

Husker ground game suffers from injuries

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better backs around this year."

Green will start the season at 215 pounds, about 10-12 pounds lighter than at the start of the 1996 season. Coach Tom Osborne said Green has had a good work ethic in the off-season.

"A year ago we had him on the Ambassador's program; that's a program where we send two or three athletes around the country and around the state primarily and they meet with donors and people," Osborne said. "But also you do a lot of riding around in automobiles and you eat a lot. Ahman was one of those guys a year ago.

"He really wasn't in very good shape when he reported for practice. And I don't think he ever really quite got into the flow of things. He was a little bit heavier and just wasn't as well-conditioned."

Green said he dropped the extra weight rapidly and gained a step of quickness that he lost a year ago. Green holds the second fastest 40-yard dash time in school history, a 4.34 second effort. He also is tied for the best 10-yard dash time with 1.45 seconds.

Starting in front of Green will be fullback Joel Makovicka. Makovicka steps into the starting role with the departure of Brian Schuster. The walk-on junior from Brainard rushed 23 times for 119 yards last season and had one start, against Kansas.

After Green and Makovicka, the NU backfield gets a little thin. Backup I-back Sims is one of the fastest Huskers on the team, consistently running a 4.4 40-yard dash time.

"Jay Sims, he's always the same," Osborne said. "He's a good player at I-back."

The backup fullback, Billy Legate, is also a walk-on who's progressed over winter and summer conditioning. Legate's made a name for himself as a special team player, mainly a headhunter on kickoffs. He led the team in tackles by an offensive player with five last season. He was also a first-team Academic All-Big12

member for the 1996 season. Josh Cobb is listed third on the depth chart at fullback. He played in eight games last season and gained 43 yards on 12 carries before missing the last three games of the season.

DeAngelo Evans, the No. 2 I-back, has been sidelined all spring and for the beginning of fall workouts with a nagging groin injury. He had surgery for it this summer and is starting to jog on it, Solich said.

"He has no pain at all," Solich said. "He could play early in the season."

Definitely ahead of schedule is fourth string I-back Dan Alexander. Alexander unknowingly tore an ACL in the spring game and has had reconstructive surgery. He's been practicing once a day with minimal contact. Alexander has the size and speed to play either I-back or fullback, but has been practicing mainly at I-back.

"Learning the I-back will be plenty," Solich said.

Alexander doesn't care which position he plays.

"It doesn't matter," he said. "Once I learn the position, I'll do well at either. I-back is an easier position to learn. It's easier and more natural for me."

Fullbacks Ben Kingston and Willie Miller - tied for fourth on the depth chart - are both injured and not expected to return to practice until the middle of September. Kingston suffered an ACL injury in spring practice, and Miller had unexpected shoulder surgery from the spring game.

"Willie Miller, one of our top fullbacks, unexpectedly had a major shoulder operation one month after spring ball," Osborne said. "We thought he was fine with no major problem. He won't be ready until middle of September, early October."

As fall practice continues, depth in the backfield remains a concern for the players and coaches.

"Four of our probably top eight or nine backs aren't ready to go right now," Osborne said. "That remains a cause for some concern."

Kosch, Brown eye NU record books

BY DAVID WILSON
Senior Reporter

Nebraska kicker Kris Brown and punter Jesse Kosch don't consume themselves with breaking records. They have bigger things on their minds.

"For us, we both break records and do this and do that," Brown said, "but if we're not playing for the national championship, that won't mean a lot to us."

As a junior, Brown is on pace to break every career place-kicking record for the Cornhuskers. The 5-foot-10, 205-pounder ranks 14th in career scoring, and is 129 points behind career record-holder Mike Rozier. Brown is two field goals behind career-leader Dale Klein and is 43 extra points behind Kevin Seibel.

"You just try to do better than you did the year before," Brown said, "and I think in both Jesse and my case, I think we've become more consistent over the years."

Kosch, a senior, set a school

Nebraska Preview Special Teams

Jesse Kosch is second in the nation of returning punters.

Name	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	Position
Jesse Kosch	6-0	190	Sr.	Punter
Bill Lafleur	5-11	200	Jr.	Punter
Kris Brown	5-10	205	Jr.	Place Kicker
Ted Retzlaff	6-0	180	Sr.	Place Kicker



record last season averaging 44.7 yards per punt and is on pace to break Mike Stigge's career mark of 41.8 yards per punt. The 6-foot, 190-pounder has a 43-yard career average and is a candidate for All-America honors this fall.

A walk-on in 1993, Kosch red-shirted before backing up Darin Erstad in 1994. Kosch earned the starting role as a sophomore in 1995, beating out other qualified candidates, said Dan Young, NU's kickers coach.

"When he came, there was about three players that came in at the same time," Young said. "They

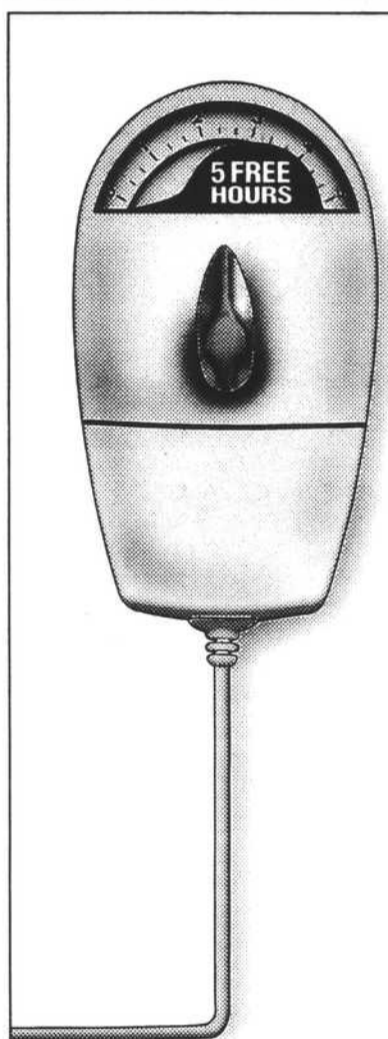
weren't all super-duper, but they were all class athletes. Jesse has made a lot of improvements. He's gotten a lot more consistent."

Kosch said repetition has helped him improve.

"With anything you do," Kosch said, "the more you do it, the better you'll be. This is my fifth year here. I've had time to improve - which I needed to do. I wasn't very good when I got here. I've improved substantially."

Brown said he also had

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