away defeated. Nebraska is 1-1 against Arizona State in the teams' two meetings in Tempe, including a 17-14 loss in the 1975 Fiesta Bowl. Nebraska has lost three other Fiesta Bowl games there.

But the Huskers' past problems in that stadium haven't affected the thinking of the Sun Devils, Woodson said.

"It hasn't even crossed our minds," he said. "Tom Osborne will get them up for this one, no question. This is a new Nebraska team and a new Arizona State team."



Quarterback lives dream playing for Sun Devils

By Thomas Clouse
Staff Reporter

Arizona State quarterback Bret Powers grew up idolizing the Sun Devils, but he never believed he would someday be burning Arizona State opponents.

The 6-foot-5, 210-pound sophomore has led the Sun Devils to a 30-3 scorching of Oklahoma State and a 32-25 upset of Southern Cal.

He was introduced to Arizona State football at an early age because his father, Howard, played tight end and defensive end for the Sun Devils in 1957.

"When I announced my letter of intent to ASU, it was a dream come true," Powers said.



Powers

The Sun Devils are ranked 24th in The Associated Press Top 25 poll. This Saturday's game against 16th-ranked Nebraska is Arizona State's first home game.

"We have to put the first two games behind us and get up for Nebraska," Powers said. "But I'm sure we will."

The key to the game is to not turn over the ball, he said.

"And we need to take advantage of any Nebraska turnovers," Powers said.

In the past, Arizona State's offense has been balanced, but this year the offense is loading up on the run, he said. Sun Devil rushers have gained 493 yards on 103 carries over two games.

"We have really done well rushing, and we will try to continue it against Nebraska," Powers said.

His personal goal is to play consistently each week, he said.

"I don't want to play great one week and bad the next," Powers said. "I just want to put the team into good situations."

In two games, Powers has completed 21 of 39 passes for 356 yards, two touchdowns and one interception. He is averaging 178 passing yards a game and 17 yards a completion.

In 1990, as a backup, he played in five games. In his one start, against Oregon, he went 16-for-31 for 178 yards.

"Last year it was great when I finally got in," he said. "Now I'm starting and it's really exciting."

A lack of experience hasn't affected his confidence, he said.

"I just go out and perform to the best of my abilities," Powers said. "I am not going to help the team if I'm not confident."

In 1989, as a senior at Cactus High School, Glendale, Ariz., he completed 119 of 199 passes for 1,629 yards and 12 touchdowns.

Powers was an honorable mention USA Today All-American, a member of the 1988 Phoenix Metro All-Star team, and he received the National Football Foundation and Hall of Fame scholar/athlete award.

The sophomore pre-med major with a 4.0 grade-point average, said he wants to specialize in sports medicine, but he would play in the NFL if he gets the opportunity.

"But if I don't get a chance, I'll have something to fall back on," Powers said.

Although his academic schedule is difficult, he said, playing for the Sun Devils has helped him manage his time better.

"Football is like another college course," Powers said. "You prepare all week long, and Saturday is your test."

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