

Injury-plagued Veland utilizes skill, devotion to take 'em on

By Mike Kluck
Staff Reporter

Tony Veland never had a doubt about playing his senior year for the Nebraska football team.

But injuries have plagued the senior free safety throughout his career, and his ability to take the field has often been a question mark.

But Veland said he knew the answer to that question.

"I had been through too many things to not be here to start my senior season," Veland said. "I'm too competitive. I knew I would make it to this point."

Veland originally was recruited by Nebraska to play quarterback. During the 1992 season he was listed as the No. 1 quarterback. Two weeks before the first game he broke his collarbone, and by the time he returned to the lineup, Tommie Frazier had taken over the starting job.

During the 1993 season, Veland received the opportunity to play quarterback for the Cornhuskers, but ruptured his right patellar tendon in the Texas Tech game and was sidelined for the season.

Veland said that during his off-season rehabilitation some of the Husker defensive coaches and players kept talking him into attending defensive meetings.

Nebraska's defensive backs coach George Darlington said coaches started to question themselves and Veland in the spring of 1994 about whether it would be more sensible if Veland switched to defense.

Darlington said the switch made sense because a free safety is the defensive quarterback.

Darlington said it was an easy decision because Veland was smart and liked to hit.

"He is a very good tackler and strong," Darlington said. "He really lays the wood to a person when he hits them."

During spring drills, Veland was unable to practice because of his knee injury, but went to all the defensive meetings.

Although Veland missed all of 1994's spring drills, the converted quarterback entered the first game

"I had been through too many things to not be here to start my senior season. I'm too competitive."

TONY VELAND
Nebraska free safety

against West Virginia as the No. 2 free safety.

When starter Mike Minter was injured in the second game, Veland had his opportunity on defense.

Since then, Veland has started every game and was the Huskers' third leading tackler against Miami in the Orange Bowl.

Darlington said Veland's performance last year was impressive because Veland's knee injury prevented Veland from playing at 100 percent.

"He only played at 85 percent all season, so he was limited," Darlington said. "It was very credible of the job he did, because he was never at full speed."

The adversity Veland has endured throughout his career has helped him gain the respect of his teammates.

On Sunday, the Huskers voted him one of the five captains for this season. Veland said he might have gotten some added votes as a captain because he tried to go out of his way to help younger players.

The three-year letter-winner from Omaha said he didn't spend much time thinking about his past injuries and was concentrating on the season opener against Oklahoma State in Stillwater, Okla., Aug. 31.

Veland already has suffered through a strained stomach muscle during preseason practices, but said that wouldn't hinder him against the Cowboys.

"I can move pretty well right now," Veland said. "I feel pretty healthy right now. I try not to think about the injuries so they won't hinder me."

Veland said he was looking forward to the start of the Huskers' season and being a leader in the defense of the national championship.

"This (the start of the season) is great and I'm ready to go out with a bang," Veland said. "I just have a good feeling."

Veland's good feeling is carrying over to his intentions for this season.

"My No. 1 goal is to be the best free safety I can be," Veland said. "I want to be one of the hardest hitting safeties in the country."

Darlington said Veland had already proved himself as a hitter on the field.

"During the Kickoff Classic last year, he made two really good, strong tackles," Darlington said.

Both Veland and Darlington said Veland was still developing and learning to be a free safety.

Darlington said if Veland had played injury-free and been a free safety all four years, Veland probably would have been an All-American candidate this year.

"He would have received enough coverage with the media attention we receive to be an All-American candidate," Darlington said. "With us coming off the national championship, he would have been a logical choice."

Veland said a successful, injury-free season this year may lead to a pro career. Veland said he had the size and speed to be able to compete in the National Football League.

Darlington agreed that Veland had an excellent opportunity to perform next year.

"If he stays healthy, I think he has a good chance to advance on to the next level, despite his past injuries," Darlington said.

If a professional career isn't available, Veland said he would still have his degree in engineering, which he hoped to receive in May.

"My degree is really important because I was the first one from my family to go to college and earn one," Veland said.

Washington practices, but game status unclear

From Staff Reports

Nebraska wide receiver Riley Washington returned to practice Monday, but his status for the game against Oklahoma State in Stillwater, Okla., Thursday is still uncertain.

Hours before kickoff, Washington is scheduled to attend a 3:30 p.m. preliminary hearing in Lancaster County Court.

Washington faces charges of attempted second-degree murder and use of a weapon to commit a felony in connection with an Aug. 2 shooting at a Lincoln convenience store.

Osborne said in a released statement:

"By University standards, Riley

Washington is eligible to go to class, and he has rejoined the team on the practice field. He is, by law, innocent until proven guilty and that is our stance also. He will not play in a game until I am absolutely satisfied that he is innocent."

Running back Damon Benning was held out of practice, as he continues to nurse a pulled hamstring. Osborne said Benning would practice tomorrow. But defensive backs Eric Stokes and Tony Veland participated in yesterday's workout along with defensive tackle Christian Peter.

Osborne said that true freshman kicker Kris Brown would handle kick-offs, along with field goal and extra point attempts. Lance Brown or Jesse Kosch will be the backup.

Travel

Continued from Page 9

ever we have to do.

"There is going to be a heat factor, and for the well-being of the players, that would make sense."

Nebraska's travel roster will be finalized today, after the faculty representative's ruling.

Osborne said three true freshmen, rush end Chad Kelsay, I-back Ahman Green, and place-kicker Kris Brown,

would not redshirt this season.

Brown, from Carroll, Texas, will probably handle the place-kicking and kickoff duties Thursday against Oklahoma State, Osborne said.

Ted Retzlaff, who participated in the Huskers' scrimmage last week, still has not been cleared to play. When Retzlaff — who tore a knee ligament last spring — returns, Osborne said the redshirt freshman from Waverly would challenge Brown for the place-kicking duties.

If you don't stop your friend from driving drunk, who will? Do whatever it takes.

FRIENDS DON'T LET FRIENDS DRIVE DRUNK.

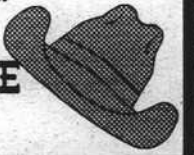
U.S. Department of Transportation

UNT Rodeo Association

Do you have an interest in rodeo? Attend the meeting Wednesday, August 30, 7:30 pm at the East Campus Union.

Room to be posted.

EVERYBODY IS WELCOME TO ATTEND!



NEBRASKA vs Oklahoma St. Kick Off Party



THIS THURSDAY AT **HUEY'S**



Party Starts at 6pm!



\$8 is ALL it'll cost you to party the night away!

1¢ Beers & drinks All Night!

T.V.'s "Galore!"

Big Screens • Little Screens • All Kinds of Screens



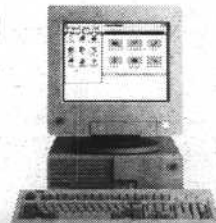
1/2 Price Wings & Nachos all night long!



Come after 9 pm and only **\$5** will get you penny drinks until 1 am!

Huey's & Penny Night: Your Prime Ticket for the Game!

DISCOVER new worlds



\$1,575

PC330 DX2 - 66 MHz w/ 11" SVGA Color Monitor

Get the Right Start

Call 1-800-4 IBM LOAN

For Special Financing



CALL

701C DX1 - 75 MHz 3 MB RAM, 300 MB Hard Drive

IBM and the CRC Computer Shop have special educational pricing on PCs and ThinkPad® Notebooks.

Call 472-5785 for more details.

