

SPORTS

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SPORTS OPINION



Gregg Madsen

Unheralded backs learn to survive

Steve Raymond and Chad Eicher were running down a dream this spring — the dream of playing I-back for Nebraska.

This unknown tandem shared the No. 2 and No. 3 I-back spots for the majority of spring practice because of injuries to James Sims and Damon Benning.

Raymond, a redshirt freshman in the fall, was the second I-back on the white offense in Saturday's spring game, backing up the recovered Sims.

But Eicher, listed as the No. 3 I-back on the red squad behind starter Ahman Green and Benning, did not have a chance to run the ball in the red team's 20-17 victory.

He was filling out an answer sheet for the Medical College Admissions Test. Eicher, a junior transfer from UNO, said missing the game was a disappointment, but it wouldn't erase the progress he made this spring.

"I think I've shown that mentally I can keep up and physically I can run the plays," Eicher said. "I know I definitely have the ability to play I-back."

At 6-foot-3 and 225 pounds, Eicher may be better suited for fullback.

"I came in kind of wanting to do that," he said. "I really like carrying the ball, but fullback is definitely a possibility."

Fullback also could be a possibility for Raymond, who has bulked up to 205 pounds after coming to Nebraska at 185.

"I've really been working hard on the weights," Raymond said. "But coming here I knew I needed to just survive."

This spring, Raymond has done more than just survive.

He gained 135 yards on 35 carries and scored three touchdowns in the Huskers' four scrimmages this spring.

A 1,000-yard rusher as a junior in high school, Raymond tore his posterior cruciate ligament before his senior year at Gering.

"I didn't have to convince anyone," Raymond said. "I think more than anything else, I needed to show myself I could play here."

Raymond and Eicher both said they weren't worried about what would happen next fall when high school All-American running back DeAngelo Evans arrives in Lincoln.

If Evans doesn't redshirt, Raymond and Eicher will drop even further on the depth chart.

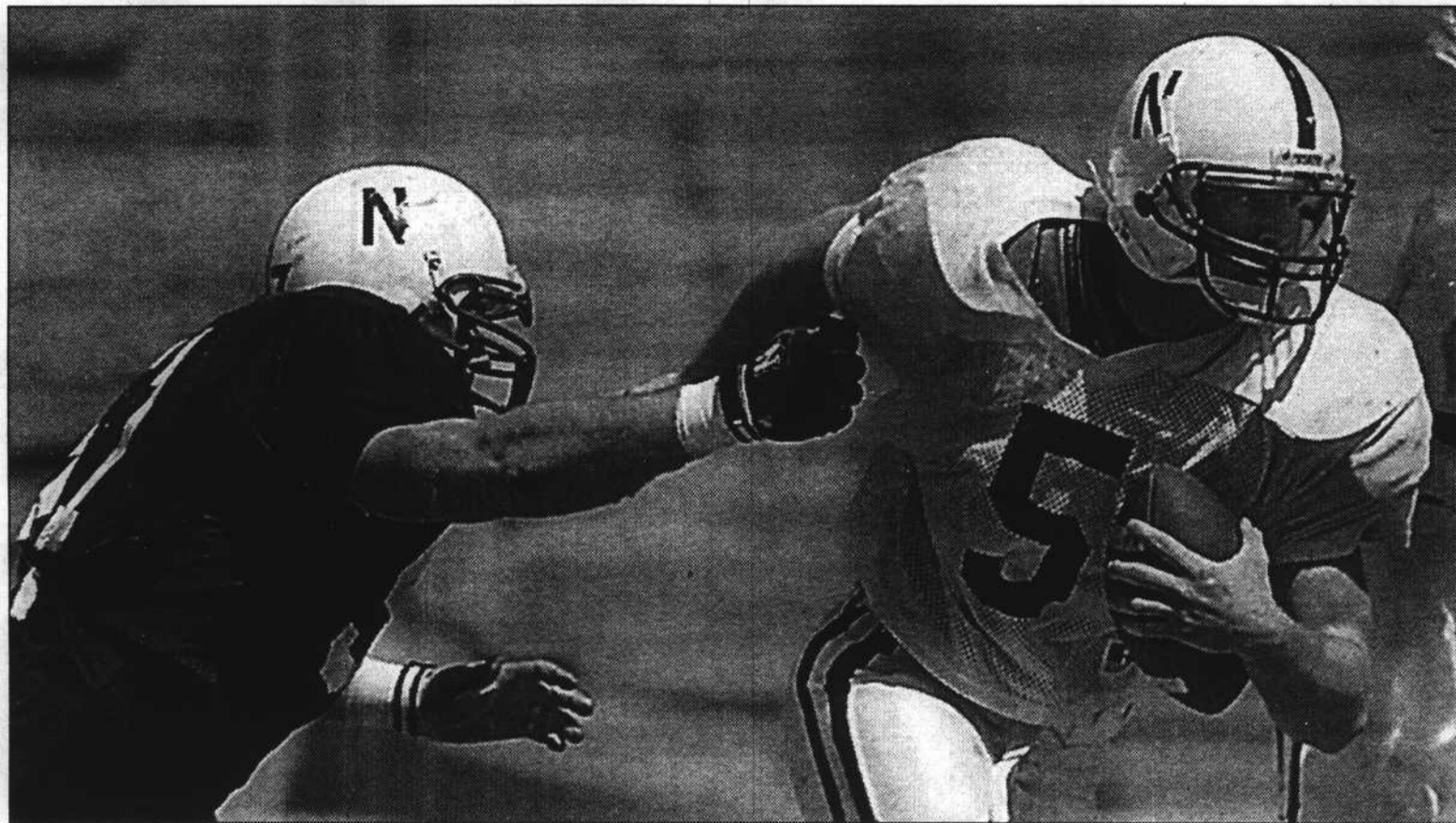
Neither Raymond nor Eicher has the breakaway speed of Green, the athleticism of Sims, the experience of Benning or the reputation of Evans.

But they do have something as large as any other player on the team — a love for the game.

And for now, that's enough.

Madsen is a sophomore news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan staff reporter.

Paying respect



Matt Miller/DN

Nebraska quarterback Jeff Perino eludes the grasp of Chad Kelsay on Saturday during the spring game. Perino decided to not wear No. 18 Saturday out of respect to former Husker Brook Berringer.

QB follows Berringer's example

By Trevor Parks
Senior Reporter

As of Saturday morning, Cornhusker jersey No. 18 was set to run onto the Memorial Stadium turf again.

But quarterback Jeff Perino, who had been wearing Brook Berringer's old number throughout the spring, said he felt it wouldn't be right to wear it on a day when the Nebraska football program mourned the loss of its former quarterback.

Berringer was killed in a plane crash Thursday near Raymond. His funeral was held Monday in Goodland, Kan.

Right after the pregame meetings Saturday, Perino told quarterbacks coach Turner Gill that he

didn't feel comfortable wearing No. 18.

"I said, 'I don't know why, but I didn't feel like I should be wearing this,'" Perino said. "For whatever reasons I decided to change my number. That's his number, and it's a part of him."

So Gill called down to the equipment room and found another white jersey for Perino, a redshirt freshman. Almost every Cornhusker wore a black T-shirt with a white No. 18 printed on the front, though.

During Saturday's spring game, Perino wore No. 5, a change that he said probably wouldn't become permanent.

Perino completed 5 of 11 passes for 66 yards and rushed for minus-13 yards, but he said he was having a tough time concentrating on foot-

ball. Perino was Nebraska's leading passer in two of its four major scrimmages this spring.

"We really cared about him," Perino said of Berringer. "Everybody who plays for this team and comes through this program is like family, and we care a lot about them."

When Perino came to Lincoln from Durango, Colo., last summer, he was recovering from knee surgery and ended up spending two weeks in Berringer's home.

Because Perino could not move into the residence halls until shortly before classes began, he slept on Berringer's fold-out couch. The two quarterbacks talked football after Berringer returned home from two-a-day practices in the fall.

"He'd come home and he was tired and we'd sit down with a glass of iced tea," Perino said. "We talked a lot about football."

In his first spring, Perino has looked like Berringer at times.

Perino redshirted last season after knee surgery last summer. Berringer also redshirted his first season in 1991. After his redshirt season, Berringer was 6-foot-4 and 200 pounds, not far from Perino's 6-2, 195-pound frame.

Both Berringer and Perino have often talked about their love for hunting and the outdoors. Perino said he played with Berringer's hunting dogs many times.

Last fall, Perino was a scout

See PERINO on 11

Ideus decides to leave

By Trevor Parks
Senior Reporter

Chad Ideus didn't want to stay at a place where he didn't feel welcome.

So after finding out he wouldn't play, even though his scholarship was renewed, he decided to transfer from the Nebraska basketball program.

Ideus became the second Cornhusker to transfer, following center Leif Nelson, who decided in the first week of April to leave Nebraska.

Ideus said he had a meeting with Coach Danny Nee the morning of April 9, but that afternoon he said he did not want to leave Nebraska.

"When I went into him, he said, 'You're not going to play and you're not going to fit in,'" Ideus said. "It just came down to he wasn't going to play me, and I don't understand because he never gave me a chance."

The 6-foot-7 redshirt freshman from Adams committed to Nebraska after his junior year. He

played in only 10 games last season, averaging 2.7 points and 1.5 rebounds per game.

After meeting with Nee, Ideus said he hadn't yet made a decision.

"I'm looking forward to being here next year," Ideus said on April 9 after his meeting with Nee. "If for some reason I'm not here next year, it won't be by my choice."

Ideus said the point of that meeting was to make sure Nee knew he was not going to transfer.

"I knew I wanted to stay, but I also had to think about it," Ideus said. "I also wanted to say that what happened in February shouldn't have happened. I was just caught up in the middle of it."

Ideus was referring to Feb. 13, when nine of 11 players went to Athletic Director Bill Byrne to voice their concerns about Nee.

"He (Nee) didn't see me fitting into the system," Ideus said. "I was doing what the team was doing, and I got singled out."

But why not ask Nee to terminate his scholarship instead of sit-

ting on the bench and not playing?

"Either way, it doesn't matter," Ideus said, "but maybe this way he can cover his butt. I'm moving on to be around people I trust, and a big reason why I am leaving is to enjoy basketball again."

Nebraska Wesleyan and Nebraska-Kearney are two schools Ideus has shown interest in. Ideus said he did not want to transfer to another Division-I school because he would lose a year of eligibility.

Nebraska, which now has two scholarships available, is still in the running for Kris Hunter, a 6-10, 210-pound center from Tallahassee, Fla. Hunter averaged 15.5 points, 14 rebounds and eight blocks per game.

Hunter's coach, Ronnie Lang, said Hunter canceled his visit to Georgia scheduled for last weekend. Other schools besides Nebraska that are still in the running are Florida State, South Florida, Virginia and Auburn. Hunter will make a decision later this week, Lang said.

NU golfers in 3-way tie for first

From Staff Reports

After the first two rounds of the Big Eight men's golf tournament in Hutchinson, Kan., Nebraska is in a three-way tie for the lead with one 18-hole round left Tuesday.

The Cornhuskers are tied with Oklahoma and Oklahoma State for first place with a score of 299. On Monday, Nebraska was led by junior Trent Morrison and freshman Josh Madden, who are tied for fifth place at 150.

Sophomore Ryan Nietfeldt shot a 153, and was followed by freshman Steve Friesen with a 162.

Going into the final round of the women's conference tournament in Des Moines, Iowa, the Huskers are in fourth place, 36 strokes behind Oklahoma State. Iowa State is second and Missouri is third.

Nebraska sophomore Rachelle Tacha is tied for first place heading into the final round with a score of 154.