

Huskers up against experience in opener

Utes have edge with 18 starters returning to play

By Nick Hytrek
Senior Reporter

Don't expect a typical Nebraska football season opener this year.

At least that's what Nebraska coach Tom Osborne said regarding Saturday's game against Utah.

In past season openers, Nebraska has trounced opponents by such scores as 59-28, 48-17 and 56-12.

Osborne said the score should be different against the Utes.

"There's always going to be quite a few players that haven't played much before that are going to be in key roles; and I would say right now we're probably a little bit better in that respect than normally."

Six starters return on offense and seven are back on defense for the Huskers. Those numbers look better when adding in people who played a lot last year but didn't start, Osborne said.

"A lot of the guys who are so-called new starters are people who have got considerable experience," Osborne said.

Some of those players include offensive performers Tyrone Hughes, Calvin Jones, Vincent Hawkins and Zach Wiegert.

But with 18 starters returning, Utah will have the advantage in experience, Osborne said.

"In contrast, Utah is probably still a more experienced football team," he said. "I think it's one of the more experienced teams we've ever seen."

Osborne pointed out that the Utes will be dangerous on offense, where 10 starters return. Among those 10 are quarterback Frank Dolce, who threw for 2,444 yards and 16 touchdowns last season, running back Keith Williams, who had 1,076 yards rushing, and wide receiver Bryan Rowley, who caught 60 passes for 1,011 yards.

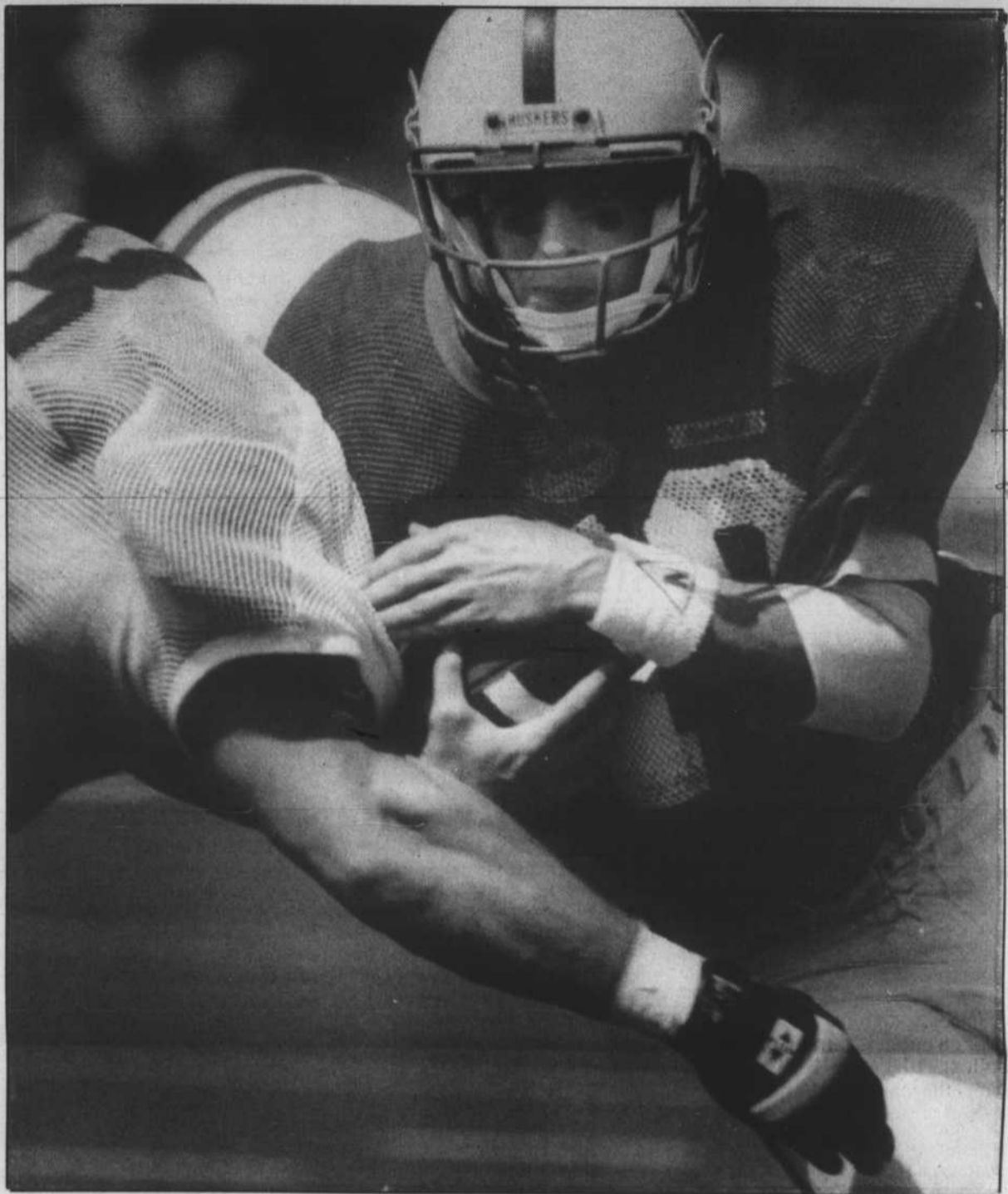
The only common opponent of the two teams last year was Arizona State. Nebraska beat the Sun Devils 18-9. Utah lost to Arizona State 21-15.

"Arizona State beat them in a very close game down in Tempe," Osborne said. "You know they're capable of playing well against good people."

Notes:

- Under Osborne, the Huskers are 14-4-1 in openers and 17-2 in home openers. The last time Nebraska lost its opening game was in 1985 when Florida State beat the Huskers 17-13.

- The Huskers will be playing their first game on the new artificial surface in Memorial Stadium. The new artificial turf was installed shortly after spring practice ended. This summer's Nebraska Shrine Bowl was the first game on the new turf.



Kiley Timperley/DN

Nebraska senior quarterback Joel Cornwell is tackled by linebacker Mike Anderson during a scrimmage last Saturday. Cornwell will back Mike Grant in this Saturday's opener against Utah.

“We've been battling and hitting each other around and we don't want to do that anymore. We're tired of knocking each other around.”

— Grant
NU quarterback

"I believe (Utah) has some optimism this year," Osborne said. "I think they're going to be a very fine football team."

"I look for a fairly close game." Kickoff is at 1 p.m. at Memorial Stadium.

Starting quarterback Mike Grant said the No. 11 Cornhuskers were ready to get the season under way.

"We've been battling and hitting each other around and we don't want to do that anymore," Grant said.

"We're tired of knocking each other around. We're ready to play someone else."

Because the game is the first of the year for both teams, experience will be a factor, Osborne said.

"Of course the first game is always an uncertain time," Osborne said.

Utes eager to match wits with Huskers, coach says

By Nick Hytrek
Senior Reporter

Utah football coach Ron McBride might want to reconsider where he watches Saturday's game with Nebraska.

McBride conceded that his team might be a little overmatched against the No. 11 Cornhuskers.

"It's an honor — a privilege — to come back and play against (Nebraska)," McBride said. "It might be better to be a spectator than a player, but we'll come in and see what we can do," and were contenders for a bowl bid.

Ten starters on offense and seven on defense return this year.

That experience will help this year's Utah team, McBride said.

"The strength of this team is that it's just a solid football team," McBride said. "We're not overly outstanding. We're just a solid football team."

But at the same time, McBride said it was hard to tell where the strengths of his team lie.

On offense, Utah is led by Frank Dolce, the team's 1991 Most Valuable Offensive Player. Last season Dolce completed 177 of 314 passes for 2,444 yards and 16 touchdowns

before a broken ankle sidelined him for the final game.

Wide receiver Bryan Rowley is Utah's all-time career leader in reception yards with 2,303. Last season he caught 60 passes for 1,011 yards and 11 touchdowns.

McBride said that on defense, the Utes wouldn't stop Nebraska's running game, but he hoped they could make it tough for the Huskers to run.

"It's like a guy hitting .400 in baseball," McBride said. "He's probably going to get his hits against you no matter what you do."

"So we'll try to slow them down, but we won't stop them."

Probable Starters

SE 33 Tyrone Hughes	5-10	175	Sr.	LOLB 93 Travis Hill	6-2	240	Sr.
LT 77 Lance Lundberg	6-4	300	Jr.	LT 82 John Parrella	6-5	290	Sr.
LG 62 Kep Mehlin	6-6	265	Jr.	NG 73 David Noonan	6-3	275	Jr.
C 51 Jim Scott	6-2	265	Sr.	RT 70 Jamie Liewer	6-4	270	Sr.
RG 75 Will Smith	6-1	265	Sr.	ROLB 34 Trev Alberts	6-4	230	Jr.
RT 72 Zach Hart	6-5	260	So.	SLB 48 Mike Anderson	6-2	235	Jr.
TE 89 William Washington	6-2	250	Sr.	WLB 32 Ed Stewart	6-0	205	So.
QB 1 Mike Grant	6-3	205	Sr.	LCB 19 Kenny Wilhite	5-8	175	Sr.
FB 26 Lance Lewis	5-9	235	Sr.	RCB 6 John Reece	6-0	200	Jr.
IB 21 Derek Brown	5-10	225	Jr.	SS 31 Steve Carmer	6-2	210	Sr.
WB 38 Vincent Hawkins	6-2	235	Sr.	FS 8 Tyrone Byrd	6-0	180	Sr.
PK 13 Byron Bernmark	5-10	165	Jr.	P 47 Mike Stigge	6-2	190	Sr.

Offense Defense

TE 86 Scott Murry	6-4	220	Sr.	LE Anthony Hall	6-5	251	Jr.
LT 61 Mike Dehoog	6-4	284	Sr.	LT Dave Chaytors	6-2	253	Jr.
LG 52 Roy Ma'Alaia	6-2	269	So.	RT Blain Burger	6-5	278	Jr.
C 56 Lance Scott	6-3	256	Sr.	RE Luth Ellis	6-5	256	So.
RG 60 Tom McNitt	6-4	280	Sr.	SLB Eric Williams	6-2	206	Sr.
RT 63 Russ Dailey	6-5	268	Sr.	WLB Keith Williams	5-10	208	Sr.
QB 12 Frank Dolce	6-1	203	Sr.	CB Ryan Tonniges	5-11	213	Sr.
TB 20 Keith Williams	5-8	189	Jr.	CB Sam Rhodes	6-2	196	Jr.
IB 32 Jamal Anderson	6-1	225	Jr.	DE Jeff Miller	6-4	216	Jr.
WR 19 Bryan Rowley	6-10	185	Jr.	DE Jeff Shan	5-11	197	Jr.
WR 2 Greg Hooks	6-2	185	Jr.	DE Mark Swanson	5-10	185	Jr.
SB 88 Greg Hoffman	6-4	185	Jr.	DE Greg Wilson	6-1	230	Sr.

Scott Maurer/DN

Husker volleyball team set for tough tourney competition

By Jeff Singer
Senior Reporter

The Nebraska volleyball team won't be opening its regular season this weekend by playing easier competition for some early victories.

Instead, the Cornhuskers will be battling some of the nation's top teams tonight and Saturday in the First Tier Invitational at the NU Coliseum.

Nebraska plays its first match of the tournament at 7:30 p.m. tonight against New Mexico, then plays a doubleheader Saturday, playing at 11 a.m. against Pittsburgh and at 7:30 p.m. against Pacific.

Nebraska volleyball coach Terry Pettit said he was looking forward to playing the quality teams coming into the Coliseum this weekend.

"I don't think we could have any better competition this early in the season," Pettit said.

All four teams in this tourney have received preseason Top 20 accolades. Nebraska is ranked No. 3 in "Volleyball Monthly's" preseason ratings, while the Pacific Tigers are ranked fifth by the magazine.

New Mexico is ranked No. 12 by the magazine, and Pittsburgh was among the other teams receiving votes.

Pettit said that just because this was the first tournament of the year, the Huskers couldn't take anything for granted.

"A win or loss now is as significant now as it is in November," he said. "That's what the game is about — trying to win."

Last season at this time, Nebraska was 1-2 against its opponents. The Huskers split matches with Pacific in Stockton, Calif., while being upset by New Mexico in last year's BYU/Mizuno Invite in Provo, Utah.

Pettit said revenge wouldn't be on

the minds of the Huskers in the tourney.

"If we operated from a revenge motive, we'd be worn out by Sept. 15," Pettit said. "The only thing I could see revenge in is war, and if you lose there you're out; revenge is for other things and not for volleyball."

Nebraska sophomore outside hitter Kim Tonniges said the Huskers wanted to send a message to the Lobos and Tigers.

"We don't talk about revenge, but inside we know when we played them before we didn't play well, so we do want to revenge our play from last year," Tonniges said.

Nebraska tuned up for the First Tier Invitational with an exhibition match Tuesday night against a squad of Nebraska alumnae.

The Huskers swept all five games from the alumnae, winning 15-11, 15-0, 15-4, 15-13 and 15-11.

Tonniges said Nebraska's victory Tuesday night showed the Huskers were ready to compete against the nation's top teams.

"The way we played last night (against the alumnae) — as a team we were together," Tonniges said. "Our team is really close and on the court we really push each other."