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Wildcat signal-caller Plummer prepares for Nebraska barrage

By Derek Samson
 Senior Reporter

Even though Arizona State's Jake Plummer is the starting quarterback, he is taking on the responsibility of stopping Nebraska's high-powered offense Saturday.

Plummer's biggest concern when the Sun Devils travel to Lincoln is keeping Nebraska as far away from the 668 yards a game it averaged in its first two games.

"We have to keep their offense off the field," Plummer said. "We have to try to keep the ball as long as we can on every possession. They score a lot of points, but that won't happen if they stay on the sidelines. I know it won't be easy because they have a good defense, but it's up to our offense to keep them off the field."

Plummer is the top returning quarterback in the Pac-10, passing for 2,179 yards and 24 touchdowns last season.

Last week, Nebraska faced one of the best quarterbacks in the Big 10 in Tony Banks of Michigan State.

Banks passed for 290 yards in the 50-10 loss to the Cornhuskers.

"Throwing for a lot of yards is nice, but it doesn't matter if you don't score," Plummer said. "Michigan State couldn't score. If you throw for 1,000 yards, but don't put anything on the board, it doesn't really matter."

"That's what we have to concentrate on. If we get our chances, we have to capitalize. I don't care if I only throw for 50 yards, as long as we can score points."

Plummer said putting points on the board would be difficult against Nebraska's defense because it bends, but it seldom breaks.

"They're a smaller defense, but they are very quick," he said. "You can make plays on them, but they're so athletic and fast that they can recover. We've played against some defenses like that, so we have a good game plan."

The 6-foot-2, 192-pound junior said Nebraska's defense was closest to Washington's, which beat Arizona State 23-20 in the season opener.

Plummer said if the Sun Devils hang around Saturday as long as they did against the Huskies, it would be heartbreaking to leave Lincoln with a loss.

"The reason I came to Arizona State is because they're in a top conference and play some great teams every year," he said. "We haven't had very good seasons here, but if we can knock off a team like Nebraska, it turns everything around. The whole season will be different."

Plummer said he didn't think Nebraska would be preoccupied with the troubles surrounding Lawrence Phillips and Damon Benning and forget about the Sun Devils.

"We can't even think about that stuff," Plummer said. "I will say it is too bad that had to happen to them. But they're still a great team. They know how to win through ups and downs."

Plummer, who has started since midway through his freshman season, said he hoped Arizona State would be more prepared for Nebraska, and not just its running back.

"Who they line up on the football field is the least of our worries," he said. "We can't get into a thing where we walk in there and think, 'Wow, it's Nebraska.' We have to be concerned with ourselves and our responsibilities."

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Sun Devil receivers hope for good yardage

By Mike Kluck
 Staff Reporter

One of the first statistics Keith Poole looked at from the Nebraska-Michigan State game was receiving yards by Spartan receivers.

As he read down the list, his eyes got wider and wider until he found the number he was looking for — 290.

Spartan receivers accumulated 290 receiving yards against the 2-0 top-ranked Cornhuskers, which gave Arizona State's junior wide receiver an optimistic approach to his team's game against the Cornhuskers this Saturday at Memorial Stadium.

Poole leads the 1-1 Sun Devils with 10 receptions for 175 yards. He is averaging 17.5 yards a catch, which is down from last season when Poole led the Pac-10 with 21.6 yards a catch.

"This is a great opportunity playing the defending national champions," Poole said. "Nebraska will be a tough challenge for us, especially playing them at home."

Poole said the Sun Devils may have success against Nebraska be-

cause they will try to present many different options for Nebraska to defend. Junior Isaiah Mustafa and freshman Ricky Boyer also start for the Sun Devils.

The Sun Devils are averaging 250.5 yards and three touchdowns a game passing. Poole, Mustafa and Boyer account for five of Arizona State's six touchdowns passing.

Poole said he had watched Nebraska games on television in the past and had an idea of what to expect when he entered Memorial Stadium for Nebraska's home opener.

"From what I've seen Nebraska gets a great crowd, and there will be a lot of red," Poole said. "I expect for it to be loud. I know they get a great crowd and have a good environment for a college football setting."

Poole said since Arizona State already lost to Washington, it was important for the Sun Devils to win their remaining games to play on Jan. 1. He said even if a New Year's Day game is not possible, they still would like to participate in a bowl game.

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game, and made the game a little more respectable. But I think it was 45-7 at one point. Arizona State was totally dominant."

Arizona State's quarterback Jake Plummer helped the Sun Devils look so dominant against UTEP, throwing a career-best four touchdowns.

Osborne said Plummer and the Sun Devils' defensive quickness may cause Nebraska the biggest problems.

"Their quarterback is an excellent player," he said. "They have some good skilled players. They play very hard on defense. I was really impressed with the aggressiveness with which they play. They support very quickly on the run. They will have 11 guys near the ball, so we'll probably have to work to get our yards."

NOTES:

● Osborne said reserve defensive tackle Larry Townsend would miss the game after he strained his knee against Michigan State. Osborne also confirmed that Clinton Childs would start at I-back.

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