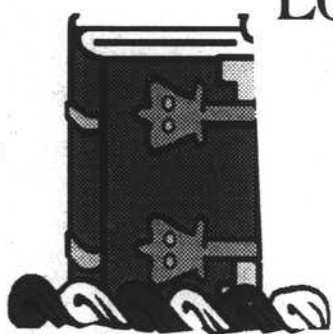


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NU depth chart reveals uncertainty in many positions

BY DAVID WILSON
Staff writer

A three-week delay in the release of the Nebraska football post-spring depth chart revealed more players earned an all capitalized "OR" by their name than solidified an individual slot during spring ball.

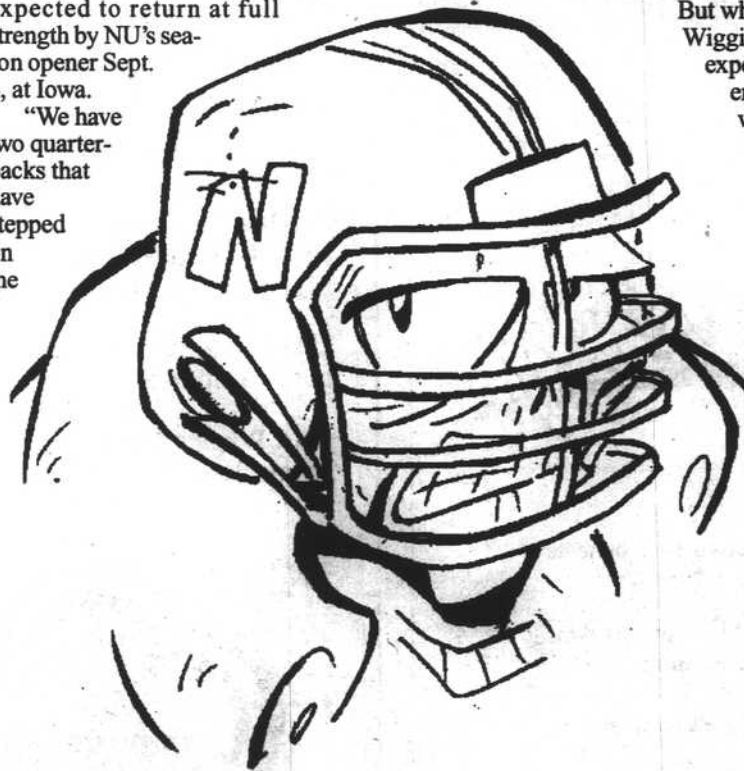
Aside from 17 returning starters and a number of players with returning experience, 50 of the 92 athletes share their position on the depth chart with another player.

"You do see an awful lot of 'OR's' in there," NU Coach Frank Solich said after releasing the depth chart May 28. "There isn't a position that is locked up to the point where if a guy doesn't come back and play well that someone won't move ahead of him. That's just athletics in general. You need to perform every week and every year. You can't just show up."

Only two players — senior wingback Shevin Wiggins and freshman kicker Josh Brown — earned a starting role during the spring, and one, left cornerback Keyuo Craver, jumped into a shared starting role with Erwin Swiney. Wiggins became the starter again after earning a sixth season of eligibility through the NCAA.

In all, eight returning offensive starters maintained their positions, including quarterbacks Bobby Newcombe and Eric Crouch, who continue to share the No. 1 slot. Newcombe, who suffered a knee injury last fall and did not participate in contact drills this spring, is expected to return at full strength by NU's season opener Sept. 4, at Iowa.

"We have two quarterbacks that have stepped on the



field and got it done for us," Solich said. "Without question, both of them have proven that they can lead this football team. So you want them both to understand that and you the people out there to understand that."

At I-back, juniors DeAngelo Evans, Dan Alexander and Correll Buckhalter, also continue to share the top spot on the depth chart. Buckhalter started seven games for the Huskers last fall and led NU with 799 yards on the ground, while Evans and Alexander battled injuries.

The returning Wiggins adds returning experience to the receiving corps.

"Shevin's reappearance on the scene is tremendously important to us," Solich said. "He has done a lot for this team. He's a very good leader and an experienced player. We're glad to have him back. If you look at our depth at the receiver spot, this was important."

But while Wiggins' experience was

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FRANK SOLICH
NU head coach

added to the depth chart, rover Joe Walker's name was removed as the junior had arthroscopic surgery last month to repair a joint surface defect found as he was recovering from anterior cruciate ligament surgery.

Walker, who grabbed a team-high three interceptions while starting seven games for the Huskers last fall, could return by mid-season, Solich said.

In his place, freshman Mike Demps was added to the bottom of the rover position on the depth chart. Demps was one of 21 freshmen to earn spots on the chart.

Both freshman right cornerback DeJuan Groce and freshman left rush end Chris Kelsay earned second-string positions, while Brown is the only freshman to earn a No. 1 spot. Aside from starting kicking duties, Brown is also slated as the second-string punter behind junior Dan Hadenfeldt.

The incoming recruiting class could also shake up the depth chart in the fall, Solich said. Incoming freshman will report Aug. 6, and varsity players will report Aug. 10, before practice begins on Aug. 12.

"They will be given a look," Solich said. "I don't think there is anyone we'll rule out. There are some guys that we feel will be able to provide some depth."

Solich said the delay on the release of the post-spring depth chart gave him a chance to meet with nearly every player individually.

"The last thing I wanted to do was throw something out there and have a lot of players throwing their hands up in the air not knowing what was released," Solich said.

The players that he hasn't met with individually, Solich said, will get their chance when they return for summer workout programs.

"They are going to be back in abundance," Solich said, "well over 100. That's important to develop chemistry. It's all voluntary, so that makes it more meaningful."