

# SPORTS

MONDAY, APRIL 19, 1999

PAGE 9

## Fumble returns save Red team in game

First-team defense stuffs Husker offense, many questions still to be answered in fall

“At the end of spring ball you'd like to see good execution. But with a number of players out and jumping a lot players back and forth, some of that is understandable.”

FRANK SOLICH  
Nebraska head coach

BY ADAM KLINKER  
Senior staff writer

The Nebraska Red-White Spring Game usually serves as the preliminary answer to all those lingering questions that vex the Cornhuskers after the end of any season.

But after yesterday's edition of NU's annual rites of spring, which the Red squad won 27-12, Husker Coach Frank Solich said some things remain to be seen.

And then again, Solich said, it's only spring. Twenty-four NU players, including eight starters, missed all or most of the spring and the Spring Game with injuries.

“The execution was not where you would like sometimes,” Solich said. “At the end of spring ball you'd like to see good execution. But with a number of players out and jumping a lot players

back and forth, some of that is understandable.”

While the execution may have been down, both the Red and White squads gave the crowd of 29,739 at Memorial Stadium some extended, improvised entertainment on offense and most notably on fumble and kick returns.

The scoring on both sides took on a big-play look as the Whites scored their only touchdown on a 47-yard gallop by reserve I-back Chris Butler. The Reds scored on fumble returns of 94 and 23 yards and a Spring Game record 100-yard kickoff return by Mike Demps.

Scoring the only offensive touchdown for the Reds was Correll Buckhalter on a 1-yard push into the end zone with two and a half minutes remaining in the game.

“It was big that we got that,” said Buckhalter, who led all rushers with 90

Red	27
White	12

yards on 14 attempts. “We had to at least get in the end zone once, but we should have gotten more out of some of our drives.”

The score capped an 87-yard drive by the Red squad highlighted by Eric Crouch's 45-yard bomb to Matt Davison that put the Reds on the 2-yard line to set up the touchdown.

It was the only time Crouch connected for long yardage in what he characterized as a disappointing showing for himself and the Red offense, which gained only eight first downs and averaged 3.6 yards per play.

Crouch, wearing the green jersey to signify that he was off-limits in the contact category, was 4-13 passing for 63 yards. He also threw two intercep-

tions and was sacked once.

“Any time the No. 1 offense doesn't get on the scoreboard we have to reevaluate and see what's going on,” Crouch said. “We had chances all day long. It was frustrating.”

While the first-team offense on the Red squad stymied several times on their drives in the first half, it was helped by the White squad's offensive miscues and Demps' long return in the second quarter.

Both Solich and Crouch credited the first team defense (the White squad) with keeping the Reds in check and not allowing either the passing or running games to be firmly established.

“They're a really good defense,” Crouch said. “It really helped out this spring being able to work against those

Please see **GAME** on 10

## NU beats Santa Clara, gains confidence for fall

■ Jenny Benson returns as Huskers score three in a win over the highly touted Broncos.

BY JAY SAUNDERS  
Staff writer

One statistic jumped out after the Nebraska women's soccer team's victory over Santa Clara on Saturday night.

The Broncos allowed only three goals in 23 games last season. The Cornhuskers equaled that output in 90 minutes with a 3-1 win. In the final game of the spring exhibition season, NU beat the team that many expect to be No. 1 next season.

“Once we got the first goal, we knew we could beat them,” junior Lindsay Eddleman said.

Nebraska	3
Santa Clara	1

“This kind of tells us where we are.”

A crowd of 1,019 at the Abbott Sports Complex watched as Santa Clara got on the board first when junior Jacqui Little stole a ball in the midfield and scored past a reeling Karina LeBlanc.

In the second half, NU Coach John Walker used four forwards in a game for the first time to try to spark the offense.

The adjustment worked. NU rattled off three second-half goals.

“It was a tale of two halves,” Walker said. “They dictated the tempo in the first half.”

Freshman Becky Preston struck first after a free kick taken by fellow freshman Meghan Anderson.

With 14 minutes and 41 seconds left in the match, a Bronco collided with freshman Kelly Rheem. The official awarded NU a penalty kick, and Jenny Benson cashed in to give the Huskers a 2-1 lead.

The freshman scoring continued when Shannon Tanaka scored a goal with less than four minutes left.

Walker said he didn't know if he would use the four-forward set again, but it was effective against Santa Clara.

“It really limited their time with the ball,” Walker said. “We were able to apply more pressure.”

While the offense scored at will, the defense was keeping the Broncos away from good scoring opportunities.

Sophomore Lauren Tatum said most of the second half was played with Santa Clara on their heels.

“We showed what we are capable of doing out there,” Tatum said. “We definitely dominated them in the second half.”

The Broncos were without four players. Three of those players were named All-Americans last season.



MATT MILLER/DN  
**TOP-** SANTA CLARA FORWARD RACHEL WEBER throws the ball in play in the first half of Nebraska's 3-1 win. Although Santa Clara dominated the first half, the Huskers' three second-half goals were as many as Santa Clara allowed all last season.

**RIGHT-** SHANNON TANAKA, left, hugs Amy Walsh after the Huskers defeated Santa Clara 3-1 Saturday night at the Abbott Soccer Complex. Tanaka scored the Huskers' third goal to seal the come-from-behind victory.

“(Our players) played with a lot of emotion and rightly so. This will be a confidence booster.”

JOHN WALKER  
NU soccer coach

But the Huskers were not exactly at full strength. Only six players were completely healthy this weekend.

That number went down as soon as junior Lindsay Eddleman hit the turf. Eddleman injured her right ankle, but she came back into the game and had an assist.

Even though it was an exhibition game, Walker said the victory would be important down the line.

“(Our players) played with a lot of emotion and rightly so,” Walker said. “This will be a confidence booster.”

