



Kiley Timperley/DN

Nebraska's Brook Berringer drops back to pass at a scrimmage Saturday at Memorial Stadium.

Huskers to use shotgun offense more next year, Osborne says

By Jeff Singer
Senior Reporter

When will the Nebraska offense change?

That's the question many Cornhusker football fans have asked concerning Nebraska coach Tom Osborne's offense, but Osborne said this spring's offense was different from ones used in years past.

"Sometimes people say we're doing the same old thing, but that's not true at all," Osborne said. "We probably change 30 percent of our plays every year, so we've made a lot of changes."

One of the alterations to the Husker offense this spring has been a more frequent use of the shotgun formation, which is normally reserved for passing teams.

Osborne, whose team led the nation with 328.2 rushing yards per game last season, said he would like to use the shotgun more to mix the different offenses Nebraska could throw against its opponents.

"We'll use it in certain situations. I don't know that it's going to be a steady diet, but we feel like we'd like to be able to line up in it some," Osborne said.

The player who will likely be using the shotgun the most is No. 1

— 66 —
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Husker quarterback Tommie Frazier. The freshman said he liked using the shotgun more.

"Any quarterback feels comfortable with it, because it gives them the opportunity to look out and see what's coming at them," Frazier said.

Frazier, who finished last season with Nebraska's best-ever touchdown-to-interception ratio at 10 to 1, said he was eager to throw the ball more.

"The focus of this year is going to be to try to throw the ball more," Frazier said. "We have put in some new plays that make teams wary about us just running the ball."

Frazier said it was easy to see why Osborne wanted to put the ball in the air more this year.

"We have fast athletes out there and I think (Osborne) did this to show our speed to other teams," he said.

"In the past, teams thought that Nebraska was just a power football team, but now that we have speedsters on the team, (Osborne) is just trying to exploit that too, instead of just power," Frazier said.

Osborne said talk of more passing didn't mean that he was ready to revamp his run-style offense, which had led to four NCAA rushing titles in the last five years.

"We've been very dominant offensively," Osborne said. "But people are always going to be unhappy with some of the things you do."

Frazier is listed at the top of the Husker spring depth chart, but both Osborne and Frazier said things could change.

"This isn't like with pro football quarterbacks where anybody has anything locked up; it's always open," Osborne said.

Quarterbacks Ben Rutz, Tony Veland and Brook Berringer are listed behind Frazier on the depth chart.

Frazier said he would need a solid spring season to keep a hold on the No. 1 spot.

"I can't say it's mine to lose, because anything can happen," he said. "I'm just going to go out there and try to improve; I'm always going to try to do the best I can."

NU, Cyclones split soaked doubleheader

By Jeff Griesch
Staff Reporter

The rains came at Buck Beltzer Field on Wednesday, but the Nebraska and Iowa State baseball teams would not go away. Nebraska beat the Cyclones 5-1 in the first game of a doubleheader, but the Huskers lost the nightcap 15-3 and fell to 2-3 in Big Eight play and 13-13 overall.

The start of the first game was delayed by 45 minutes, and the teams had to sit through another 45-minute rain delay with one out in the top of the sixth inning.

"That's Midwest baseball for you," Nebraska coach John Sanders said. "You just kind of have to expect it as part of baseball this time of year."

Troy Brohawn, 4-0, struck out 11 Iowa State hitters en route to his third complete game of the season.

Brohawn, a sophomore from Woolford, Md., scattered five hits but lost his shutout bid in the ninth inning.

Iowa State third baseman Brett Elam led off the ninth with a single to right field.

Brad Mangler followed Elam's single by hitting a hanging change-up from Brohawn over Jed Dalton's head in center field to score Elam from

first.

The Huskers got off to a quick start against the Cyclones, scoring three runs in the first inning and another in the second. Nebraska added an insurance run in the eighth off Iowa State reliever Ron Tjebben.

All five Husker runs were unearned, as Nebraska took advantage of four Cyclone errors.

With one out in the first, Darin Petersen reached on a throwing error by the Cyclone second baseman.

With Petersen on first, Marc Sagmoen hit a double off the base of the fence in center field to drive in Petersen.

Darin Erstad followed with a bunt single and Sagmoen moved to third. After Erstad stole second, Sagmoen scored on a sacrifice fly from Brohawn.

Derek Dukart drove in Erstad with a two-out single to give the Huskers a 3-0 lead.

In the second game, Iowa State jumped on Nebraska starter Steve Boyd — a reliever making his first start of the season — early. The Cyclones scored two runs in the first inning before Boyd settled in, setting a career high with eight strikeouts in 5 1/3 innings of work.

NU's Brohawn misses shutout by one pitch

By Susie Arth
Senior Reporter

Despite a steady drizzle, a rain delay and a muddy field, Cornhusker pitcher Troy Brohawn lost his concentration only once.

That once came in the ninth inning, when Iowa State's Brad Mangler hit a double off Brohawn to score teammate Brad Urban and ended Brohawn's hopes of a shutout.

"I had one bad pitch today," Brohawn said. "Maybe I gave up a little on the pitch, but I won't do that next time."

"That was the only thing I did totally wrong today."

Brohawn, who improved his record to 4-0 for the season, said he was especially pleased with his performance in the first inning.

"Today me and John (Sanders) made a goal to get out of the first

inning," Brohawn said. "I think that was the key today."

In the first inning, Brohawn was able to strike out the first two batters he faced and get a fly-out from the third.

Brohawn was able to have another steady start Wednesday, when he remained in the game after a 45-minute rain delay at the beginning of the sixth inning.

After the delay, Brohawn retired three of the first four batters he faced. "My arm actually felt better after the delay," he said.

Brohawn's concentration was not limited to the mound.

From the plate, Brohawn had three sacrifices, a walk and one run batted in.

Sanders said he was pleased with Brohawn's effort.

"I know he wanted the shutout," he said. "The pitching was solid."

This truly may be the year for the Husker football team

It's April, so naturally it's time for the hype to begin.

From the Panhandle to downtown Omaha while spring football practices continue, Nebraska fans across the state already are talking about how their beloved Cornhuskers will perform in the fall.

Nebraskans tend to believe there are only two big events during the spring: the groundhog seeing his own shadow and the start of spring practices.

And during the four weeks of football's spring training, the majority of Husker fans usually have the upcoming season's national championship banner ordered by the time the Red-White game comes around, only to have something go wrong in the fall.

But for the first time in 22 years, the Nebraska forecasters who are predicting a Husker national title might just end up being right.

Nebraska won't be the best team in the nation in the fall — but then again, how often does the best team win the national title?

The team who does bring home the mythical national championship is the one who can use its own talent to the best of its abilities while being fortunate enough to get some good breaks along the way.

Therefore, if you have the right amount of luck, mixed with talent and good fortune, a national title can be born.

And this year, circumstances seem to have placed the Huskers into a position where talk around town of a national championship can now go from fantasy to reality.

So why should optimism soar around the Husker program this spring? Here are the best reasons why:

• A guaranteed perfect non-conference season. This isn't saying much with a schedule that includes North



Jeff
Singer

Texas State, Texas Tech, UCLA and Colorado State, but how often in recent years has Nebraska been able to start its Big Eight season unscathed?

True, this is a pitiful group of non-conference opponents, but at the end of the season, 4-0 will be better remembered than Nebraska's plastering of the North Texas State Eagles.

• A weak Big Eight conference. This season will probably mark one of the worst seasons for Big Eight football as a conference in recent history, which should mean a cakewalk for the Huskers through their league season.

The only scare for Nebraska will be in October at Colorado — oops, I

take that back; I just remembered that the two teams are similar to the ones that registered a 52-7 Husker win last year.

• Tommie Frazier getting control of the reins for the full season. Last season's Big Eight Offensive Freshman of the Year will get to prove himself as a sophomore by getting to start at quarterback for the entire season.

With this in mind, Frazier should challenge for All-Big Eight honors and possible All-American hype as long as Coach Osborne's offensive system can blend and tie in with Frazier's extraordinary abilities.

• The moving of the "We-Backs" into singular form. Derek Brown's premature departure for the National Football League will prove itself as a blessing for the Huskers, and the evidence of this will be Calvin Jones' numbers throughout the season.

Without having to rotate Jones and

Brown into the lineup from quarter to quarter and altering the team's rushing styles, now the ground game can be clearly defined: power football via Jones with a constant eye on the Heisman Trophy.

• Playing Iowa State at home. After watching Nebraska lose 19-10 in Ames last year in college football's upset of the season, this is truly a valid point.

Another plus to playing those pesky Cyclones this year, as opposed to last season, is not having to see Iowa State quarterback Marv Seiler do another Joe Montana impersonation.

Although it should be a clear road for the Huskers to the national championship, Nebraskans now must hope the road doesn't have any surprising potholes like it has the past 22 years.

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