

SPORTS

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SPORTS OPINION



Mitch Sherman

Berringer's impact goes beyond field

For 3 1/2 minutes Saturday afternoon at Memorial Stadium, everything stopped.

The Cornhusker sidelines and 48,000 fans peered skyward at the HuskerVision screens propped atop the northwest and southeast corners of the stadium, and no one made a sound.

"Because You Loved Me" by Celine Dion played as the stadium filled with images of Brook Berringer, Nebraska's former quarterback who was killed Thursday in a plane crash north of Lincoln.

Berringer's friends stood silent on the AstroTurf, dressed in full pads, helmets at their sides. Many of them cried.

"It took the life out of me," linebacker Grant Wistrom said. "When something like that happens, it puts everything in perspective. There are some things that are a lot more important."

Brook Berringer's life was more important than football.

The Huskers played Saturday because they had to, not because they wanted to. They played because life must go on even in the wake of tragedy; and because Berringer would have wanted them to play.

Wistrom, Berringer's teammate for two seasons, was one of many Huskers moved by the pregame tribute, which remembered not only Berringer the football player, but Berringer the man off the field.

He was pictured reading to children, throwing touchdown passes, playing with a collapsed lung and perhaps his personal favorite activity, hunting.

Football was put in perspective Saturday. Even in Nebraska, where the crowd at a spring scrimmage is the October envy of dozens of schools, football didn't seem too important anymore.

"It was sad," offensive guard Chris Dishman said, "really sad."

The pain of Berringer's death, Coach Tom Osborne said, is much like losing a member of the family. For the coaches, he said, it is only one step removed from the death of a son or daughter.

"It's been difficult to concentrate," Osborne said, "but it's something you have to do. I don't think the length of his life is as important as the quality of his life."

Nebraska played Saturday for its fallen former quarterback. Not every player knew Berringer well, but they all respected him for his class off the field and his ability on it, which would have given him a spot this weekend in the NFL.

With the 100th pick late in the fourth round of the draft Sunday, the Denver Broncos chose Jeff Lewis, a little-known quarterback from Northern Arizona.

That pick should have gone to a former Nebraska backup from Goodland, Kan., who instead will be buried today by his mother.

Sherman is a junior news-editorial major and the Daily Nebraskan sports editor.

Phillips drafted sixth by Rams

Peter among six former Huskers selected; NFL passes on Frazier

By Mike Kluck
Senior Reporter

Nervous anticipation turned to relief for six former Cornhuskers who were selected in the National Football League draft Saturday and Sunday.



Peter

NFL level next season.

Lawrence Phillips, Tyrone Williams, Aaron Graham, Christian Peter, Doug Colman and Tony Veland learned over the weekend that they would have a chance to compete at the

But five of the six players said they were disappointed with their position in the draft.

"I would be lying if I said I was happy about not being drafted earlier," said Peter, a former Cornhusker defensive tackle from Locust, N.J., who was picked in the fifth round by New England.

"I'm just happy to be part of the New England Patriots organization," he said. "I really don't know if I'll start right away. I'm just hoping to find a way where I can contribute. If it's running back or wide receiver, I'll do whatever they want me to do."

Phillips, who was drafted by the St. Louis Rams, said he felt he was the best player in the draft, but was happy

to be playing in St. Louis.

In a press conference in St. Louis on Sunday morning, Phillips said he was not concerned that he would have a recurrence of the problems that hampered him last year at Nebraska.

Phillips was suspended for six games after assaulting an ex-girlfriend last season. He is on probation and receiving counseling for his anger.

Those off-field problems made some teams shy away from Phillips. In a report on ESPN on Saturday, general managers from San Diego and Philadelphia said they had removed Phillips from their draft board because of his problems.

The New York Jets, Jacksonville, Arizona, Baltimore and the New York

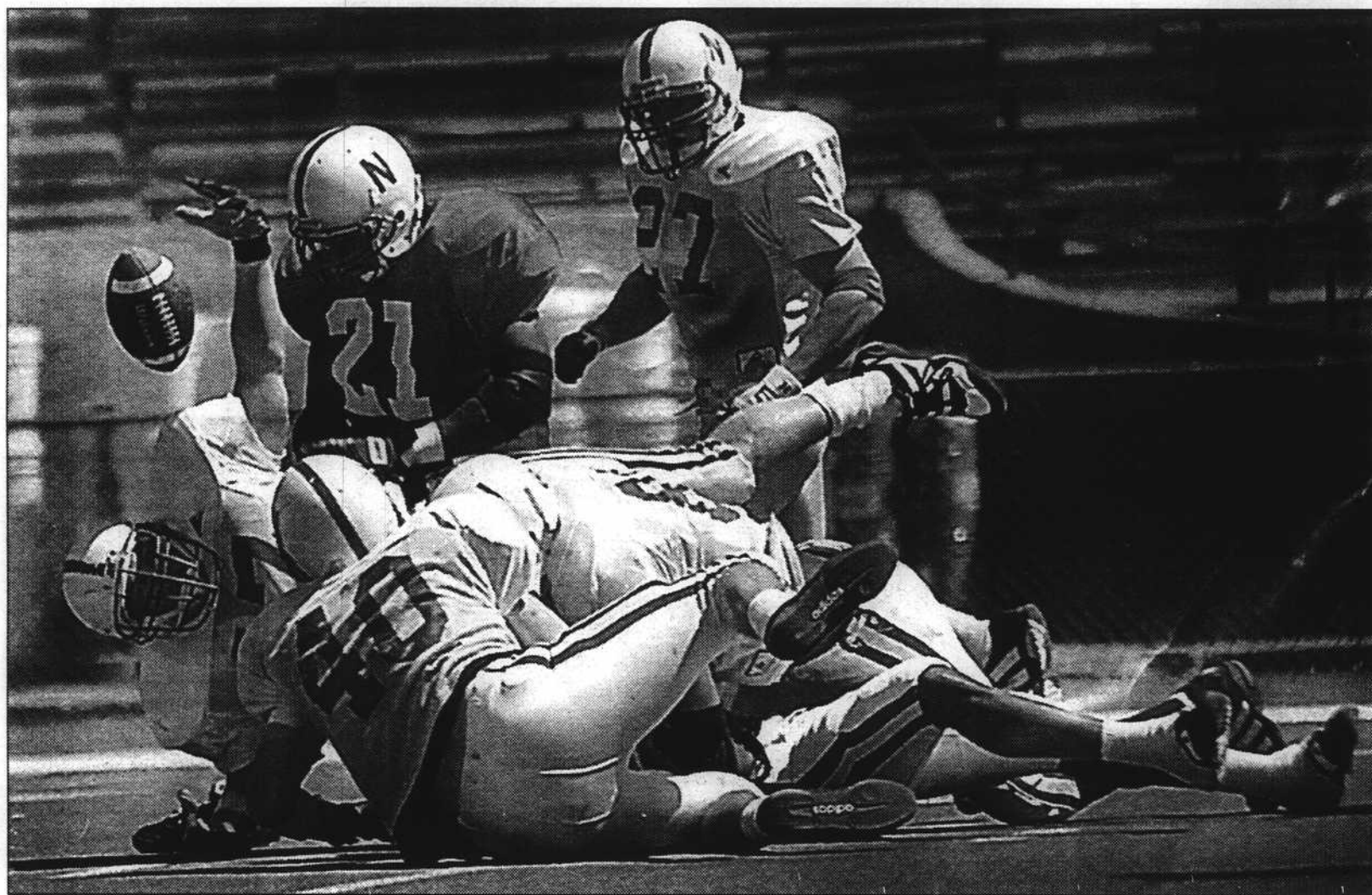
Giants, all of which picked before St. Louis, had expressed interest in Phillips, but opted not to draft him, leaving him available for the Rams.

Phillips said he was looking forward to playing with former Husker teammates Toby Wright and Zach Wiegert.

Besides Phillips, Colman, a linebacker who was selected in the sixth round by the Giants, will have a chance to team up with former Husker Rob Zatechka. Zatechka was drafted last season by the Giants.

The draft was ironic for Colman, he said, because he had talked to Zatechka about playing in New York an hour

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Matt Miller/DN

Chad Kelsay (No. 57), Erick Arens (No. 40), Damon Benning (No. 21) and Steve Raymond (No. 27) battle to recover a fumbled punt by Shevin Wiggins on Saturday at Memorial Stadium. The white team got the ball and scored three plays later to take a 7-3 lead.

Defense dominates Red-White Game

By Trevor Parks
Senior Reporter

There is an old saying that offense wins games but defense wins championships.

If that adage holds true after Saturday afternoon's annual Red-White Spring Game at Memorial Stadium, the Cornhusker football team may need to build an addition to its trophy case.

The red team (No. 1 offense, No. 2 defense), despite being held without an offensive touchdown, pulled out a 20-17 victory over the white squad (No. 1 defense, No. 2 offense) in front of a spring game record crowd of 48,659 fans.

Coach Tom Osborne said he was proud of the effort put forth by his team, especially on the defensive side.

"We've got a decent offensive football team, but I think we may have an outstanding defense," Osborne said. "If you play good defense and have a good kicking game, you have a chance."

The defense shined as the red team surrendered 231 yards and the white team held the red offense to only 209

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TOM OSBORNE

Nebraska football coach

yards.

The red team, featuring I-backs Ahman Green and Damon Benning, was held to 93 yards rushing on 46 carries. No. 1 quarterback Scott Frost led the red team with 50 yards rushing on 19 carries. Fullback Ben Kingston of the white team led all rushers with 56 yards on 10 carries.

Green, the No. 1 I-back, was held to 25 yards on 11 carries. Benning carried the ball six times for 16 yards, and No. 1 fullback Brian Schuster gained 4 yards on three carries. Neither team had a run longer than 15 yards.

Jon Hesse was the game's leading tackler with 12 stops, including 2 1/2 behind the line of scrimmage. Chad Kelsay added eight tackles, including two for losses.

Frost, who completed only 4 of 14

passes for 44 yards, said the defense might single-handedly win a few games for the Huskers next fall.

"I don't think the offense has to put up great numbers because of the way the defense plays," Frost said. "The rush ends put their ears back and really came after us."

One of those defensive linemen, Jeff Ogard, said stopping the No. 1 offensive line was the key to the defense's dominance.

Ogard forced two Frost fumbles on the afternoon.

Matt Turman's 59-yard pass to Brendan Holbein in the second quarter was the longest offensive play of the game. That play helped set up a 25-yard Kris Brown field goal.

With the lack of offense, special teams played a key part in the red

squad's win.

Benning returned a Brian Morro punt 87 yards for a touchdown with 4:22 left in the third quarter. Frost's pass to Jon Vedral on the two-point conversion tied the game at 14.

Brown made field goals of 26, 25 and 23 yards. His fourth field goal of the day, another 25-yarder with three seconds left in the game, gave the red team the victory.

Brown, who also punted once for 58 yards to the 1-yard line, said he welcomed the chance to kick a field goal that decided the game. Last year, Brown's freshman season, no team came within 14 points of the Huskers.

"It builds my confidence up a little bit," Brown said. "If the situation warrants itself next fall, I can say I've been in a pressure game and kicked the game-winning field goal."

The white team took a 7-3 lead on a 2-yard touchdown run by James Sims with 6:42 left in the first quarter.

The white team went up 14-6 on a fourth-down-and-3 play from the 18 when Monte Christo threw an 18-yard touchdown pass to tight end T.J. DeBates in the second quarter.