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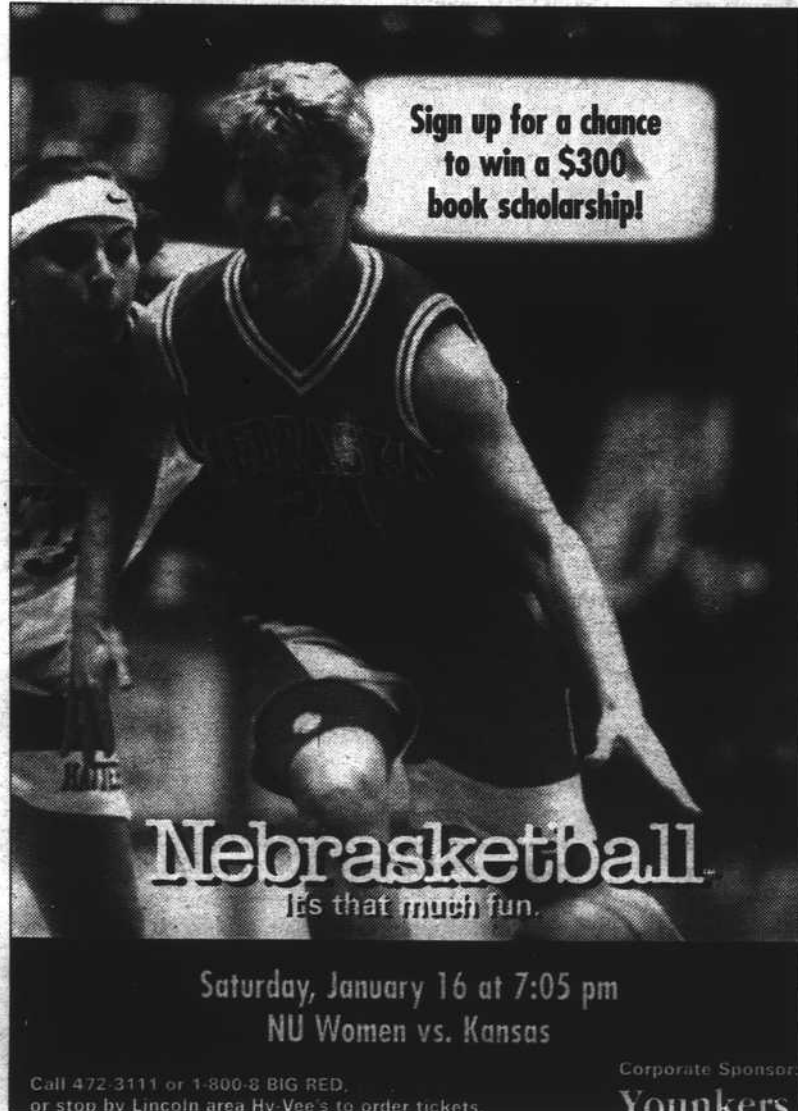
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Evans' surgery adds to injured Huskers

■ The target return of Bobby Newcombe and Joe Walker looks to be the start of fall practice.

By ADAM KLINKER
Senior staff writer

With DeAngelo Evans' knee surgery on Monday, the cycle was complete - the Year of the Cornhusker Knee Injury was hopefully over.



Evans

On Jan. 11, the NU I-back underwent arthroscopic surgery to clean up cartilage in his left knee.

In a practice before the Dec. 30 Holiday Bowl, Evans re-aggravated the original injury which he had sustained early last season, said Doak Ostergard, NU's head football trainer.

Upon returning to his home in Wichita, Kan., following the game, Evans met with a family doctor who suggested an MRI and then surgery.

"With any of those types of surgeries, this is the time of the year we try to do that," Ostergard said. "That way they have a little bit of time to rehab and be back for spring ball."

details available on the surgery, but said he expected Evans to fully recover within three to four weeks.

"It's pretty minor," Ostergard said.

Evans' other injury, a bruised tailbone, is healed and should not give him any more problems, Ostergard said.

In addition to Evans, three other NU walking wounded were also looking for an optimistic diagnosis on their knees following the season.

For rover Joe Walker and quarterback Bobby Newcombe, both hampered by knee injuries, things are coming along well, Ostergard said.

"Things are good," he said. "It will be really important for them to make a concentrated effort now to stay on track with their rehab. So far, they're doing a good job."

Ostergard said Newcombe's surgery on his left posterior cruciate ligament will probably take another six months to fully heal, just in time for Newcombe to return for fall practice.

Walker tore his anterior cruciate ligament prior to the Holiday Bowl and underwent surgery.

Like Newcombe, Walker should be back for fall practice after a five-month full recovery.

The prognosis is also good for Dan Alexander, who injured his right knee against Kansas State on Nov. 14. On Nov. 17, Alexander underwent surgery to repair damage to his lateral collateral ligament and hamstring

tendon.

Alexander's recovery was expected to take about three months. Ostergard said Alexander was off crutches Dec. 28 and bearing full weight on the knee.

"He'll just progress on and we'll see how he comes along," Ostergard said.

Knees notwithstanding, it was the Year of the Injury as a whole for Husker football.

Ten starters, including seven offensive skill position players - among those, three I-backs and two quarterbacks - suffered injuries that caused them to miss all or part of at least one game.

"We had more overall injuries this year," Ostergard said. "And it's more focused because it's happening to a lot of front-line guys."

Though greater in number, Ostergard said the severity of NU injuries was less pronounced in the 1998 season.

In the 1997 season, though overall injuries were down, there were five cruciate ligament surgeries. In 1998 there were just two cruciate surgeries - Newcombe's PCL and Walker's ACL.

In other football news, Dan White left Nebraska for the second semester and will not return. White, who carried the ball six times for 27 yards and was the No. 2 I-back for the Colorado game, will transfer to a Division I-AA or Division II school to be eligible for next season.

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