

Tiger offense, Husker defense to clash

Huskers anticipate passing game Great plays goal of Tiger coach

By Todd Cooper
Senior Reporter

After giving up an average of 265 yards passing a game, one wouldn't think Nebraska's defense would particularly cherish facing Missouri, the best passing team in the league.

But... "I love it when they pass," Cornhusker outside linebacker Trev Alberts said.

He'll get a lot of what he loves Saturday in Memorial Stadium. Kickoff is at 1 p.m.

Missouri comes to Lincoln averaging 245 passing yards a game behind junior quarterback Phil Johnson, who leads the conference and ranks 16th nationally in total offense.

Meanwhile, Nebraska ranks 81st nationally in defense and 55th against the pass.

"I think we're looking forward to the challenge Saturday," Alberts said. "If they're on, they're going to be tough to beat."

And Johnson will be tough to contain, Husker Coach Tom Osborne said.

"We'll have to work hard on containment," he said. "He's a good runner and a good thrower. He's been able to do a lot of damage both ways."

The Huskers will have to find a way to get more pressure on the quarterback, Osborne said, adding that he is "moderately satisfied" with the damage Nebraska's defense has caused

by blitzing.

Middle guard Pat Engelbert said that the pressure has been sporadic.

"We're playing in spurts," Engelbert said. "We're getting in there but we aren't doing it consistently."

Defensive tackle Jamie Liewer said consistency will come with time and timing.

"We've been improving," Liewer said. "It's just a matter of getting everything clicking. It's kind of frustrating. All we can do is keep plugging at it."

The Huskers sacked Kansas State quarterback Paul Watson nine times during Saturday's 38-31 Nebraska victory, but Watson ended the day 26-for-46 passing for 340 yards. He also escaped Husker pressure for 76 yards on 16 carries, including a 26-yard run.

"From what we can see, Missouri's better," Alberts said. "It just depends on what team shows up."

Missouri is 3-2-1 after beating Illinois, Memphis State and Oklahoma State. The Tigers were crushed by Baylor, 47-21, and Colorado, 55-7, and tied Indiana 27-27.

"They've been kind of inconsistent," Alberts said. "But Missouri is always dangerous. With a mobile quarterback and big offensive line, they can hurt you."

See HUSKERS on 8

By Chuck Green
Senior Editor

Missouri football coach Bob Stull isn't sure which team he'll be bringing to Lincoln for Saturday's game against the ninth-ranked Cornhuskers.

Will it be the team that suffered 26- and 48-point losses to Baylor and Colorado?

Or will it be the one that routed Illinois and Memphis State?

Stull is hoping it will be the latter.

"This season has really been up and down for us," Stull said. "We've had success and failure. We've made some great plays and some mistakes. Hopefully on Saturday, we'll make more great plays than bad ones."

Stull is counting on Tiger quarterback Phil Johnson to make several great plays against Nebraska.

"Phil is one of the better players I've ever seen as a coach," Stull said. "He's cool at all times, no matter what's going on. He keeps his head and shows good poise whether we're winning or losing."

"We'll need a good effort from him this week."

Johnson has completed 107 of 189 passes for 1,303 yards and 11 touchdowns this season, averaging 12.2 yards per completion. His favorite target is running back Ronnell Kayhill,

who has snagged 32 passes for 269 yards and two touchdowns this season.

Tight end Byron Chamberlain, a sophomore, has pulled down 25 passes for 314 yards and three touchdowns.

Last week against Oklahoma State, Johnson connected with wide receiver Kenny Holly for a 51-yard pass on the game's first play, and Kayhill scored on the next play, giving Missouri its first first-quarter touchdown of the season.

Johnson, whose passing has put Missouri atop the Big Eight in passing offense, completed 18 of 31 passes for 260 yards and a school record-tying four touchdowns. Johnson also ran five times for 90 yards, giving him a career-high 350 yards of total offense.

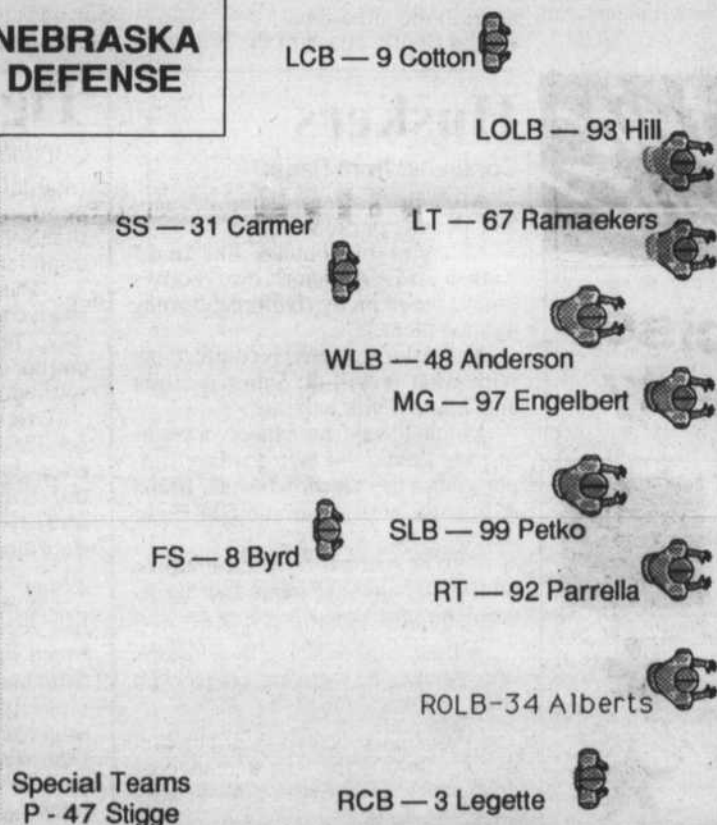
Missouri's defense limited the Cowboys to 261 yards of total offense and seven points and forced five turnovers. Defensive end Stacy Elliott led the Tigers with nine tackles, two sacks, a broken-up pass and a forced fumble.

Missouri's rushing attack also is solid, with running back Mike Washington and Kayhill leading the effort. Washington has gained 205 yards on 54 carries, while Kayhill has amassed 184 yards on 68 carries.

But Missouri's weakness is defense, Stull said. The Tigers rank last in the Big Eight in

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NEBRASKA DEFENSE



MISSOURI OFFENSE



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