



QUARTERBACK ERIC CROUCH handles the ball during the final spring practice Wednesday at Memorial Stadium. Crouch will be sitting out of the Red-White Spring Game on Saturday after recent shoulder surgery put him on the injured list. Josh Wolfe/DN

Texas shows off depth in scrimmage

By Joshua Camenzind

Staff writer

Texas Coach Mack Brown's Longhorns have given him something to boast about.

Both the first- and second-string players gave solid performances in the annual orange-white game.

"This has been the best spring we've had since I've been here," Brown said on the university Web site. "We're better off two-deep than we've been since I've been here."

But it is that experience and depth that might do in the Longhorns at the quarterback position. It is a position that is assured controversy in the fall.

While last year's starting quarterback, Major Applewhite, was on the mend this spring recovering from knee surgery, sophomore Chris Simms took over and showed he could hold the reins of the offense adequately.

Simms played the whole spring game with the No. 1 offense and was near perfect. He completed 10 of 11 passes for 129 yards while his backup for the spring, Adam Hall, completed four of five passes for 85 yards and a touchdown.

Looks like Brown has a controversy on his hands.

"Chris is much better now than he was at the end of last year," Brown said. "I'm really pleased with how Adam is coming along as well."

But can Brown bench the co-offensive Big 12 Player of the Year, Applewhite?

"We don't know where Major's knee is at, but he'll be ready by the fall," he said. "And we've got another one (Chance Mock) coming in, so we'll be looking good at quarterback."

Whatever decision Brown chooses to make, the offense will have plenty of weapons to complement whoever is running the offense.

The Longhorns return Hodges Mitchell at running back and Ivan Williams, a redshirt freshman who had 45 yards on eight carries in the spring game, and both will provide depth at the position. Both scored touchdowns in the game but got help from a solid offensive line.

"The offensive line is much better than they were at the end of the year," Brown said. "They're more physical - moving better - and we're running better because of it."

Brown said the linemen would be

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QB a surprise for Red-White game

By Brandon Schulte

Staff writer

Just imagine the finger-pointing that would have occurred. And the laughing.

If someone had predicted that the starting quarterbacks for the red and white teams in the Nebraska 2000 spring game would be Joe Chrisman and Brett Lindstrom, laughter most certainly would have ensued. And the question "Who?" most likely would have followed.

But with starter Eric Crouch receiving limited repetitions and no contact due to offseason shoulder surgery, and back-up Jammal Lord going down with a knee injury this spring, Chrisman and Lindstrom are NU's top two signal callers this Saturday.

Chrisman and Lindstrom both said that they have to pinch themselves to make sure they are the top two quarterbacks.

"I didn't expect to be here, in this situation, so fast," Lindstrom said. "When I first came in, I was just going to run the No. 3's, and I'm just starting

"I've always wanted to play big time football and you can't get bigger than this ... kind of a dream I guess. I'm still living a dream."

Joe Chrisman

NU quarterback

to get in a comfort zone."

Chrisman, a walk-on and native of Longmont, Colo., was a redshirt in 1998 and appeared in four games as a reserve quarterback last year, rushing for three yards on two carries and attempting four passes.

Lindstrom, also a walk-on, was recruited as a defensive back out of Millard West before switching to quarterback before the start of spring drills. He played running back his senior year of high school after playing quarterback both his sophomore and junior season.

The lack of depth at quarterback is consistent with the lack of experience. Chrisman is the only one of the three

quarterbacks behind Crouch who has played in a college game.

But before Lord, who is the Cornhuskers' only other scholarship quarterback besides Crouch, went down with the injury to his posterior cruciate ligament, the three combined in NU's first major scrimmage of the spring to rack up nearly 700 yards of total offense.

All of them led the offense on scoring drives, but Lord's ability to make plays on long yardage situations drew rave reviews from Coach Frank Solich.

"I think Jammal has really been a big-play guy for us," Solich said. "Instinctively he's done a lot of things

QUARTERBACK PERSPECTIVES

WHO'S BACK:
Eric Crouch
LRE Chad Kelsay

WHO'S GONE:
Jeff Perino

OUTLOOK:
Crouch is among the best quarterbacks in the nation. There's little left for him to learn at this point; he only needs to polish what's already there. Passing situations might be a minor emphasis.

for us that many experienced quarterbacks just never quite do. We were real pleased with his progress."

If Lord requires surgery to repair his injury, Solich said he'll miss all of next season. But if he recovers the way the NU doctors think he can, Solich said, Lord might be able to participate in some summer conditioning.

In the event that Lord is lost for the season and Crouch is injured next season, Quarterback Coach Turner Gill said wingback and former starting quarterback Bobby Newcombe would

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Notre Dame looks forward to new beginning

"Hopefully we don't have to hear 5-7 again once we get started with spring practice. ... Maybe that will be the last time we have to answer questions."

Bob Davie
Notre Dame coach

By Brandon Schulte

Staff writer

Notre Dame has more than just a storied football program. It's a place where legends are true and dreams are made.

The Fighting Irish have given college football coaching greats Knute Rockne, Frank Leahy and Ara Parseghian.

Notre Dame even spawned the career of former President Ronald Reagan, who became famous by playing George Gipp in the 1940 film "Knute Rockne - All American."

But the weight of the golden dome and 10 national titles in the past century can get pretty heavy. Just ask current Irish Coach Bob Davie, who drew fire last season after his team went 5-7 and failed to qualify for a bowl game.

"Hopefully we don't have to hear 5-7 again once we get started with spring practice," Davie

said. "I doubt it, but maybe that will be the last time we have to answer questions about that."

It's been a long, cold winter in South Bend, Ind., since ND lost its last four games in November. Eleven starters have graduated (four offense, six defense and the kicker). That includes two-year starting quarterback Jarious Jackson. And Notre Dame has been put on minor probation by the NCAA for improprieties between former players and a booster.

But for the first time in a while, Davie and his players are ready to put the past behind them as they look forward to a new century and a new season.

"I think we have a lot of reasons to be optimistic," he said. "Of course, I realize at this time of the year, all over the country, everyone is optimistic."

"Every team in the NCAA is 0-0 right now and that's the great thing about the spring - everybody has a fresh start. There's a lot of positions open. And

everyone is optimistic."

For Irish eyes to be shining in 2000, ND will have to do something about its defense. Five times last season, the Fighting Irish lost games even though they scored three or more touchdowns.

Last year's unit gave up big plays on a regular basis. And Notre Dame games resembled the offensive shootouts that were prevalent in the old Western Athletic Conference rather than games of the ND championship teams of yesteryear.

"We have to eliminate giving up the big plays that we had a problem with on defense last year," Davie said. "The second thing is we got to eliminate the turnovers on offense. I don't think there's anything that takes the wind out of you in football as much as those two things."

"When you turn the football over as we did last year - a lot - when you give up big plays on defense, it's hard to maintain that passion when you have these bad things happen to you."