



Husker running back Damon Benning attempts to fight away from defenders Larry Arnold, Jeff Sakalosky and Eric Stokes during the first half of Nebraska's final scrimmage Saturday afternoon.

Friendly rivals

I-backs battle for season's starting position

By Derek Samson
Senior Reporter

Damon Benning isn't about to let I-back Lawrence Phillips get comfortable with his starting job this season.

Benning, who started last year's Texas Tech and UCLA games, is making the best of his second-team spot behind Phillips.

In Saturday's scrimmage, Benning scored two touchdowns, rushed for 53 yards, caught one pass covering 16 yards and completed a pass for 23 yards.

"I feel like I'm playing pretty well," Benning said. "I'm a lot more comfortable with the system (than last season). It seems like everything is starting to come to me a lot more naturally now."

But Phillips also hasn't been slacking during the fall scrimmages, especially Saturday's scrimmage.

The 6-foot, 200-pound sophomore scored on a 68-yard run on his way to a 128-yard rushing day on 10 carries.

The starting job opened when

Calvin Jones, the second-leading rusher in Nebraska history, opted to pass up his senior year to enter the National Football League draft, so Phillips and Benning headed into fall practice as the top two I-backs.

Junior Clinton Childs remains third-string, while junior college transfer Brian Knuckles is fourth-string.

Cornhusker coach Tom Osborne said he would be confident with any of the four I-backs.

"I think we have three solid players at I-back and probably a fourth in Knuckles," he said. "Knuckles has been a little handicapped with his shoulder injury, but I think he will come along just fine. The other three are very solid right now."

"Phillips is the fastest, and he can really accelerate around the corner. Benning is an excellent receiver and a very good all-purpose back. Childs is the biggest and has a lot of power. So we feel good about all three."

Childs rushed for 37 yards on six carries, while Knuckles was held out of the scrimmage because of his injury.

| Gunning For The Top Spot | | | |
|--------------------------|------|-------|----|
| Lawrence Phillips | Att. | Yards | TD |
| • 1993 Stats | 92 | 508 | 5 |
| • Saturday's scrimmage | 10 | 128 | 1 |
| Damon Benning | Att. | Yards | TD |
| • 1993 Stats | 55 | 323 | 4 |
| • Saturday's scrimmage | 10 | 53 | 2 |

The race for the top running back spot is a friendly rivalry, Benning said.

"Lawrence and I get along real well," the sophomore from Omaha Northwest said. "We clown around a lot together about it. I don't really worry about it too much. I think our teammates are confident with whatever back is in there."

"I just want to do whatever I can to help the team win when I am in the game. That's all that matters."

Rules to be set for strike talks

NEW YORK (AP) — Talks to resolve the baseball strike probably won't resume until Wednesday, union head Donald Fehr and management negotiator Richard Ravitch said Sunday.

The sides will meet today to set ground rules for the talks and will meet Tuesday with federal mediators.

Bargaining, which broke off when the strike began Aug. 12, will then resume with owners at the table for the first time since talks began on Jan. 13, 1993.

Fehr said he had no great expectations for the week, insisting that acting commissioner Bud Selig had "got a calendar" for management's actions during the talks.

"It doesn't make any sense to try and figure it out. They'll tell us," Fehr said. "The notion that anything we say or do matters is simply wrong. They set out to have a strike, and they'll negotiate to end it when they want to end it."

The strike completed its 10th day Sunday, canceling 14 games to increase the total to 131, nearly 6 percent of the entire season. Players have lost about \$44.2 million in salary, and owners have lost an estimated \$85 million in revenue.

There have been no signs that owners will alter their demand for a salary cap, although Colorado Rockies owner Jerry McMorris repeated during the weekend that he didn't think a cap must be part of the solution.

"I have no idea whether there'll be progress," Ravitch said Sunday.

Ravitch also said he didn't know if

STRIKE SCOREBOARD

Even Barry Bonds is being hurt by the strike, apparently. Bonds, pleading financial hardship from the baseball strike, had his \$15,000-per-month child and spousal support payments cut in half by a judge this week. Before the 1993 season, Bonds signed a \$43.75 million contract that was the richest in baseball history.

| | | |
|--|------------|---|
| | DAYS LOST | PAY LOST since strike (highest-paid player) |
| | 11 | Bobby Bonilla, N.Y. Mets \$5,700,000 \$342,623 |
| | GAMES LOST | PAY LOST since strike (minimum salary) |
| | 138 | Minimum salaried player \$109,000 \$6,552 |

Salaries listed do not include prorated shares of signing bonuses or other guaranteed income, or incentive bonuses earned or money lost because of lost opportunities for incentive bonuses. AP

Wednesday's session would continue through the latter part of the week.

"We'll have to see whether it's likely to be meaningful," he said.

Fehr compared Monday's meeting to the lengthy and often pointless discussions during the Paris peace talks on the war in Vietnam. He said the subject was ground rules.

"I assume this means we'll be arguing about the shape of the table," he said. "We intend to tell them they can sit where they please."

Ravitch wouldn't respond to Fehr's remarks. Fehr declined to respond to reports that the delegation of owners might include just one person with direct investment in a team: Chicago White Sox chairman Jerry Reinsdorf.

Fehr didn't think the renewed session would provide an indication of whether the presence of owners at the table would provoke movement in the talks.

"We won't know that this week, I think," he said.

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