

## Brown back at UNL to work on degree in NFL off-season

By Derek Samson  
Staff Reporter

When Derek Brown passed up his senior year after the 1992 season to enter the NFL draft, many thought Brown's college days were over.

But Brown was just about to look at education in a whole new perspective.

After an outstanding debut season with the New Orleans Saints, Brown has returned to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln this summer to get a step closer to earning a degree in consumer science.

Brown, Nebraska's fifth all-time leading rusher, is a year and a half away from graduating, which he now feels is a necessity.

"Before, when I was here, I knew school was important, but I didn't concentrate on it that much. I just did enough to get by," Brown said. "When I got into the (National Football) League, I saw how important it was. That was when I knew I had to come back and get my degree."

And it was the NFL that made it obvious to Brown the need for life after football.

"Football won't last forever, but a degree will. You see the injuries in the NFL and you realize how quickly a career can end," said Brown, who was afforded playing time due to teammates' injuries. "A degree won't guarantee success, but it's important."

"In the real world, it's not how much you know, it's who you know. But a degree is an important piece of paper. It shows the people out there that you are a hard worker and that you can do the job."

After rushing for 2,784 career yards with the Huskers, Brown produced heavenly numbers as a Saint.

In his rookie season for New Orleans, Brown rushed for 705 yards on 180 carries and caught 21 passes for 170 yards, despite being slowed mid-way through the season with an ankle injury.

"On a scale of one to 10, I would give last year a seven-and-a-half," Brown said. "Going into last year, I said if I were given the chance, I'd show them what I could do. Being a tough athlete and a tough player was important. I've always had that (characteristic), but playing at Nebraska gave me that even more."

But the financial situations in the NFL is something Brown's college days at Nebraska didn't prepare him for.

"Mentally, it was a lot more of an adjustment than physically," he said. "I definitely had to adjust a lot more mentally in terms of responsibility. There is so much more responsibility than in college because of the amount of money that is involved."

"In college you might have bills and little stuff like that, but you're not dealing with that kind of money. You really have to be smart with it."

Money is one of Brown's concerns going into this fall.

"(This season) I have to go out and do my very best no matter what happens, take care of all my daughter's needs and save as much money as possible," he said. "The money is important because if you don't save it, something can happen to end your career and you wouldn't have anything."

"There wouldn't be anything worse than having all that money and then suddenly not having anything. I plan to make some investments this year, including a home."



Brown

Brown, a native of La Habra, Calif., said he would likely buy a house in Omaha and finish his schooling at the University of Nebraska-Omaha during the off-season.

Although Brown has no regrets in leaving Nebraska a year early, he admits he wished he could have been part of the 1993 Husker team that went undefeated through the regular season until an 18-16 Orange Bowl loss to Florida State for the national championship.

"I kind of missed being out there during the Orange Bowl," he said. "I think they (the Huskers) won it anyway. It didn't matter if I would have been there or Johnny (Mitchell) or whoever, they won that game. It was kind of hard watching the Orange Bowl because I wished I could have been out there with those guys."

## New award to honor dedicated NU athletes

By Derek Samson  
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska football players have an added incentive in this summer's strength and conditioning program.

Strength and conditioning coach Boyd Epley said players would be given a new reward for their work and dedication in the summer.

According to Epley, a Performance Award will be given to athletes who test higher in three categories on the first day of fall practice.

To qualify for the award, an athlete must score higher in the vertical jump, 10-yard dash and pro-agility run than what he did during spring testing. The athlete must also have perfect attendance for the summer workout schedule.

"During the winter, the rules and whole environment are different," Epley said. "Coaches are allowed to work with them and it's easy to get them together at the same time because everybody has their classes and are here in school."

"In the summer, the coaches aren't allowed to observe workouts and everything is run by the strength coaches. The players have different work and school schedules and it's not mandatory, which makes it hard to get everyone in here. So it takes a special kind of athlete to have the perfect attendance, and this award will show that dedication."

Epley said a patch would be given as a reward to be worn on either the work-out or game jersey. Coaches have yet to decide.

One player on his way to the

Performance Award could be senior tight end Eric Alford.

Alford will help fill the hole at tight end left by the departure of Trumane Bell and Gerald Armstrong.

"Eric has really impressed me so far," Epley said. "He hasn't been one in the past to have the perfect attendance in the weight room and now he hasn't missed a day since (yet). His attitude and effort has just been excellent. This guy has really been working hard."

The players started with workouts in the weight room May 16 and began agility drills twice a week on June 6.

Monday marked the first day of agility and speed drills. These drills will be held four times a week for all players but the linemen, who begin in two weeks.

"So far we've had an excellent turnout and excellent attitude," Epley said. "It's a little premature to compliment them since we still have a long road ahead. The summer is very important because if they aren't prepared in the fall, the coaches have to waste a lot of time then. The players have to report to fall camp ready to go."

This summer, in particular, is very important since the season will open a week earlier for the Huskers with their Kickoff Classic game against West Virginia.

"I wouldn't say that adds any pressure. I would say it's a great opportunity," Epley said. "It's only a matter of preparing a week earlier. The things that we normally wait to do when school starts, we're just going to have to get done a week earlier."

### SPORTS WIRE

## Florida uses 1st pick in NHL draft to get Jovanovski

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — He has the flair. He has the hair. But he doesn't have the honor of being the No. 1 pick.

Radek Bonk, the electrifying center from the Czech Republic, was just about everyone's top pick in the NHL draft — except the Florida Panthers' and Anaheim Mighty Ducks'.

The Panthers, with the No. 1 pick, instead selected defenseman Ed Jovanovski from the Canadian major junior ranks. The Mighty Ducks, with the No. 2 pick, selected Russian defenseman Oleg Tverdovsky.

So where did that leave the Las Vegas Thunder's whiz kid? The No. 3 pick by the Ottawa Senators.

Even Jovanovski raised his eyebrows.

"To tell you the truth, I was

shocked," Jovanovski said.

Bonk had become a big hit in Las Vegas with his long flowing hair and dazzling smile, and had a stylish game to match. The 6-foot-3, 215-pound center from the Czech Republic had scored 42 goals in his first season in the professional International Hockey League and seemed to be on his way to greatness.

Still, he didn't interest the Panthers or Ducks enough to make him the No. 1 pick.

"He scored 42 goals playing against men," Tampa Bay general manager Phil Esposito said of Bonk, who turned 18 during the 1993-94 season. "Florida and Anaheim probably passed because they drafted forwards last year and this year they wanted top defensemen."

In Jovanovski and Tverdosky,

that's exactly what they got.

Jovanovski, who played for Windsor in the Ontario Hockey League, was the scouting service's top-rated defenseman from North America. Tverdovsky, who played with Krylja Sovetov in the Russian national league, was the top-rated player from Europe.

Jovanovski's selection wasn't the only surprise at the draft, which featured a blockbuster six-player deal involving Toronto's Wendel Clark and Quebec's Mats Sundin.

It was a night of wheeling and dealing in which the Maple Leafs also acquired Mike Ridley from the Washington Capitals and the Nordiques traded Ron Sutter to the New York Islanders for Uwe Krupp.

But as it turned out, the Maple Leafs actually outmaneuvered themselves in the end. They had

traded Clark, Sylvain Lefebvre, Landon Wilson and their 22nd pick to Quebec for Sundin, Garth Butcher, Todd Warriner and the Nordiques' 10th pick.

The Maple Leafs' idea was to draft Brett Lindros, brother of Philadelphia Flyers star Eric Lindros. But the Islanders got there ahead of them with the No. 9 pick, which they acquired in the trade with Quebec.

Having lost Lindros, the Maple Leafs gave Washington the 10th pick in exchange for Ridley.

Overall, the Panthers cleaned up in quantity, if nothing else, over the first two rounds with four selections among the top 52.

Along with Jovanovski, they picked three other players from Canada — defenseman Rhett

Warrener from Saskatoon of the Western Hockey League, forward Jason Podollan from Spokane of the WHL and forward Ryan Johnson of the Thunder Bay Junior A team.

The Edmonton Oilers, with two picks in the top six, came away with two forwards from the Canadian major junior ranks. They made Jason Bonsignore of Niagara Falls of the Ontario Hockey League the No. 4 pick and Ryan Smyth of Moose Jaw of the WHL No. 6.

Meanwhile, goaltender Jamie Storr lived up to his advance billing when he was made the No. 7 pick by the Los Angeles Kings. Regarded as the top goaltender in this year's class, Storr was the highest-placed at his position since Tom Barrasso was made the No. 5 pick by Buffalo in 1983.