



Scott Bruhn/DN

Nebraska's Jay Foreman, Doug Colman, Phil Ellis and Ryan Terwilliger make up the core of Nebraska's linebackers this season.

Last year's shadow doesn't scare defense

By Trevor Parks
Senior Reporter

Being compared to last year's defense doesn't bother Nebraska's 1995 linebacking corps.

In fact, they welcome the challenge of trying to live up to a defense that gave up 11.15 points per game.

But in two of the three linebacking positions, new faces will be plentiful. One of those positions is WILL linebacker. Senior Ryan Terwilliger has big shoes to fill, stepping into the spot vacated by All-American Ed Stewart. Last season, Terwilliger played in 12 of 13 games and recorded 19 tackles.

Terwilliger said he was looking forward to the challenge of filling in for Stewart and last season's defense.

"That was a different defense, and they were great, but we shouldn't try to limit ourselves by being compared to

what they did," Terwilliger said. "We would like to be a lot like last year's defense."

Senior Aaron Penland should see playing time at the WILL position. Matt Aden and Jamel Williams also may see playing time.

Despite the lack of experience at the WILL position, Terwilliger said he was confident in his teammates' abilities.

"Aaron is a senior so he's been around," Terwilliger said. "If I go down or anyone else goes down, we are three or four deep, and we wouldn't lose a whole lot."

Another area filled with inexperience is the SAM linebacker position where redshirt freshman Jay Foreman may start.

Foreman said he was motivated for the challenge of beginning his Nebraska career as a starter.

"When you're a young player at a

position where you don't have a blackshirt (starter) coming back, they say you can't live up to what they did last year, that just made me work even harder."

Junior Larry Arnold also should see playing time.

Last season, Troy Dumas finished third on the team with 69 tackles from the SAM position. Arnold returns the most experience to the position with four tackles in 10 games.

The MIKE linebacker position has the most experience of the linebacker spots.

Phil Ellis and Doug Colman return after Colman started eight games and Ellis started five.

Together, the two had 109 tackles, while sharing playing time in 13 games. Colman and Ellis may play in a similar rotation again this year.

Ellis said he didn't mind splitting time.

Full house in the backfield

PLAYER	ATTEMPTS	YARDS	TDs
Lawrence Phillips	286	1,722	16
Damon Benning	67	367	5
Jeff Makovicka	47	321	2
Clinton Childs	62	399	5
Brian Schuster	13	99	0

Players to watch
Joel Makovicka, FB and Ahman Green, IB

"I don't think I would play as good," Ellis said. "With Doug coming in or me coming in for him, it gives us a little more rest, and we're more sharp and alert to what's going on. I think that is an advantage for us."

Colman agreed. "Being the type of player Phil is and the type of player I am, it will work real well," Colman said. "It's good be-

cause we'll always come into the games fresh."

Four newcomers may get chances to fill in at linebacker.

True freshmen Tony Ortiz, Kareem Sears and Julius Jackson will vie for playing time, and junior college transfer Terrell Farley may see playing time, too.

Quarterbacks

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"It would make anybody better to know that they have someone there that can come in and take your place," Frazier said. "You know you have to perform your best day-in and day-out. I like competition. I don't want something to come easy. If I do win the job, then I know I've earned it."

Berringer agreed. "I'd like to think it is making us sharper and keeping us more focused," Berringer said. "I know it's not hurting us any. We know we have to be at our best every practice and scrimmage."

Behind Frazier and Berringer is Matt Turman, a junior from Wahoo, who took over in the second half against Oklahoma State with a 9-3 lead and sparked the offense in a 32-3 win.

Turman started the following week against Kansas State and was assisted by an injured Berringer in a 17-6 win.

Monte Christo, who was listed behind Turman on the fall depth chart, tore his anterior cruciate ligament during the first week of practice and will redshirt.

A few candidates will fight for the vacant fourth-team spot, but all eyes are on who will fall in the first- and second-team slots.

Osborne said he hoped the situation would be handled as most close position competition is.

"The chemistry of the football

team will depend on how they handle it," Osborne said. "Obviously, one guy is going to be a little disappointed in his playing time, and if he becomes disruptive, it can make things unpleasant. Generally, our players have handled things fairly well."

Frazier said he and Berringer realized the impact their attitudes would have on the team.

"If we go in with the attitude that one of us is going to be mad because we're not playing enough, it's going to hurt the team," Frazier said. "We both need to go into the season knowing that Coach Osborne will pick one starter and the other guy is going to be a back-up and will have to accept that role."

Quarterbacks coach Turner Gill said no matter how the chips fell, Nebraska would have winners at both the starting and back-up quarterback positions.

"I feel real close to both these guys," Gill said.

For Berringer, his position from one year ago has changed drastically.

And what he went through to get to this point still seems like a blur.

"As I was going through it, it was just kind of a deal when you stay focused and don't really think about what's going on," Berringer said. "I just stayed focused and prepared for every game. Then when it was all over I sat back and thought about all the crazy things that happened on our way to winning a national championship. It was unbelievable."

Frazier ignores Heisman talk

By Derek Samson
Senior Reporter

Tommie Frazier sat down in the mob of reporters at media day with a familiar smile on his face.

He was, after all, in a familiar position.

The preseason Heisman Trophy candidate didn't mind answering questions about getting along with Brook Berringer or fighting with Lawrence Phillips for the right to be called the Heisman favorite.

Frazier, who has accomplished almost everything that was expected of him, was relaxed.

"The only pressure that's there is what I put on myself," Frazier said. "I'm not going to let anyone put any pressure on me. If I feel that I'm not doing a good job, I'm going to put the pressure on myself to do better. So the only pressure that will be on me will be by me."

But pressure has never bothered Frazier.

He began calling the signals as a freshman in the sixth game of the season. As a sophomore, he led Nebraska to an undefeated regular season, coming a field goal short of a national title.

After a blood clot sidelined him for eight games last year, he rallied Nebraska for two fourth-quarter touchdowns to spark the Cornhuskers' 24-17 victory over Miami in the Orange Bowl and a national championship.

Despite the blood clot, Frazier said,

"The only pressure that's there is what I put on myself."

TOMMIE FRAZIER
Nebraska quarterback

he had been fortunate during his career at Nebraska.

"I was in the right place at the right time," Frazier said. "I was able to go in my freshman year and start a couple of games. I was able to stay in there all the way up to last year right before the injury. Now, I have to go out and get the starting position by playing the best I can."

Turner Gill, Nebraska's quarterbacks coach, said it had been satisfying watching Frazier's growth during their four years together.

"I've seen him grow as a person, and I've seen him grow as a football player," Gill said. "This is my fourth year here so I started when he started as a freshman. Now, I get to watch him to the end. I'm excited by this, but at the same time, I'm kind of saddened by it."

But Gill, who compiled a 28-2 record as Nebraska's starting quarterback from 1981-83, didn't want to make comparisons about himself and Frazier — yet.

"I'll wait until he finishes his career," Gill said. "He's a great player

and a great quarterback. So I'm going to wait one more year before I make any direct comparisons."

With two Orange Bowl MVPs, a national championship and three Big Eight championships, a Heisman Trophy could be the final jewel in Frazier's rich career at Nebraska.

But Frazier said he wouldn't worry about the Heisman race after he took the first snap this season.

"I basically just go out there and do the best I can," he said. "Whatever my stats are, I really don't care. If I'm out there and doing the best I can and the team is winning, that doesn't really matter. I don't look at that stuff much."

Frazier admitted that his biggest competition for the award might be in the same backfield with Phillips.

But he didn't care.

"Right now, neither one of us are talking about that," he said. "We're just going to do anything to help our team win. If he wins it, I'll be happy and if I win it, he'll be happy. We both know it will take a team effort for either one of us to win it."