

Sports Opinion



Mitch Sherman

Bald Brown get his kicks as a Husker

During the hot, two-a-day workouts of August, Kris Brown had way too much hair.

So a few of Brown's Nebraska football teammates shaved his head. In the best interest of his future ability to stand upright, Brown has declined to name the barbers — although rumors have been circulating that a band of extremely short-haired defensive linemen were involved.

"I objected profusely," Brown said. "But they decided I still needed a haircut."

At first, Nebraska's place-kicker didn't like the new 'do. But soon, it began to grow on him, and the way he's kicked in four games this fall, Brown may not see his blond hair until mid-January.

"It's low maintenance," he said. "You don't have to use very much shampoo, not very much hairspray, and you don't have to comb it."

Evidently, Brown has been combing through the Cornhusker record books lately, and rewriting them in the process. Only a sophomore, his 132 career points place him 23rd in NU history, eighth among kickers.

Last year, he scored 97 points, breaking the freshman scoring record and eeking past fellow frosh Ahman Green to lead the team. This year, Brown has stepped it up a notch or two.

He's drilled seven of eight field goals and appears to toy with opposing return men each time he sends a kickoff flying into the stands. Saturday in NU's 39-3 drubbing of Kansas State, Brown hit four field goals in the first half, one of which was good from 50 yards with at least another 10 to spare.

Still, he wasn't satisfied.

"I told (kickers') Coach (Dan) Young I wasn't real pleased with the day," Brown said. "Anytime I go out, I expect myself to be perfect."

You see, Brown is not your typical kicker.

"When he came in before his senior year of high school for our camp," Young said, "that's when we really noticed him. Of all the quarterbacks we had in here — out of 1,200 kids — he was the best."

Quarterbacks?

That's right. At Carroll High School in Southlake, Texas, Brown, who won state titles as a sophomore and a junior, attracted mild recruiting interest as a signal caller. But he decided to stick with his right leg, not his right arm.

Today, he is one of the Huskers' top athletes, kicking 65-yard field goals in practice and running a 4.56-second 40-yard dash.

But most importantly, he shaves his head on a weekly basis.

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

Huskers on the road again

NU plays its third road match in six days tonight in Boulder.

By SHANNON HEFFELFINGER
Staff Reporter

Nebraska Volleyball Coach Terry Pettit is convinced that in order to win the Big 12 this season, conference teams must play well away from home.

"That's the most difficult thing about this conference," Pettit said.

Nebraska (12-2 and 4-0 in the league) will put its perfect Big 12 record on the line tonight at 8:30 against Colorado at the Coors Event

Center in Boulder. The Buffaloes, who own a 3-23 all-time record against the Cornhuskers, bring a three-match winning streak into the contest.

Tonight's contest marks the third time in six days the Huskers have played on the road and NU's only weeknight match all season.

Freshman middle blocker Tonia Tauke, whose 10 kills last Friday against Iowa State were a career high, admitted that traveling can be difficult.

"It's kind of fun," said Tauke, NU's most efficient hitter this season with a .408 percentage, "but it does get mentally tiring. Living out of a suitcase gets a little rough."

Colorado (8-3 and 3-1 in the conference) is led by senior Rachel

Wacholder. The 5-foot-11 outside hitter is averaging 3.66 kills per game with a .281 hitting percentage. Sophomore outside hitter Sarah Lodge has also been impressive at the net for the Buffaloes, pounding four kills per game.

The Buffaloes have four returning starters on their roster but feature a much younger team. Eight of CU's 11 players are freshmen and sophomores.

Despite CU's youth, the Huskers are not overlooking the younger Buffalo team.

"The Colorado-Nebraska game is always a big one," Tauke said. "We have a traditional rivalry with them."

Pettit, who said he is impressed with Colorado, thinks the match will

Volleyball

Coors Event Center

be hard fought.

"Colorado has been our main rival in the Big Eight for the last few seasons," Pettit said. "It's a very important match. They are a well-coached team."

Please see **BUFFS** on 8

Coaches say kicking game is special

By ANTONE OSEKA
Senior Editor

Nebraska Football Coach Tom Osborne doesn't like to call the Cornhusker kicking game "special teams."

"Our philosophy is to put the best possible player on kicking team," Osborne said. "We don't call them special teams or anything like that."

What makes the Nebraska kicking game special is

Young

that the Huskers put their best athletes on the field, Osborne said, unlike many teams that use low-unit players to fill punt- and kickoff-coverage positions.

"These are the best players we've got to do the job," Osborne said.

The NU punt return team features some of the top talent that Nebraska offers. Rushing from the outside to block punts are Butkus Award candidate Terrell Farley and free safety Eric Warfield. Both blocked a punt during Saturday's 39-3 win over Kansas State.

"Coach Osborne and the rest of the coaching staff do a great job of emphasizing how important the kicking game is each week," place-kicker Kris Brown said. "I love it when the kicking game is that important."

Dan Young, the Husker assistant coach in charge of kicking, said he has seen little wrong with Nebraska's special teams' play so far this season.

"The punting of Jesse Kosch has improved so much," Young said. "We thought at best Jesse was a 40-yard punter, and now he has a 45-yard average."

That 45.1-yard average has allowed Kosch, a junior, to become the No. 13 punter in the nation and rank fourth in the Big 12. On the other side of the punt, Shevin Wiggins leads the Big 12, averaging 18.2 yards on five returns.

In field goals, Brown ranks second in the Big 12 and ninth in the country, averaging 1.75 field goals per game. The sophomore has nailed seven of eight this season, including four of five last Saturday against Kansas State.

Young said the kickoff team will suffer a major loss if fullback Billy Legate is unable to play Saturday

Please see **KICKING** on 8



MATT MILLER/DN

BECKY HORNBACKER, Nebraska's goalkeeper, clears the ball earlier this season as Loyola Marymount forward Yvonne Dalton chases behind.

Hornbacher leads defense

By VINCE D'ADAMO
Staff Reporter

Thanks to Nebraska goalkeeper Becky Hornbacher, the Cornhusker goal has been closed for business this season.

The junior from Ralston sat out last season after transferring from Virginia. As a true freshman in 1993, she started two games but was granted a medical hardship after breaking her leg.

Hornbacher bounced back in 1994 to start all 21 games for the Cavaliers. She led the Atlantic Coast Conference with 11 shutouts.

This season, she has brought her winning ways back to Nebraska. Seven of the sixth-ranked Huskers' victories have been shutouts. Two shutouts last weekend lowered her goals-against average to a spectacular 0.55 per game.

Hornbacher has recorded 33 saves for 11-0 NU.

"A shutout shows that the team is dominating defensively," Hornbacher said. "It's definitely prevalent. We work on defense all

the time." "If you come in here, you don't mess with me."

BECKY HORNBACKER
NU goalkeeper

the time."

Hornbacher's experience, athleticism and intensity have been assets for Nebraska, Coach John Walker said.

If the opposition scores, Hornbacher said, she takes it personally. And since a goalkeeper is the final line defense, a certain instinct must be carried. When the opponent tries to score, Hornbacher slams the door.

"You have to have a killer instinct," she said. "If you come in here, you don't mess with me."

Seventh-ranked Texas A&M found that out the hard way in a 1-0 Nebraska victory on Sept. 29, the biggest in the history of the third-year NU program. Hornbacher had

three saves during one sequence against A&M.

The Husker's other big triumph this season was a 3-1 win over Duke. With NU trailing 1-0, a Hornbacher save prevented the deficit from growing to 2-0.

Walker said it plays like those that turn games around.

"It definitely changes the complexion of the game," he said.

The Huskers have seasoned defenders in Stephanie Vacek, Heather Brown, and Tanya Franck to give Hornbacher support.

"She doesn't give up the big mistake goals," Walker said. "You see some goalies let it go between their legs. She's really in command."