

# NU receivers value multiple functions

BY SAM MCKEWON  
Senior Reporter

Spring Football '98



The latest members of the Nebraska receiving corps suffer from a severe case of multiple personality disorder.

And that's just the way they like it.

Often seen as blocking soldiers in the Nebraska rushing army, the wingbacks, split ends and tight ends, bolstered by a colorful group of personalities, are looking to prove their big play ability.

"Every single one of us is our own person," senior wingback Lance Brown said. "We each bring something different to the table whether it be blocking or big plays. Every receiver is really unique and that makes for great chemistry."

The receivers have all settled into roles that make for a definitive melting pot, said Brown, the vocal leader of the group. Freshman Matt Davison is the foot soldier. Senior Shevin Wiggins is the quiet one. Senior Kenny Cheatham is the joker (Cheatham calls himself "the complainer"). Senior Sheldon Jackson is the silent leader.

NU Receivers Coach Ron Brown agreed.

"They're about as unique of a group as you're going to find," Brown said. "And they all get along, too. There's a lot of free spirit in those guys, and they're all good players."

And when Ron Brown says he has good players, Lance Brown said, that means the receivers are doing one thing right: paving holes for the Cornhusker backfield.

Last season, the NU receivers did its job. Nebraska led the nation in rushing with 392.6 yards per game, averaging 6.2 yards per carry — an average that suggests good downfield blocking, Brown said.

"When you get here, Coach Brown tells you the one thing you need to do to get on the field: block," said Brown, who had 12 catches for 226 yards last season. "You've got to be able to intimidate the other team."

"With all the different types of guys we have as receivers, our chemistry is great. It's helped us become great blockers and receivers."

Cheatham, who was tied with the team lead in receptions in 1997 with 14, said downfield blocking is the catalyst to the NU offense, but that the receivers could change their image some this season with an inexperienced offensive line and quarterback.

"I think we could pass the ball a little more this season," Cheatham said, "because we've got a lot of

## Returning receivers

Players listed according to spring depth chart (statistics from 1997)

Split end	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	Rec.	Yards	TD
Kenny Cheatham	6-4	210	Sr.	14	191	0
Matt Davison	6-0	180	So.	11	232	1
Billy Haafke	5-11	190	Sr.	1	15	0
Craig Fischer	6-0	180	Jr.	0	0	0

Wingback	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	Rec.	Yards	TD
Lance Brown	5-11	190	Sr.	12	226	0
Shevin Wiggins	5-11	200	Jr.	6	76	0
Sean Applegate	5-9	190	Jr.	1	9	0
John Gibson	5-11	180	So.	2	18	0

Tight end	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	Rec.	Yards	TD
Sheldon Jackson	6-4	245	Sr.	11	189	2
T.J. DeBates	6-3	250	Jr.	1	7	0

Letterwinners lost: Jeff Lake (SE); Sean Wieting (WB); Tim Carpenter (TE); Vershan Jackson (TE).

"They're about as unique of a group as you're going to find."

RON BROWN  
NU receivers coach

youth this year. We've got a lot of big-play guys out there, so we'll be dangerous."

The receivers and tight ends were dangerous last year, averaging 15.3 yards every time one of them touched the ball.

The Nebraska receiving corps will become even more dangerous if sophomore Bobby Newcombe returns to wingback, Brown said. Newcombe, currently locked in a battle for the starting quarterback position, said he wants to become a wingback permanently if he doesn't run the offense.

Ron Brown said he has not spoken to Newcombe this spring about wingback, but said he would certainly welcome him back, especially if Newcombe averages 24.7 yards per reception like he did in 1997.

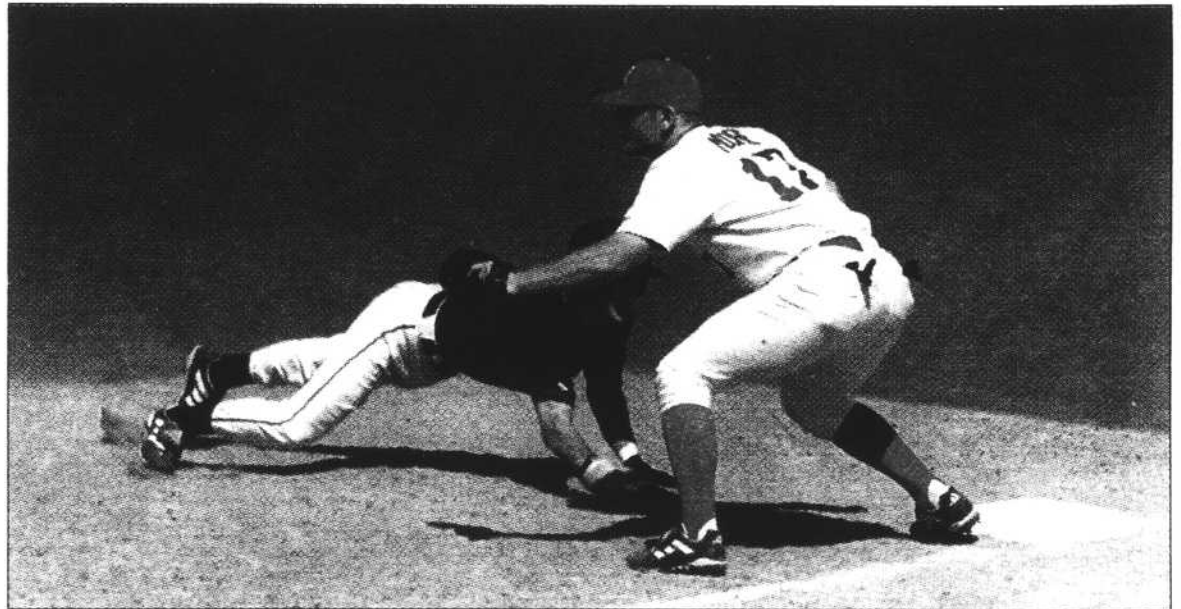
"Bobby's got the total package," Brown said. "He's a different player than an Irving Fryar, but he's like him in that he's an all-around guy."

Davison said Nebraska will be fine if Newcombe doesn't return to wingback.

"If he's at quarterback, that's great, too," Davison said. "Either way, he's going to make big plays at quarterback or at wingback."

If Newcombe does return, Lance Brown said, he will add to what is already a diverse group of players.

"We all come from different backgrounds and have different points of view," Brown said. "None of us are really the same, so Bobby fits in."



CORNHUSKER FIRST BASEMAN Craig Moore takes a pick-off throw from NU starter Matt Schuld Wednesday. The Red Raiders were successful on two of three stolen base attempts in the Huskers' 8-3 win.

CHRIS BENDET/DN

## Huskers beat No. 25 Tech

WIN from page 10

on the afternoon.

The Huskers scored two runs on three hits in the second and added three runs in the third as eight Huskers batted in the inning.

"We've been getting key hits from guys without Ken Harvey in the lineup, and they've done that all week long," NU Head Coach Dave Van Horn said. "Brian Johnson is one of those guys. He's come through with big hits, and he's thrown some guys out."

Batting in the seven spot, Johnson was 2 for 4 with three RBIs, and in addition to his seventh inning long ball, drove in first baseman Craig Moore with a single in the fifth to give NU a 6-3 lead.

Nebraska knocked out Texas Tech starter Joe Smith (3-2) early in the inning and began to work on

Red Raider reliever Zach Stewart.

Stewart, one of only seven Red Raider pitchers in uniform, was effective and struck out five Huskers but delivered Johnson a pitch that he couldn't resist.

"I've been seeing the ball really well lately," Johnson said of his fourth home run. "It felt good to get a hold of one there and help the team."

Back on the mound with an 8-3 lead, Schuld was in search of his third consecutive complete game in the eighth inning.

Schuld pitched nine innings on April 10 to defeat Texas A&M and shut down Oklahoma with 145 pitches on Friday.

On Wednesday, though, Schuld just ran out of gas against the Red Raiders.

"I understand why I came out," Schuld said after pitching 142

pitches. "My legs were feeling like Jell-O."

Junior southpaw Jay Sirriani came on in the eighth inning with two outs and struck out the first three batters he faced before allowing senior Tevis Arnold to slam the door on the Red Raiders.

"My hat's off to our pitching staff," Van Horn said. "They had to get out some of the best hitters in the country this week, and they did their job."

With their seventh win in their last eight games, the Huskers are all alone in seventh place in the conference behind Oklahoma.

The top six teams according to winning percentage advance to the Big 12 Tournament to be played in Oklahoma City on May 14-16.

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