

1900 1901  
1902 1903  
1904 1905  
1906 1907  
1908 1909  
1910 1911  
1912 1913  
1914 1915  
1916 1917  
1918 1919  
1920 1921  
1922 1923  
1924 1925  
1926 1927  
1928 1929  
1930 1931  
1932 1933  
1934 1935  
1936 1937  
1938 1939  
1940 1941  
1942 1943  
1944 1945  
1946 1947  
1948 1949  
1950 1951  
1952 1953  
1954 1955  
1956 1957  
1958 1959  
1960 1961  
1962 1963  
1964 1965  
1966 1967  
1968 1969  
1970 1971  
1972 1973  
1974 1975  
1976 1977  
1978 1979  
1980 1981  
1982 1983  
1984 1985  
1986 1987  
1988 1989  
1990 1991

**SPORTS CENTURY**

# Johnny #2 RODGERS

It started with the catch.

He dashed up the middle.

He made a move—a move that seem to miss three men at once. His whole body lurched with it, finding him space to the outside.

The move, one of many he made over his career, came out of nowhere. In own his words: "What happened out there just happened."

He broke to the sideline. He got a few blocks (one of which, to this day, every fan who ever worshipped that prairie schooner swore was a clip).

Then came the speed. He had it, to be sure. You don't get nicknamed "The Jet" without it. He bolted past the maroon jerseys.

He was gone. Man. Woman. Child. Johnny Rodgers, the Nebraska receiver who seemed to defy gravity with his style on a football field, scored on a 72-yard punt return to give the Cornhuskers a 7-0 lead.

And he did it in possibly the biggest college football game ever played. The Game of the Century on Thanksgiving Day 1971, against No. 2 Oklahoma might be best remembered for Rodgers' pigskin ballet through the OU coverage. It ended in a 35-31 NU victory, and the Cornhuskers' second consecutive national title.

It cemented the legend of "Johnny the Jet," a man who would win the Heisman Trophy in 1972; a player who always "put 'em in the aisles," as late Nebraska radio broadcaster Lyle Bremser used to say.

"I'll never forget Lyle Bremser," Rodgers said. "I'd do what I did, and he would announce it to the world. His broadcasts added onto whatever I did. He and Bob Devaney are the two people



I thank the most."

Rodgers, the No. 2 athlete on the Daily Nebraskan Sports Century list, played for NU from 1970 to 1972. His career as a receiver has yet to be paralleled. He is still the all-time pass receiving leader at NU with 143 receptions for 2,479 yards. He's fourth in career points with 270 points on 45 touchdowns. He shares two NCAA records still, for most punt return for a touchdown in a career and most kick returns for touchdowns in a career.

Seeing himself as a "utility man," Rodgers was jack of most offensive trades. Never was it clearer than in the 1972 Orange Bowl, when Rodgers ran passed, and caught touchdowns. He scored five times in a 40-6 win over Notre Dame.

"If I had to run out of backfield, I did that," Rodgers said. "I did whatever I was called to do."

And then, there was the punt returns. Rodgers said he always got the green light from Devaney. No instructions, no rules. Rodgers said he could recall a time when Devaney asked him to make fair catch, although Rodgers could if he wanted to.

"I never did," Rodgers said. But much of credit goes to blocking, Rodgers said. His 15.46 career average for yards per return was testament to the holes the NU punt return team opened for him.

Former NU Coach Tom Osborne, who was the offensive coordinator when Rodgers played, acknowledged the team effort. But Rodgers had something special, too.

"He could beat you more ways than anyone," Osborne said. "Johnny just had a tremendous amount of talent and he could do so many things out on the field."

# #5 Charles GREENE

Sitting in fifth place is something that doesn't come easy to Charles Greene.

Greene, a sprinter on the Nebraska track team from 1965-67, won every race he ran from September 1965 to March 1967, took six NCAA titles and was also a six-time All-American.

"When I showed up, I won," Greene said. "I would show up for the race and I'd say, 'Hey look, guys, first place is already taken, it's sitting up in my room. You guys must be running for second and third.'"

Greene, the No. 5 male pick on the DN Sports Century list, won three NCAA indoor championships in the 60-yard dash and three NCAA outdoor championship in the 100-yard dash.

But it was his stint in the 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games that brought in the most precious hardware for Greene.

At the 1968 Games, Greene won two medals—a bronze in the 100-meter dash and a gold in the 4x100-meter relay.

"Mexico City was kind of the culmination of my track and field career," Greene said. "When you're represent-



ing your school and your nation, things become more exciting. It was just an awesome experience."

Adding to the accolades, Greene was also billed as the World's Fastest Man for a time in 1968.

Greene came to Nebraska from Seattle to run for Frank Sevigne, the Husker coach from 1956-83. At NU, he is on the record books for his 5.2 second time in the

50-yard dash, an event that is no longer run in collegiate competition.

"Nebraska gave me an opportunity, I already had the talent," Greene said of his days as Husker. "Talent is what counts."

These days, Greene has returned to his alma mater where he has worked as the director of student judicial affairs since July 1997.

He said returning to Nebraska has been another great chapter in his life and has allowed him to see campus life from yet another perspective.

"It's a great place," Greene said. "You hear it so much in Nebraska, they preach hard work. With that, the reputation of the institution follows you wherever you go. I always remember, good athletes go other places. Great athletes and great students go to Nebraska."

# #3 Jim HARTUNG

No Nebraska athletic program, not even football, can equal the dominance and tradition of Francis Allen's gymnastic teams the last 20 years.

Along with eight national team championships, the Cornhuskers brag eight individual all-around champions. The only man to win that title twice was Jim Hartung. Until this season, he was the only Husker to win the all-around as a sophomore.

Hartung, the No. 3 athlete in the Daily Nebraskan Sports Century list, won almost everything a male gymnast can possibly win throughout a career.

He was at the very core of Nebraska's remarkable dynasty in the late 1970s and early '80s. No other athlete in school history can claim the honor of being a part of four national championship teams. Three of those titles came from 1980-82 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center in front of his home fans.

If Tommie Frazier and Johnny Rodgers were the class of Nebraska sports history in terms of recognition and popularity, Hartung was the class in terms of numbers. Numbers unequaled by any Nebraska athlete.

Four national team titles. Two individual all-around titles. Three straight national titles on the still rings. Two straight national titles on



the parallel bars. Seven individual national titles in all. Twenty-two All-America honors.

The accolades don't end there. Hartung was also a two-time Olympian in 1980 and 1984. He helped the USA men's gymnastics team win its only team gold medal in history at the '84 Olympics in Los Angeles.

And Hartung was a part of many firsts, as well. Not only was he a part of Nebraska's first national championship team in 1979, he was one of the first two NU gymnasts to win individual titles (along with Phil Cahoy in 1980). Hartung was also the first of three Nebraska men to win the Nissen Award, presented to the outstanding senior collegiate gymnast of the year.

Ironically, Hartung won the award in the year he failed to win a third-straight all-around title, 1982. Hartung epitomized the requirements the winner of the Heisman Trophy of college gymnastics must fulfill:

"He must be an example of good sportsmanship and fair play... a champion in defeat as well as in victory. He must maintain a high standard of scholarship throughout his college career.

"The true champion seeks excellence physically, mentally, socially and morally."

# Mike #4 ROZIER

There's too many big games to recall. Too many highlight reel runs to count them accurately. But Nebraska's all-time rusher, Mike Rozier, has one title, albeit a subjective one, that he will most likely never have to relinquish to anyone in college football.

He's got the best 2-yard run the world has ever seen.

Against UCLA, Nebraska had a comfortable lead and was looking to pad. With the ball on the 2-yard line, quarterback Turner Gill gave the ball to Rozier, who scampered all the way back to the 20-yard line. Dodging Bruin defenders, he crisscrossed the field a couple more times and finally scored a 2-yard touchdown on a 60-yard run.

But that was Rozier, the No. 4 male athlete on the Daily Nebraskan Sports Century list. He could make impossible-looking runs seem possible. In 1983, he ran for 2,149 yards en route to the Heisman Trophy, an award he was predicted to win.

He scored 29 touchdowns that season, 49 for his career. Rozier rushed for 4,837 yards overall and still holds two NCAA record for yards per carry in a season (7.81) and yards per carry over a career (7.16).

"He was one of our great backs," former NU coach Tom Osborne said. "Mike had a great ability to make a little move on a guy without slowing down."

Rozier played on an offense that was considered one of the most prolific in recent years. The 1983 scoring explosion had much to do with Rozier, who replaced future NFL star Roger Craig as starter at the beginning of the 1982 season. Until it was broken by Calvin Jones in 1991, Rozier held the single-game rushing record of 285 yards.

He still holds the record for most 200-yard games with six. He has the most yards in a quarter (135) and in a half (230). He has the most attempts in a career at Nebraska, the most yards, the most touchdowns and definitely the best 2-yard run.

Osborne said one of Rozier's best attributes was balance. The tiptoed run down the sideline against Syracuse, a run made famous by Sports Illustrated, made testament to that. It was Rozier's ability to stay nimble throughout a run that kept him deadly.

"Most guys have to run laterally to make guys miss, or they'll have to stop to do it," Osborne said. "Mike had great feet; he'd just keep running with a full head of steam on him."



To see the remaining top ten athletes of the century, please turn to page 12.