

SPORTS

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NU prepares for tough secondary

BY SEAN CALLAHAN
Staff writer

In the past few games, the Nebraska football team has relied on its passing attack to get its offense started.

On Saturday, when the Cornhusker receivers line up against the Kansas State secondary, they won't be lining up against any average secondary.

In fact, to some people the Wildcat secondary is considered the best in the country. Statistically, there is no room to argue — it is the best defensive backfield in the country.

Currently the KSU secondary leads the nation in passing efficiency defense with a ranking of 69.3. The Wildcats also lead the nation in interceptions with 18. All together, the Kansas State defense has allowed only five passing touchdowns all season.

Husker Receivers Coach Ron Brown has a lot of respect for the Wildcat secondary.

"They're great man-cover players, there's no doubt about it," Brown said.

"They do a tremendous job of technique and staying with people. They're not leading the nation in passing efficiency for no reason at all."



Brown

Brown also said that any mistake made against a secondary as good as KSU's could result in a score the other way.

"They make plays, they get after you, they come up with the football," Brown said. "Our receivers will definitely have to work extremely hard, be intelligent and be at the top of their game."

Junior wingback Bobby Newcombe said this is the best defensive backfield the Huskers have faced all season.

Newcombe expects the Wildcats to do anything possible to slow down the NU receivers.

"I anticipate them playing a lot of bump and run coverage up on myself

"They make plays, they get after you, they know how to pressure you and they come up with the football."

RON BROWN
NU receivers coach

and Matt (Davison) to try to keep us from getting off the line too quickly," Newcombe said.

Being involved in more offensive plays, Newcombe said, will make the KSU secondary have to key on more things and honor his presence on the field.

"It's not when I just come in the game that they're going to give me the ball, or the ball is going to come to me on a pass or a reverse. I'll be in there blocking as well," Newcombe said.

Davison knows how much of a challenge the Wildcat secondary is going to bring to Lincoln on Saturday.

"They're a very aggressive defense," Davison said. "It's going to

be one against one. May the best man win."

Davison said with such an aggressive secondary the offensive line will have to give sophomore quarterback Eric Crouch adequate time to get his passes off.

"Their corners are great athletes, their safeties are tremendous players and we know that it's going to take a great effort for us to get open and make plays," Davison said.

With such a big challenge in front of them on Saturday, Brown still has high confidence in his young receiving corps.

"I would say it's one of the best that we've had here, and they're not done yet," Brown said.

KSU finds itself in new role

BY DAVID DIEHL
Staff writer

MANHATTAN, Kan. — The shoe is on the other foot this year for the Kansas State Wildcats. Their 2:38 p.m. game vs. Nebraska on Saturday finds both KSU and the 8-1 Cornhuskers swapping positions.

Last year it was the Wildcats who had something to prove in the comforts of their own stadium, defeating NU 40-30 for their first victory over the Huskers in 30 years.

This year they find themselves in the Huskers' cross-hairs and the object of revenge for that loss. And this time, they're playing in NU's back yard.

K-State Head Coach Bill Snyder said last year's victory puts his team in a good position for Saturday's match-up.

"But doing the right things and preparing well, you can have success anywhere against anyone. You don't have to have the precedent take place," Snyder said, referring to the game in Manhattan last year.

KSU Linebacker Ben Lieber, fourth on the team in tackles, said that what happened last year is over, and that is that. This is a totally new year and a new game, he said.

"It's a different season," Lieber said. "They have different personnel. We have different personnel. We've seen what they can do, and I think they've seen what we can do. The intensity is just as high this week."

Wildcat wide receiver Aaron Lockett, the second leading receiver on the KSU squad, said there is a little bigger bounce in K-State's step in practices this week and that, in some ways, there's some pressure to go out and prove that last year wasn't a fluke.

"We've proved that we're capable of winning nine games for the past couple of years," Lockett said. "I think that Nebraska's not the only test that we have throughout the whole season."

Maybe the biggest factor of last year's and this year's games is the home field advantage. KSU hasn't lost in 21 games at KSU Stadium and has won 51 consecutive games there vs. unranked opponents. But now the roles are reversed.

The Wildcats come to Memorial Stadium, where NU is 42-1 in the past seven years, and the Wildcats haven't won in Lincoln since a 12-0 blanking of the Big Red in 1968.

Lieber recalls his first trip to Lincoln his freshman year.

"Gametime came, and it was all red, and I couldn't believe all the fans they packed in there," he said.



JEFF COOPER/KANSAS STATE COLLEGIAN

KANSAS STATE QUARTERBACK Jonathan Beasley will lead KSU on Saturday against Nebraska.

"The fans were on top of you, and it was loud. It was very intense."

Snyder said that playing at home is definitely a factor in any game. He said things such as crowd noise and the aura and expanse of Memorial Stadium make it a tough place to play, probably the toughest in the Big 12, he said.

But to get past the crowd, Snyder said his team just has to play well, and if that happens, the crowd gets taken out of the game.

"When you get there," Snyder said, "and this is true whether it's Nebraska or Texas or Oklahoma State or in Ames, Iowa — you have to keep the game within the white lines. You have to keep it on the playing field."

"We've proved that we're capable of winning nine games for the past couple of years."

AARON LOCKETT
KSU wide receiver

Sports Opinion

KSU has sad, sad history



Matt Hansen

At some unknown point of the great beyond, a couple of guys named Bob Devaney and Lud Fiser sometimes sit around and talk football. They are a strange pair, the great Devaney, a Husker and college football coaching legend, and Fiser, a man with a strange name lost in the annals of Kansas State college football infamy.

But they like each other. Devaney doesn't mind shooting the bull with a man who has only one college coaching victory to his credit.

This week, though, Lud is getting a little on Bob's nerves, talking about Bill Snyder's Wildcats and how they are going to beat Frank Solich's Huskers. Finally, after three days of Fiser's boasting, Devaney can't take it anymore.

"What exactly is wrong with you, Lud?" Devaney said. "Why the brag-



Bachman

gery? Sure, Snyder deserves some credit. Kansas State is a good football team. "But have you forgotten about the previous 80 years of Kansas State football? Have you conveniently erased the memory of all those losing seasons? Besides, your name is Lud, and your career record is 1-7. So, until the Wildcats actually manufacture something that even remotely resembles tradition, shut the hell up."

Bob Devaney is a smart guy, and he has a point. Kansas State is a quality football team and has been for the better part of a decade now.

Bill Snyder is responsible for the single best turnaround in college football history. He sure didn't have much to work with — the two-stoplight, cow pie-laden embarrassing excuse for a college town known as Manhattan, Kan., sure doesn't lend itself to great recruiting.

Not that the college is much better, although it has won multiple livestock judging national championships, a fact that is prominently displayed on signs around the city.

But all this does is make Snyder's job at Kansas State that much more impressive.

You can't forget the leaner years, though, the malnourished decades, the astoundingly depraved century of Kansas State Wildcat football.

Besides, Devaney needs some ammo. It all began with a guy, named, well, Guy. It actually began with a guy named Ira, who retired with no career victories, but Guy Lowman was the first KSU coach to face Nebraska.

He lost 59-0 in 1911. In fact, Lowman and successor John "Chief" Bender lost to NU six straight times by

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