

Offense encouraged by performance

■ **Emphasis on playing power football results in big day for Nebraska I-back Dan Alexander.**

By **SAMUEL MCKEWON**
Senior staff writer

A wet towel draped over his head like a sheik, Nebraska center Dominic Raiola looked like he'd just spent three hours merely trying to survive an aggressive assault from the NU Blackshirts.

His words sang a different tune. In fact, Raiola said, Saturday's offensive

performance in the first major scrimmage of the fall was the best he'd seen since the sophomore stepped on campus two years ago.



Raiola

performance in the last two years — like night and day.

Not that the defense didn't have

Awaiting Iowa 12 days and counting

its moments. Although the offense compiled 385 rushing yards, the first-team unit rendered useless just about every offensive squad that went up against it and swarmed quarterbacks Bobby Newcombe and Eric Crouch on nearly every play.

Neither signal-caller had an especially big day, partially by design, NU Head Coach Frank Solich said. The game plan on Saturday had an emphasis on power football, which meant fewer options and virtually no down-field passing, Solich said.

Power football did mean a heavy dose of No. 2 I-back Dan Alexander,

who did not disappoint in his first major action since surgery to his right knee.

Alexander had the day's biggest play, bursting through a gaping hole in the middle of the No. 2 defense and rambling 65 yards for a touchdown on the first play of an offensive series. For the scrimmage, Alexander recorded 87 yards on seven carries and also put a devastating block on Sam linebacker Julius Jackson, enabling Newcombe to scramble for 13 yards and a first down.

"Bobby set that up," Alexander said. "He gave Julius a little move — got him off-balance. I don't think Julius saw it coming."

Alexander expressed surprise at

his performance, saying he thought it might take "a couple of scrimmages" before he returned to full strength after repair to a torn lateral collateral ligament he suffered in the Kansas State game last Nov. 14.

Solich, though, had no such fears. "Dan doesn't mess around with too many moves," Solich said. "Even when he gets in the open field."

Solich had praise for redshirt freshman Dahrnan Diedrick, too. Diedrick, the No. 4 I-back, ran for 52 yards on six carries, often taking tacklers a few yards with him.

No. 1 back DeAngelo Evans racked up 22 yards on eight carries as

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Just for kicks



MATT MILLER/DN

Breanna Boyd, left, and Christine Latham fight for the ball in the Huskers' intrasquad scrimmage Saturday at the Abbott Sports Complex. Nebraska, which opens its regular season Friday against Texas Tech, also won an exhibition game 14-0 against the University of Nebraska at Omaha last weekend.

Pettit satisfied with scrimmage

By **JOHN GASKINS**
Staff writer

Facing two top-10 teams this weekend to start the season will be a tall task for the Nebraska volleyball team.

To prepare for such a task, the Cornhuskers faced another perennial top-10 powerhouse Saturday night — themselves.

The No. 3 Huskers showcased their depth in the annual Red-White Scrimmage in front of 894 fans at the Nebraska Coliseum.

After five sets and 2½ hours of grueling play, Head Coach Terry Pettit said his team will stack up well against next weekend's competition.

"I thought it was an incredible scrimmage," Pettit said. "From the starting point, both groups competed hard. At times, everyone played well. It was certainly as good of a scrimmage as we've had since I've been here."

The White team, composed of NU's top eight or nine players, stormed back to shatter the dreams of a younger Red-team upset, 10-15, 16-14, 9-15, 15-13, 15-4.

As expected, 1998 first-team All-American junior Nancy Meendering stole the show at the outside hitter position. Meendering, who played in all five games for the White team, led the Huskers with 24 kills.

Setting many of those attacks was junior co-captain Jill McWilliams,

"I think we can learn a lot from this scrimmage."

TERRY PETTIT
NU head coach

who anchored the Whites to a fifth set, 15-4 romp when the team needed her most.

McWilliams' backup at setter, freshman Greichaly Cepero, lived up to the hype she's received from Pettit and the press. Cepero played setter, middle blocker and outside hitter for both teams and finished with 11 kills and a .444 hitting percentage.

"Greichaly did a lot of things well, like we knew she would," Pettit said. "We need to find a way to keep her on the court."

Three other players who impressed both Pettit and Meendering on Saturday were junior outside hitter Kim Behrends (14 kills, .448 pct.), freshman middle blocker Pam Krejci (led the Red team with 17 digs) and senior defensive specialist Kim Crandall (12 digs).

"The closeness of the whole entire match is really evidence of how even everybody on our team is in ability," Meendering said.

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Huskers look to fill shoes of suspended Wiggins

By **ADAM J. KLINKER**
Staff writer

With Shevin Wiggins' future in question following his arrest last Friday, the Nebraska football team once again faces the loss of a key figure in the offensive attack.

After being granted a rare sixth year of eligibility from the NCAA, Wiggins, a senior wingback, was expected to be one of the keystones in the Cornhusker receiver corps this fall.

Instead, Wiggins was suspended indefinitely from the Husker team after he turned himself in to Lancaster County sheriff's deputies on a felony charge of sexual assault of a child.

NU Head Coach Frank Solich said Wiggins will not play or practice with the team while the matter, involving the alleged fondling of a 14-year-old girl, is investigated.

Solich said he based his decision on univer-

sity policy.

"There is a system in place within the university, and it is a policy I agree with," Solich said. "We'll start from there."



Wiggins

London and junior John Gibson.

London, who has been plagued by injuries throughout his career at Nebraska, said although a weighty task now lies before them, the talent and experience of the backups should

sustain the Husker receiving game.

"We would love to have Shevin out here playing with us because he's the greatest guy," London said. "He's our teammate, and we love him."

"The thing is, tough times come, and now we've got to fight through it. We wingbacks will have to put together a package, and I think we'll do well."

In addition to the loss of Wiggins' presence on the team, Solich said the squad must also contend with the psychological strain that sometimes accompanies a controversial situation involving a player in trouble with the law.

"It tears you up," Solich said. "We do all we can to have our players act in a certain manner. When it doesn't happen, it hurts. You really spend a great deal of time with these players. On a year-round basis you're with them, you get very attached to them, you know their character and find that they're good people. So when

something like this happens, it's really a setback."

Following what many believed would be his last season in 1998, Wiggins applied for and was allowed a sixth season added on to the usual five-year clock the NCAA gives athletes to exhaust their eligibility.

Wiggins received his sixth year and has continued at Nebraska as a graduate student as a result of a bylaw that the NCAA had drawn up in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Wiggins has a learning disability.

But his future as a football player and as a student is now in jeopardy as the alleged crime carries a penalty of up to five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

"We all wish the incident had never occurred," Solich said. "We'll see how it affects Shevin. Certainly he's set back in his career right now."