

Alberts makes final cut for Butkus Award

By Tim Pearson
Senior Reporter

Nebraska linebacker Trev Alberts has a team-high 94 tackles this season.



Alberts

Alberts joined Florida State's Derrick Brooks and

He could soon add another grab—only of a much bigger sort.

On Thursday, Alberts was selected a finalist for the Butkus Award, which is given to the nation's best linebacker.

Alberts joined Florida State's Derrick Brooks and

UCLA's Jamir Miller as a finalist for the honor, which will be awarded Dec. 11 in Orlando, Fla. The winner, selected by a nationwide vote of sportswriters, will be announced by former Chicago Bears linebacker Dick Butkus, after whom the award is named.

Alberts said just being named a finalist was an honor.

"I know there were a lot of great linebackers out there this year," he said via conference call Thursday. "It makes me feel real good to be named with such outstanding competition."

Alberts has had a banner season for Nebraska this year. Against Iowa State last Saturday, he tied Jim Skow for the Husker record for sacks in a season.

Alberts has 15 sacks for 88 yards-in-losses.

Alberts, a senior from Cedar Falls, Iowa, holds the Nebraska school record for quarterback sacks with 29.5 in his career.

He is 12 solo tackles away from tying Wayne Meylan's position record of 59 unassisted tackles in a season. Alberts has 21 tackles for losses, four short of Skow's position record. He is seventh on the Nebraska all-time tackle chart.

Alberts said he never expected to be a finalist for the Butkus Award.

"Certainly I have confidence in my abilities," he said. "But I never

really imagined I'd be sitting here today.

"I've had pretty good coaches in an outstanding program. Things have really worked out well for me."

Husker coach Tom Osborne said Alberts deserved to be named a finalist after helping lead the Huskers to a 10-0 record and a possible shot at a national title.

"It's a great honor for Trev," Osborne said. "He's a great player, and he's done an outstanding job."

"He's a great student and a great leader."

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—Alberts
Nebraska outside linebacker

Also on Thursday, Alberts was named a first-team All-American by Football News. Brooks and Miller were also named to the team.

NU volleyball players' thoughts dominated by revenge

Huskers hope to redeem loss against Sooners

By Tim Pearson
Senior Reporter

Revenge will be on the minds of Nebraska volleyball players in their 7:30 p.m. match Friday against Oklahoma at the NU Coliseum.

Before a four-game loss to the Sooners on Oct. 9 in Norman, Nebraska was 13-1 and looking for their 18th straight Big Eight title.

The Huskers were 2-0 in the Big Eight, but the Sooners put an end to Nebraska's hopes of another undefeated Big Eight season and dealt a severe blow to their Big Eight title chances.

Now it's payback time for the Huskers, junior outside hitter Kelly Aspegren said.

"(Revenge) will be the main factor," she said. "We know that we shouldn't have lost and we've worked on some things since then."

Aspegren said the Huskers wouldn't be looking past the Sooners toward the postseason.

"The loss to Oklahoma was one of their biggest matches of the season," she said. "Maybe we looked past them. But if we put it all together against them, we'll be great."

But Oklahoma coach Miles Pabst said he didn't think revenge would play a role in the match.

"I'm sure they want to kick us every which way but loose, but I don't think there's a revenge factor," he said. "They know everything we have, and we know everything they have."

"It'll come down to the team that executes best."

The seventh-ranked Huskers, 21-4 and 9-2 in the Big Eight, are on a three-match win streak after a three-game win over Iowa State on Wednesday.

Husker coach Terry Pettit said the Iowa State match gave his team an opportunity to work on some different things that could prove beneficial against the Sooners.

"It wasn't a match where we said, 'Here's the game plan,'" he said. "We wanted to work on several different situations."



Kiley Timperley/DN

Nebraska's Nikki Stricker (left) and Jen McFadden attempt a block during the Cornhuskers' win over Iowa State Wednesday night.

Volleyball team coming together as tourney nears

By Tony West
Staff Reporter

When the Nebraska volleyball team lost back-to-back matches against Big Eight rivals Oklahoma and Colorado earlier this season, some players began to doubt the Huskers' ability.

But now, the seventh-ranked Cornhuskers appear to be stepping it up, junior middle blocker Peggy Meyer said.

"At the beginning, we gelled really well," she said. "In the middle, we had a lax and we're coming together again now."

And that team unity may be the reason for the Huskers' second straight three-game sweep. The Huskers swept Iowa State on Wednesday night, 15-8, 15-11, 15-3 after sweeping Missouri on Saturday. Nebraska has two matches left — against Oklahoma and Illinois — before the Big Eight Tournament on Nov. 26-27 at the Omaha Civic Auditorium.

Nebraska coach Terry Pettit said the Huskers would have to be mentally ready for postseason competition.

"At the end of the season, all the teams play hard," Pettit said. "Playing hard isn't good enough."

Meyer agreed. "We just have to get mentally prepared for each match," she said. "Ninety percent is mental."

Every player has to take responsibility and concentrate on her tasks, also.

"Everyone knows what their strong points are," Meyer said. "I come in for blocking and I want the rest of the team to know that I'll go in tough."

Meyer came in tough last night against Iowa State, hitting five of eight kill attempts for a .625 attack percentage.

With the postseason right around the corner, Meyer said, the Huskers can't worry about their individual play.

"You can't play selfish, this is a team sport," Meyer said. "If I'm totally inward on myself, no one can play around me."

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Sportswriters are less than impressed with Huskers

By Jeff Singer
Senior Editor

The Nebraska football team's undefeated record has impressed numerous college coaches enough to place the Cornhuskers second in the latest USA Today/CNN coaches' poll.

However, several sportswriters who vote in the Associated Press rankings aren't exactly overwhelmed.

"There are at least seven teams who would beat Nebraska on a neutral field," said Don Whitten, who writes for the Oxford (Miss.) Eagle. Last week, Whitten placed the Huskers eighth on his ballot behind Notre Dame, Florida State, Miami, Auburn, Florida, Ohio State and Tennessee.

The 10-0 Huskers are ranked third in the latest Associated Press poll and consequently trail Florida State by 67 points in the coalition rankings.

Thus, despite the Seminoles' 31-24 loss to Notre Dame last Saturday, Florida State still has the upper hand in the bowl picture. If things stay the way they are, the Seminoles and Irish will have a rematch in the Fiesta Bowl on New Year's Day for the national title.

The Chicago Tribune's Ed Sherman, who last week placed Nebraska sixth on his ballot, said he didn't think the Huskers deserved a shot at the national title, even if they won their final game next week against Oklahoma.

"You've got to look at their strength of schedule and the fact that they barely beat a sub-

.500 Kansas team (21-20)," Sherman said. "They need to go out and play a worthy schedule. They don't have to look far for examples either — look at what Colorado did."

The Buffaloes played Baylor, Texas, Stanford and Miami in their non-conference games, while the Huskers played North Texas, Texas Tech, UCLA and Colorado State. Both teams have one preconference opponent that remains in the AP Top 25. Miami is fourth, and UCLA is No. 16.

Even a Husker win over the 15th-ranked Sooners next Friday would not impress some writers, including the Mesa (Ariz.) Tribune's Bob Moran.

"This is not the Oklahoma that was coached by Barry Switzer," said Moran, who had the

Huskers sixth on his ballot. "Oklahoma has not done well in non-conference games, and they don't bring much to the table. Beating Oklahoma does not mean what it used to."

However, the Sooners did go 4-0 in the non-conference this season, including a 44-14 rout of No. 10 Texas A&M in September.

Whitten, who gave Nebraska its worst vote of the 62 members casting ballots, said he used a simple system to vote each week.

"I vote based on who I think is better after each week's games," he said. "And right now, I would say teams like Auburn, Tennessee and Florida are all on the same level. And if one is better than Nebraska, then they're all better

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