

# NU seniors impress scouts

Booker solidifies his status as a potential first-rounder.

By MITCH SHERMAN  
Senior Reporter

A group of speedy defensive backs, including two converted linebackers, stood out Tuesday as 25 to 30 NFL scouts evaluated several Nebraska seniors at Cook Pavilion.

Gathered in preparation for April's NFL draft, the scouts took special notice of cornerback Michael Booker, who is projected by many analysts as a mid-to-late first-round pick. But Terrell Farley, Jamel Williams, Mike Minter and Eric Stokes also turned heads, causing one scout to label the NU group among the nation's best batch of defensive backs.

"It's as good as you're going to find," said Kent McCloughan, an Oakland Raiders' scout who lettered at Nebraska from 1962 through 1964. "They're all going to be drafted in a pretty good round."

Booker, 6-foot-2 and 205 pounds, ran a 4.41-second 40-yard dash and drew the day's largest crowd during a series of agility drills.

"Everybody would love to go in the first round. That's a given," said Booker, who started 23 games over the last two seasons and earned second-team All-Big 12 honors as a senior. "But if you perform at first-round status, which I think I'm doing, then you'll go in the first round."

Last month in Indianapolis, Booker and several other former Cornhuskers performed for a much larger group at the league's annual scouting combine. Although Booker preferred Tuesday's workout in a familiar environment, he said, the scouts remained difficult to read.

"They've got that stern look and smile at every player," Booker said. "They don't say too much, but everybody likes to see an athlete come out here and try to better himself."

Williams, 6-2 and 210 pounds, and Farley, a 6-1, 205-pounder, played linebacker at Nebraska, but because of their size and speed, a spot in the secondary — perhaps at safety — best suits the duo at the next level.

"You can see Farley and Williams have no idea how to really pedal as a defensive back," McCloughan said. "They think as a linebacker, so they're



RYAN SODERLIND/DM

MIKE FULLMAN takes a break on Tuesday at Cook Pavilion. NFL scouts were in town to watch the Husker seniors' workout.

going to have to be really good special teams players for a year or two before they learn to play. But they'll be drafted in pretty good position."

Williams led Nebraska with 97 tackles last season, and Farley — despite missing four regular-season games and the Orange Bowl because of two DWI arrests — recorded 43 tackles, including 10 behind the line of scrimmage. McCloughan said he did not know how Farley's off-the-field problems will affect his draft status.

Minter, Stokes, I-back Damon Benning and offensive linemen Adam Treu and Chris Dishman also impressed McCloughan, who played defensive back for the Raiders after graduating from NU.

Many of the scouts return to Lin-

coln next Tuesday, primarily to watch Jared Tomich, who McCloughan called "an important item to see." Tomich suffered a fractured right ankle during a January practice for the Senior Bowl in Mobile, Ala. He missed the scouting combine and watched Tuesday's workout from the sidelines.

Projected as a middle linebacker in the NFL after twice earning All-America honors as a rush end at NU, Tomich wore a cast on his ankle for four weeks. He's now running on the leg and said he will be ready for the scouts next week.

"It was something that I had no control over," Tomich said of his untimely injury. "When's there's nothing you can do, it's pretty rough. Hopefully, it won't hurt me too much."

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