

# Homegrown Cornhuskers shore up defensive line

By John Adkisson  
Senior Editor

Strangely enough, the Nebraska defensive line is made up almost entirely of guys from ... Nebraska.

From Norfolk to Grand Island to York, from Hyannis to Atkinson, rarely have so many top-notch players from outstate Nebraska been assembled on one unit.

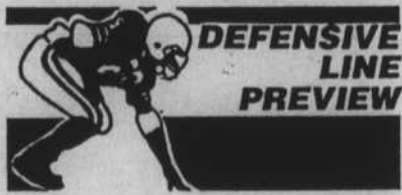
Until now. "It's not like we just went out and recruited a bunch of kids from Nebraska," said Cornhusker defensive coordinator Charlie McBride. "This just happened to fall into place."

Any talk about this year's all-Nebraska defensive line begins and ends with 6-foot-5-inch, 290-pound left tackle John Parrella.

"I think we've got one guy who's an outstanding player in John Parrella," said Nebraska coach Tom Osborne.

The numbers support the claim: In ten games last year, Parrella made 19 unassisted tackles and recorded 4.5 sacks. Against Oklahoma, he recorded a career-high nine tackles and had three quarterback hurries in the Sooners' last possession.

Parrella was moved to left tackle this spring, which enabled junior Kevin Ramaekers to move into the right



tackle spot.

Ramaekers, from Norfolk Catholic, played in 10 games last year and recorded seven solo tackles and 28 tackle assists. He tore a knee ligament in winter conditioning and missed all of spring practice, but recovered and returned this fall.

"He's made a remarkable recovery," Osborne said. "I've never seen a guy recover from reconstructive knee surgery as fast as he did."

Two other part-time tackles from last year, Jamie Liewer and Bruce Moore, also returned.

Liewer, a senior from Atkinson, started six games last year. He finished with 25 total tackles, including five tackles for losses and two sacks.

Moore, a junior from York, was used in pass-rushing situations last year and will likely see the same role in 1992.

Other players who will contend for playing time at tackle include Hyannis native Terry Connealy and junior Billy Wade from The Woodlands, Texas. Larry Townsend, a 6-5

265-pound freshman from San Jose, Calif., may also see action.

At nose guard, McBride is searching for a replacement for All-Big Eight performer Pat Engelbert.

The leading candidate for the job may be David Noonan, who played in every game behind Engelbert last season. Noonan, a 275-pound junior, had 11 tackles and one sack last season.

"Noonan seems to be No. 1 right now," McBride said. "After that, we're still trying to sort some people out."

Those people include Bill Humphrey, a sophomore from Libertyville, Ill., and Jerry Irons, a junior from The Woodlands, Texas. Christian Peter, a 310-pound sophomore who sat out last year due to Proposition 48, is also contending for playing time.

McBride said he was pleased with both the size and the quickness of the defensive line.

"They're the fastest big men that we've had here," McBride said. "For the size of these guys, their quickness is really pretty incredible."

Osborne said he was anxious to see what the young defensive linemen can do.

"A lot of these guys, they look great testing, but we don't know if they can play," he said. "That's what we're going to have to find out."

## Peter

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starter and team leader Pat Engelbert.

As of now, Peter is battling for a spot behind No. 1 middle guard David Noonan.

"If I work as hard as I possibly can, maybe I can get some playing time," he said.

McBride said Peter's biggest challenge in battling for playing time would lie in his ability to succeed in the mental aspect of football.

"Physically, you'd think right away that that's what you're looking for," McBride said. "But on the field, you've got to make decisions in fractions of seconds. That's what he needs to work on."

Even on Photo Day, Peter couldn't talk for long - every time he tried to answer a question, another group of young fans lined up, waiting for his autograph.

Just what is it that attracts people to Christian Peter, a player who hasn't even played a down at Nebraska?

"It's got to be my good looks," he said with a laugh.

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## Receivers ready to fill big shoes, 'get the job done'

By Scott McNeal  
Staff Reporter

Flashiness and big plays. That's what the Nebraska receiving corps want to replace this year with the loss of big-play men Johnny Mitchell and Jon Bostick.

The duo, who are playing in the NFL this season, accounted for 55 receptions and 953 yards last year and most of Nebraska's big plays in the air.



Now the job for Nebraska coach Tom Osborne is to find suitable replacements at split end and tight end - and to find a wingback to step in for two-year starter Nate Turner.

William Washington, a senior who split time with Mitchell last season, will start at tight end and be backed by Gerald Armstrong and Mike Vedral. "I'm not as good, or have as much flair, that Johnny had," Washington said. "But I will get the job done and do it right."

At split end, senior Tyrone Hughes returns to head the depth chart after a brief stint at cornerback in the 1992 Orange Bowl.

Hughes is followed by junior Corey Dixon, who caught three passes last year for 25 yards. Behind the top two will be junior Trumane Bell, who redshirted last year after transferring to Nebraska from Highland (Kan.) Community College.

At wingback, senior Vincent Hawkins emerged as the front-runner in spring practice following the departure last year of four-year starter Nate Turner. Last season, Hawkins caught three passes for 55 yards, including a 22-yard touchdown in the opener against Utah State.

Behind him is 5-foot-9-inch sophomore Abdul Muhammad, who caught six passes for 84 yards last season. He also started the Colorado game last season.

Tom Werner, a senior from Tilden, is third behind Hawkins and Muhammad at wingback.

Osborne said I-back Derek Brown will also be used at wingback in some formations, allowing both Brown and fellow I-back Calvin Jones to play at the same time.

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