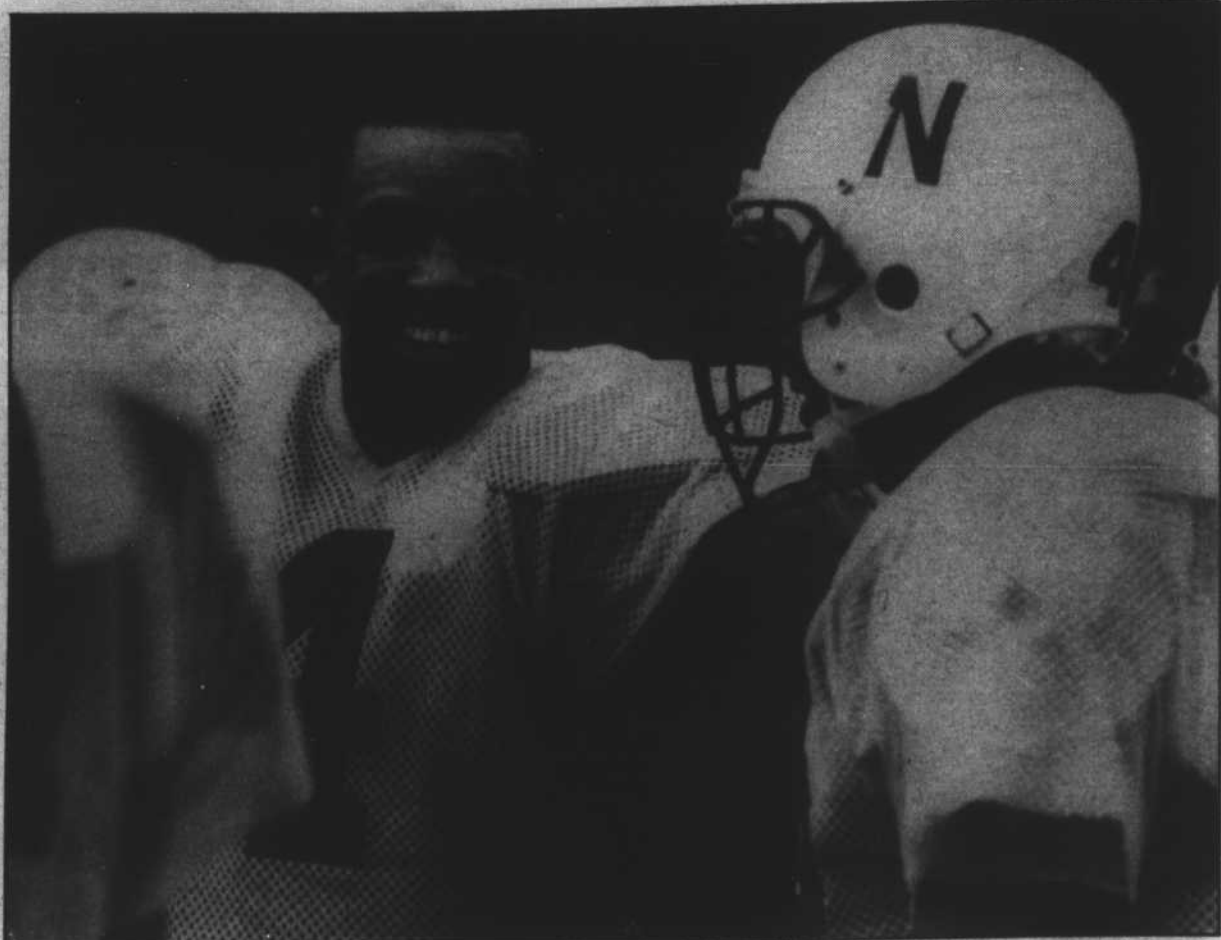


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Staci McKee/DN

Nebraska free safety Troy Dumas jokes around during a recent scrimmage. Dumas is one of three defensive backs making their first start Saturday.

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Secondary will prove its worth, Dumas says

By Derek Samson
Staff Reporter

Nebraska free safety Troy Dumas is out to set the record straight about himself and his fellow defensive backs.

Dumas said he was excited for games to begin to prove wrong the rumors that the lack of experience in the secondary would hurt the Cornhusker defense.

"Everyone is talking that the secondary is a weak link to this defense," Dumas said. "I don't buy that at all. Actually, I think it is one of the stronger parts."

Cornerback John Reece is the only

returning starter in the Husker secondary, but that doesn't concern Dumas.

"Even though we didn't start, most of us got a lot of playing time last year," he said. "Right now, we're all just waiting for games to see how it goes."

Dumas said the defensive backs wanted to earn a reputation not only in the conference, but across the country as well.

"We want to be one of the hardest hitting secondaries in the nation," Dumas said. "We've got some head-bangers."

The 6-foot-3, 215-pound Dumas said he fell into that category.

"My strong point is, I'm big and

quick," he said. "I'm able to see a lot over the linemen. I don't have a hard time seeing the ball, and that really helps."

As a backup to Tyrone Byrd in 1992, Dumas saw playing time in every game and started against Arizona State and Oklahoma State. He finished the season with 31 tackles.

"I can see a difference in last year and in this year," he said. "Even though I wasn't a starter, I can see a difference in the unity among the defensive backs."

"This year, everyone hangs out with each other, and there wasn't that kind of unity here last year. It really helps on the field when everyone can relate to each other."

Nebraska enjoys injury-free practice

From Staff Reports

The Nebraska football team didn't experience any injuries during Thursday's practice at Memorial Stadium, Coach Tom Osborne said.

Left guard Joel Wilks, who missed practice again Thursday, will not play Saturday against North Texas, he said.

Senior linebacker Austin Wertz will undergo arthroscopic knee surgery sometime in the next week. Osborne said Wertz, who is also suffering from a fractured hand, would

miss at least two weeks.

Despite the fact that North Texas is a Division I-AA school, Osborne said he was not concerned about the Huskers looking past the Eagles.

"I think it's good that it's a first game," Osborne said. "I hope they'll be excited."

The first game is always full of uncertainty, and Osborne warned not to expect perfection from the Huskers.

"We may play a great game and win by three points, or we may play

not so well and win big," he said.

Osborne said 105 players would suit up for the game.

Senior safety Mike Heins and senior wingback David Seizys have recently been awarded scholarships, bringing the total number of scholarship players to 87, Osborne said.

NCAA rules allow schools to have 88 football players on scholarship.

"We've got a couple of guys in mind," Osborne said. "We might give one (scholarship) at mid-year. We'll see how it works out."

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