

SPORTS

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Berringer's health and NU option revived

By Derek Samson
Senior Reporter

For the first time in more than a month, Nebraska will have a healthy quarterback who won't be starting his first game for the Cornhuskers.



Berringer

Brook Berringer assumed the role of starting quarterback on Oct. 1 against Wyoming, after Tommie Frazier's season was ended by a blood clot in his leg.

Berringer didn't last long. He suffered a partially collapsed lung against Wyoming and again the next week against Oklahoma State.

Berringer said he finally should be at full speed when the No. 2 Colorado Buffaloes play third-ranked Nebraska on Saturday.

"My lung is 100 percent, and I feel real good," Berringer said. "I feel like I can take any kind of hit. I haven't really (taken any hits) in the last couple games, but I was cleared to."

"They (the coaches) were just probably

hoping I could get through it and be ready for this game," he said. "I feel like I'm back to where I was before."

But what will happen when the junior from Goodland, Kan., takes his first hit on Saturday is still a mystery.

"Of course if you take a hit like I did the first time, there is always the possibility (of re-injuring the lung)," Berringer said. "I think it's healed up probably 100 percent. The flack jacket is going to help give me even more protection than I had with the original injury."

Berringer's backup, sophomore Matt Turman, suffered a shoulder injury in the fourth quarter of last week's 42-7 victory over Missouri. His status for Saturday still is unknown.

For Coach Tom Osborne, Berringer's recovery couldn't have come at a better time, especially with the possibility of Turman — who started against Kansas State two weeks ago — being out.

"The quarterback picture is a little better now than it has been or what we thought it might be," Osborne said. "I think the doctors feel pretty good about his (Berringer's) situation now, so that makes you feel better."

"Naturally, you wish right now that you

Countdown To The Showdown



knew for sure if Matt Turman was able to play. I don't think he (Turman) was hurt as badly as we thought during the game. He may be available by this Saturday."

Osborne said Turman's status would depend on his ability to throw with a sore shoulder.

"At least he was able to hand off a little yesterday (Monday) in practice," he said. "We hope that he'll be able to throw a little bit in the next couple of days, and if he can, he'll certainly be available to play."

With a healthy Berringer, Nebraska's option game also returns, after being almost invisible since Berringer's injury.

Osborne said having to shy away from his game plan to protect Berringer's lung was the most frustrating thing during Nebraska's quarterback woes.

"It hasn't been a real nightmare, but it's been a little bit difficult," Osborne said. "It's been a little bit difficult, at least in one game, and part of two games to call plays and try to keep a guy healthy, because you knew there weren't many left."

As for Berringer, overcoming the collapsed lung was just one of his triumphs over injury this season.

After struggling with pain in his right elbow for much of last season and the beginning of this year, Berringer said he had put that injury behind him as well.

"My elbow's been great this season," Berringer said. "I had a few minor problems during two-a-days, but since then I've had no problems at all."

NOTE:

The Huskers practiced for two hours on Tuesday, and Nebraska coach Tom Osborne said only one player was injured as No. 2 I-back Damon Benning left practice early with a turned ankle. Osborne said Benning's injury did not appear serious and said Benning should be ready for Saturday's game with Colorado.

No. 2 Nebraska survives injury scare to go 20-0

From Staff Reports

The Nebraska volleyball team defeated Illinois Tuesday night to stretch its consecutive winning streak to 20 games. The streak is the school's longest ever to begin a season.

The Cornhuskers defeated the Illini 15-8, 15-6, 15-10 to raise their record 20-0. If Nebraska beats Colorado Saturday night, the Huskers will tie an all-time school winning streak of 21.

Nebraska fell behind early in the first game 2-1, but the Illini never led again after the Huskers tied the score 2-2.

While leading 4-2 in the first game, Jen McFadden suffered a strained ligament to her right knee when she collided with teammate Christy Johnson. Early anterior cruciate ligament tests came up neither positive nor negative. Nebraska went on to win the first game 15-8.

Husker coach Terry Pettit thought that his team did a good job picking up the slack that was created by the missing McFadden.

"I thought we played well," Pettit said. "We got the ball to Weston, and I think Christy (Johnson) and Allison (Weston) had their best match to-night."

The Huskers started the second game by scoring the first seven points behind the serving of senior Kelly Aspegren and junior Maria Hedbeck. Nebraska took a 14-3 lead and then held off an Illini rally to win the second game 15-6.

Nebraska opened up the third game by jumping out to a 6-0 lead. Illinois fought back to tie 6-6. Nebraska scored the next 4 points to take a 10-6 lead. Illinois pulled to 11-10 before the Huskers finished off the Illini 15-11 on a Weston kill. Weston led all players with 21 kills on the night.

The match marked the fourth straight loss for Illinois which fell to 14-9.

Pettit said that he was happy to come out of Champagne with a victory. The Huskers have traveled to Illinois for previous NCAA tournament appearances.

"I'm real pleased," Pettit said. "There are too many ghosts flying around in this building. I don't think we've ever come in here and won 3-0."

Illinois tried to catch the Huskers off guard by coming out with a new offense set, but that plan may have backfired, Pettit said.



Michelle Paulman/DN

Nebraska's Christy Johnson and Allison Weston go up for a block against Iowa State last Saturday. The Huskers defeated Illinois in three games Tuesday night.

Luck plays on Colorado's team but not on Nebraska's

After Colorado's 28-21 victory — oh, it was 35-21; I forgot the last touchdown for the pollsters in the closing seconds — over Kansas State last Saturday, the stage is set.

With Nebraska limping its way to an 8-0 record and the Buffs proudly owning a 7-0 mark, the Big Eight has returned to the "Big Two."

What a showdown it will be. Although the records are nearly identical, that is where the similarities between these two teams end.

Sure, it's a game between No. 2 and No. 3 for the Big Eight championship and most likely the national championship, but it also is a unique game between the luckiest and unluckiest teams in college football.

To support this theory, just look at the recent history. Colorado has been blessed in all aspects of the game, while Nebraska has been scorned.

This season's luck:
Nebraska — Oct. 5, 1994: Quarterback and Heisman Trophy candidate Tommie Frazier develops a second blood clot that will sideline him for the rest of the season.

Before the second blood clot, Frazier was expected to return for the Missouri game, which would give

him one week to prepare before Colorado came to town.

Colorado — Sept. 26, 1994: Colorado quarterback Kordell Stewart's 64-yard Hail Mary pass landed in the arms of receiver Michael Westbrook to give Colorado the luckiest finish ever — a 27-26 victory over Michigan.

Lucky (or unlucky) clipping calls:
Nebraska — Jan. 1, 1994: A clip, which no replay could produce, was called on the Huskers, negating a 71-yard punt return by Corey Dixon in Nebraska's 18-16 Orange Bowl loss to Florida State. Oh, it also cost 11-1 Nebraska the national championship.

Colorado — Jan. 1, 1991: A clip nullified a 91-yard Raghil Ismail punt return for Notre Dame with less than a minute remaining in the game. Colorado was able to hang onto its 10-9 Orange Bowl victory after the clip brought the return back. Oh, it also gave Colorado its first national championship despite its 11-1-1 mark.

Nebraska vs. Colorado — Nov. 2, 1991: Byron Bennett's extra-point attempt was blocked and returned 85 yards by Colorado's Greg Biekert to tie the game at 9-9, instead of giving Nebraska a 10-7 lead. The replay



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showed several clips on Biekert's return, including one on Cornhusker tight end Johnny Mitchell just as he was about to tackle Biekert.

After Bennett was bombed by snowballs from the Colorado students, his 41-yard field goal to win the game was blocked. The game ended in a 19-19 tie.

The officials' role in all this:
Nebraska — Jan. 1, 1994: Big East officials stripped Nebraska coach Tom Osborne of his first national championship in the 18-16 loss to the Seminoles.

Colorado — Oct. 6, 1990: Officials allowed Colorado to have five downs. As a result, Colorado's Charles Johnson scored as the game clock expired on the fifth down to give Colorado a 33-31 victory over Missouri. Missouri would have given the Buffs their second loss of the

season, and the national championship would never have been.

And finally the beneficiaries of all this luck.

The coaches:
Bill McCartney — Jan. 1, 1990: Notre Dame routed Colorado 21-6 for the national championship, but Colorado came back one year later to capture the title with a 10-9 win over Notre Dame — a game in which the Irish had an extra point blocked.

Tom Osborne — Jan. 2, 1984: Nebraska's two-point conversion failed, and the Huskers lost the national championship 31-30 to Miami.

Jan. 1, 1994 — The Huskers lost to Florida State 18-16, giving Osborne two lost national championship games by a total of three points. McCartney is 1-1 in national championship games, despite being outscored 30-16 in the two games.

Colorado seems to have stolen Oklahoma's "Sooner Magic" of years past. The Buffs also have taken over the Sooners' spot in the "Big Two."

Osborne, however, wasn't too quick to agree that the Buffaloes had gotten all the breaks.

"I think if you ask the Colorado

people, they would say that the ball hasn't bounced their way," Osborne said. "Last year, we had the fortunate play at the end (John Reece's interception). Two years ago, it certainly didn't bounce their way when they had six turnovers."

But if Colorado has a chance to let luck play a role in Saturday's game, Nebraska fans will have a disappointing homecoming, and Bill McCartney will be on his way to his second national championship.

However, after Nebraska's 17-6 win over Kansas State, which dropped the Huskers below Colorado in the Associated Press poll, the Huskers again are feeding off what led them to an undefeated regular season in 1993: lack of respect.

Nebraska is good enough to beat Colorado's combination of Stewart, Westbrook and Rashaan Salaam.

But overcoming the combination of Nebraska, Colorado and luck is a different story.

So please, leave the rabbit's feet at home on Saturday, because luck in college football has been wearing black and gold, not scarlet and cream.

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