

SPORTS WEEKEND

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In the spotlight



Michelle Paulman/DN
Nebraska linebacker Ed Stewart, announced as a Butkus Award finalist on Thursday, pursues Iowa State quarterback Todd Doxzen during Nebraska's win on Saturday.

Stewart 'thrilled' to be Butkus Award finalist

By Todd Walkenhorst
Staff Reporter

Nebraska's Trev Alberts was named the Butkus Award winner last season.

Ed Stewart took another step on Thursday toward becoming the second consecutive Cornhusker to win the award given to football's best linebacker.

The Downtown Athletic Club of Orlando announced that Stewart was one of three finalists for the Butkus award, which will be given on Dec. 9.

The other two finalists are Dana Howard of Illinois and Colorado's Ted Johnson.

The Butkus award is named in honor of former Chicago Bears linebacker Dick Butkus.

Butkus will present the award in a ceremony at Walt Disney World in Orlando on Dec. 9.

Stewart said he was proud to be considered for the award.

"It's a great honor," Stewart said. "I'm really thrilled to be a part."

Stewart also said it was great to be considered for an award that was a tribute to one of his heroes.

"Being a great Bears fan from Chicago, it's a great honor," he said.

Nebraska coach Tom Osborne said Stewart had been a tremendous asset to the top-ranked Huskers this year.

"Ed has been a great player for us for four years," Osborne said. "(Stewart's) combined a set of abilities, so we have used him a tremendous amount in pass coverage, and we've used him a lot in the run."

This season, Stewart leads the Huskers in tackles with 91, 39 of them unassisted. Stewart has 3 1/2

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ED STEWART
NU linebacker

2 quarterback sacks and 5 1/2 tackles for losses.

Howard said he was happy for himself and for Stewart.

"I know Ed very well," Howard said. "I'm happy for him, and I'm sure he's happy for me."

Stewart would not speculate on his chances of winning the award and starting a tradition of Nebraska linebackers winning it.

"I'm just thankful I made it this far," he said, "and we'll see what happens from here."

NU must beat OU to remain perfect

By Andrew Strnad
Staff Reporter

The only team that stands between the Nebraska volleyball team and a perfect regular-season record is the Oklahoma Sooners.

The top-ranked Cornhuskers, who clinched the Big Eight championship Wednesday night with a win over Colorado, take on the Sooners Saturday night in a 7:30 match at the NU Coliseum.

Nebraska coach Terry Pettit sees no reason why the Cornhuskers can't beat the Sooners, who lost to Nebraska 15-9, 15-10, 15-9 in Norman Oct. 8.

Pettit said the only problem that faced the Cornhuskers was Oklahoma's size. Oklahoma has four starters that are 6-foot-1 or taller.

"They are bigger than us at every position," Pettit said.

Nebraska improved to 26-0 and 11-0 in the conference with its 15-13, 15-5, 15-2 sweep of No. 14 Colorado Wednesday night in Boulder, Colo.

Pettit was pleased with how his team improved since the last time it played Colorado Oct. 29.

Pettit said the Huskers' experience in big matches was the key to defeating Colorado.

"No doubt about it, it helped a lot," he said.

On the other side, Colorado lacked the experience of the Huskers.

"They felt inexperienced at some positions, and that hurt them," he said.

Pettit also said that winning the first game on the road was crucial because it took the crowd out of the match.

"The fans can help you a lot at home, but they can also hurt you on the road," he said.

One Husker who played a major role in Nebraska's success was setter Christy Johnson.

Pettit said the junior from Millard North in Omaha kept the Huskers' heads in the match.

"She's a great setter," Pettit said. "She kept us organized the whole match." Pettit also said that Johnson had played better than any other setter they had played.

Not only did Johnson play well, but so did the blocking combination of middle blockers Peggy Meyer and Allison Weston.

Weston, a candidate for Big Eight — and possibly national — player of the year, had four blocks, including two solo ones. Meyer picked up four assisted blocks.

Wrestlers ready to face top teams in Omaha meet

By Clay Short
Staff Reporter

Nebraska wrestling coach Tim Neumann isn't questioning the importance of his team's performance in this weekend's Omaha Open.

There will be several of the nation's top teams awaiting the Cornhuskers. No. 7 Minnesota, No. 2 Oklahoma State, Northern Iowa, and Wyoming will all compete.

"Minnesota pretty much handed us our butts last year, and they returned all their starters," Neumann said.

Neumann has also had his mind on Iowa State.

Last weekend Neumann sent a team of non-starters to compete in the Iowa State Open. He was surprised with both the progress of the Cyclones and the end result.

"They were further along than I thought they were; they looked very good. They are definitely going to be challenging in Omaha," Neumann said. "We went to work on our starters (two weeks ago) to get them ready

for Iowa State."

The good news for Neumann is that the starters are all in the lineup for this weekend, and seven are ranked nationally.

"I look at all of our starters to challenge for the championship. All of our guys are either the top one, two or three," Neumann said.

Neumann is expecting sophomore Temoer Terry at 150 pounds to be near the top in Omaha.

"Temoer Terry went there last year and was named outstanding wrestler," Neumann said. "It was his first college competition and he won it, so I definitely expect big things from him again this year."

Ryan Tobin at 190 will not compete and is out for a couple of weeks. Neither will Erik Josephson, who is undergoing treatment for a loose disk in his back.

"We're very anxious to have our whole team out there, against some very tough competition," Neumann said. "Everybody is at competition weight, and we should provide some excellent matches."

Athlete picks NU football over other sports, schools

By Mitch Sherman
Senior Reporter

Chris Rainey, a talented, multi-sport athlete from Minneapolis, has agreed to accept a scholarship to play football for Nebraska next season.

Rainey, a 5-foot-11-inch, 175-pound cornerback, wide receiver and kick returner, probably will play defensive back in college, Michael Favor, his coach at Minneapolis North High School, said Thursday.

"Chris is an excellent athlete," Favor said. "He's a great football player, and he's going to bring a tremendous amount of talent to their team."

Favor said Rainey, who has been timed at 4.4 seconds in the 40-yard dash and led the state in scoring this fall, would not be an easy player to replace.

"It's a great pickup for Nebraska," he said. "Chris was our best punt returner and kickoff returner. He was a great defensive back, and

"He was drawn to Nebraska because of their tradition of winning."

MICHAEL FAVOR
Rainey's high school coach

he punted for our team, too. He did everything for us."

Despite his talent on the football field, Rainey, who is scheduled to visit Lincoln in December, is just as explosive on the basketball court, Favor said.

"Hands down, he's one of the top three basketball players in the state," Favor said. "A lot of people thought he would go to college for basketball."

Favor said at one time Rainey considered trying to play both sports in college, but lately,

he had decided to concentrate on football.

Rainey is the seventh high school senior to commit to Nebraska this fall. Players cannot sign letters of intent until February.

Rainey was attracted to Nebraska as soon as the Cornhuskers began to recruit him, Favor said. He chose Nebraska over Notre Dame, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Minnesota and Iowa.

"He was drawn to Nebraska because of their tradition of winning," Favor said. "They are always a top team, and Chris has been very impressed with Coach Osborne's program. He's proven here that he could play with the best, and he wanted to play with and for the best in college."

A leader on the field this fall, Rainey has shown improvement in the last few years, Favor said, and will continue to improve while at Nebraska.

"He has definitely gotten better," Favor said. "He has improved a great deal in man-to-man coverage. He has really soft hands and has shown great pursuit to the ball."

Nebraska Football Recruits

Name	Height	Weight	Position
Andy Bilanzich <i>South Lake City</i>	6'2"	180	P-PK
Kris Brown <i>Carroll, Tex.</i>	6'0"	185	PK
Brandon Drum <i>Columbus (Sooner)</i>	6'5"	250	OT
Lonnie Fulton <i>Grand Island</i>	6'5"	240	OL
Adam Julch <i>Omaha (Burke)</i>	6'5"	300	OT
Chad Kelsay <i>Auburn</i>	6'4"	220	LB
Chris Rainey <i>Minneapolis, Minn.</i>	5'11"	175	CB

