

ON THE COVER

Photo of NU rush end Jared Tomich by Scott Bruhn

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Offense needs time to gel

Frost says first unit has potential to become lethal

By **TREVOR PARKS**
Senior Reporter

In Nebraska's quest for an unprecedented third straight national title, it may be safe to say the defense will be outstanding, but how long will it take the offense to reach that same level?



Frost

Maybe a couple of games, said Scott Frost, the probable starting quarterback when the No. 1 ranked Cornhuskers open their season Sept. 7 at Memorial Stadium against Michigan State.

"Last year, the offense was supposed to be the dominant factor on the team, and the defense had some question marks," Frost said.

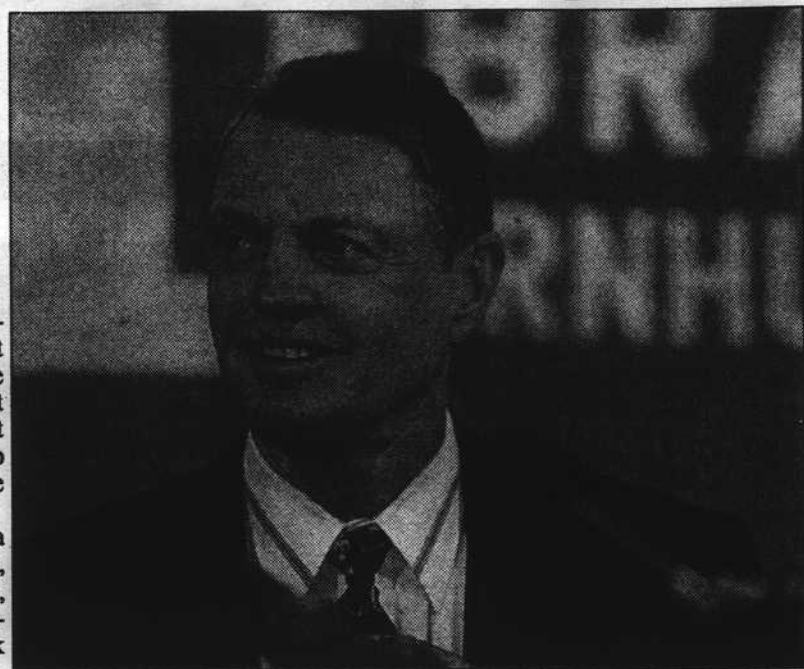
"By the end of the year, the defense came around. Slowly but surely they developed into one of the best defenses in the country. The offense has the capability of doing that.

"It might take a couple of games to get to the level to win a Big 12 championship or a national championship, but our defense will be good enough to carry us."

Getting used to life without once-in-a-generation quarterback Tommie Frazier and I-back Lawrence Phillips will be the biggest change.

But Frost and sophomore Ahman Green, who ran for 1,086 yards as a freshman, are prepared to defend NU's 25-game winning streak, which includes six wins over top 10 teams.

The offensive line — a giant ques-



TANNA KINNAMAN/DN

AS HE enters his 24th year at Nebraska, Tom Osborne will coach an offense that features five players with six or more starts last season.

tion mark to begin 1995 — lost only center Aaron Graham and guard Steve Ott. Eric Anderson, Jon Zatechka, Chris Dishman, Aaron Taylor and Adam Treu will lead the Huskers up front. Taylor, an All-Big-Eight selection at guard, has moved to center. Brian Schuster returns as an experienced fullback, and Brendan Holbein and John Vedral, a seasoned pair of wide receivers, also return.

No. 1 tight end Tim Carpenter, a junior, injured his knee in the spring and may not be ready for the first game, creating opportunities for sophomore Sheldon Jackson and junior Vershan Jackson.

Treu, a first-year starter, said the offense may take a few weeks to gel. "I don't want to say we are going to come out right away; we may take a game or two, who knows?" Treu said. "As great a coach as Coach (Tom) Osborne is, it may take him a little while to figure out what is going to happen."

Last season, the offense averaged 52.4 points per game and never scored fewer than 35. On the ground, the offense picked up 400 yards each time out — winning its second straight rushing title and 12th overall — and averaged 556 yards of total offense.

Those numbers were capped off with a 62-point performance in the Fiesta Bowl rout of Florida.

Although NU hit on all cylinders that night, not everything worked to perfection, Schuster said.

Frost, the first-team offensive player with the least experience, said he hoped to find his role in the season-opener.

"They won 12 games last year running this offense," Frost said. "I just want to play my role in this offense as we go after more wins this year."

"The longer people are going to underestimate our offense, the better off we are going to feel about it."

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