

## Big XII Notebook

# Freshmen at bottom of depth chart

BY JOSHUA CAMENZIND

The Memorial Stadium sideline is usually where you will find Cornhusker freshmen on football Saturdays, at least until the waning moments of blowouts.

Nebraska's final preseason depth chart, released Monday, seems to buck that trend on first glance. Three true freshmen are listed.

But upon further inspection, it's probably just a mirage. None of those three freshmen are ranked higher than third at their respective positions.

Unless your name is Tommie Frazier or Ralph Brown, don't expect to see much playing time, said Rod Baker, a senior linebacker listed ahead of highly touted freshman T.J. Hollowell.

"It would really surprise me if they played a lot this season," he said. "They're really talented, but this is a complex program. If they can come in and take over, they're going to be NFL stars in a couple years."

T.J. Hollowell is third at strongside linebacker, behind sophomore Scott Shanle and Baker.

Terrell Butler is No. 4 at the left cornerback position behind junior Keyuo Craver, redshirt freshman Pat Ricketts and senior Dwayne McClary.

The fourth spot at free safety is filled by Willie Amos. Amos is listed behind junior Dion Booker and seniors Clint Finley and Troy

Watchorn.

Senior rover Joe Walker is impressed with what he has seen from the freshmen.

"They've been very impressive throughout two-a-days and fall camp," he said. "They are all very athletic but are still in the process of learning."

Defensive coordinator Craig Bohl said that being listed on the depth chart means that the young players are looking good and are improving. But Bohl emphasizes that no final determination has been made on their status for the season.

"I want to make it clear that nothing has been finalized at all," he said. "We are in the process of evaluating all of the freshmen, still."

"We have not made a final determination on whether they are going to play or redshirt yet."

NU Coach Frank Solich said coaches will keep evaluating freshmen.

"We have had a number of freshman that have picked the system up and have performed well enough that we will continue to look at them," he said. "Right now, there could be anywhere from three to five guys (who) end up playing for us. We will see how that plays out."

Walker, who played in all 13 games as a true freshman and bypassed redshirting, said that right now the freshmen are going through a transition.

"They are in the process of putting their mental game and their physical game together," Walker said.

Solich said maybe one or two of the freshmen are ready to play in Saturday's opener. But he wasn't offering guarantees.

Other depth chart notables include Thunder Collins, who is No. 3 on kickoff returns. Bobby Newcombe will not only return punts this season, but will return kickoffs, as well.

Because of Dan Hadenfeldt's suspension, Josh Brown is the No. 1 punter. Chace Long will kick off in Hadenfeldt's place, as well.

Collins is listed as the No. 4 I-back along with

**Kansas**  
The Jayhawks will unveil several offensive formations Saturday in the season opener against Southern Methodist. The team will use No. 1 backs Moran Norris and David Winbush in same backfield at times, and it will occasionally line one up at wide receiver. Norris is a larger, inside runner, and Winbush is a shifter rusher outside the tackles.

"We'll see how the game plays out," KU Coach Terry Allen said. "They'll actually be in the backfield at the same time quite a bit."

Allen said kicker Joe Garcia, who had a miserable season in 1999, has shown significant improvement in 2000 fall camp. He'll remain the starting kicker for now. Quarterback Dylon Smith, who helped the Jayhawks get hot late last season, also showed marked improvement.

**Oklahoma**  
Not even in the Barry Switzer heydays have the Sooners sold as many season tickets as they have for the 2000 campaign, with 63,000 tickets sold so far.

"It's amazing that the support is like that," OU Coach Bob Stoops said. "Hopefully, we can continue to create that excitement."

Stoops said four or five true freshmen could play in the first month of the season, most notably Renaldo Works, a tailback who has already moved his way in the two-deep chart.

**Oklahoma State**  
OSU Coach Bob Simmons is keeping the wraps on the new, wide-open offense so far this fall. He continues to preach that the Cowboys will have a balanced offense for the Sept. 9 opener against Tulsa. Simmons doesn't see Oklahoma State moving away from its rushing roots too far.

"I don't see this as the end of Tailback U," Simmons said. "Whether it's one back or two backs or three, we're going to run the football."

Simmons said an injury to quarterback Tony Lindsay's passing arm shouldn't be serious and won't impede his playing time in practice.

**Kansas State**  
It may have shown as a 27-7 victory over Iowa, but few positives derived from KSU's win in Saturday's Eddie Robinson Classic.

The Wildcats lost running back and punt returner David Allen "for at least one ball game" after hurting his ankle, Coach Bill Snyder said.

Allen didn't break any bones, but he will not play Saturday against Louisiana Tech.

Chris Claybon will be assuming the starting role at running back, while receivers Aaron Lockett and Quincy Morgan will return kicks.

**Missouri**  
Kirk Farmer "is the guy" at quarterback for the Missouri football team in the season opener against Western Illinois, Coach Larry Smith said Monday.

Other quarterback Jim Dougherty suffered a season-ending injury last week. Darius Outlaw, a redshirt freshman, and Justin Gage, a converted wide receiver, will back up.

**Texas Tech**  
It may have been his first game as a collegiate head coach. But Mike Leach never felt the sudden rush of excitement that he was told would accompany the start of the Red Raiders' 24-3 victory over New Mexico Saturday.

"I kept waiting for it," Leach said.

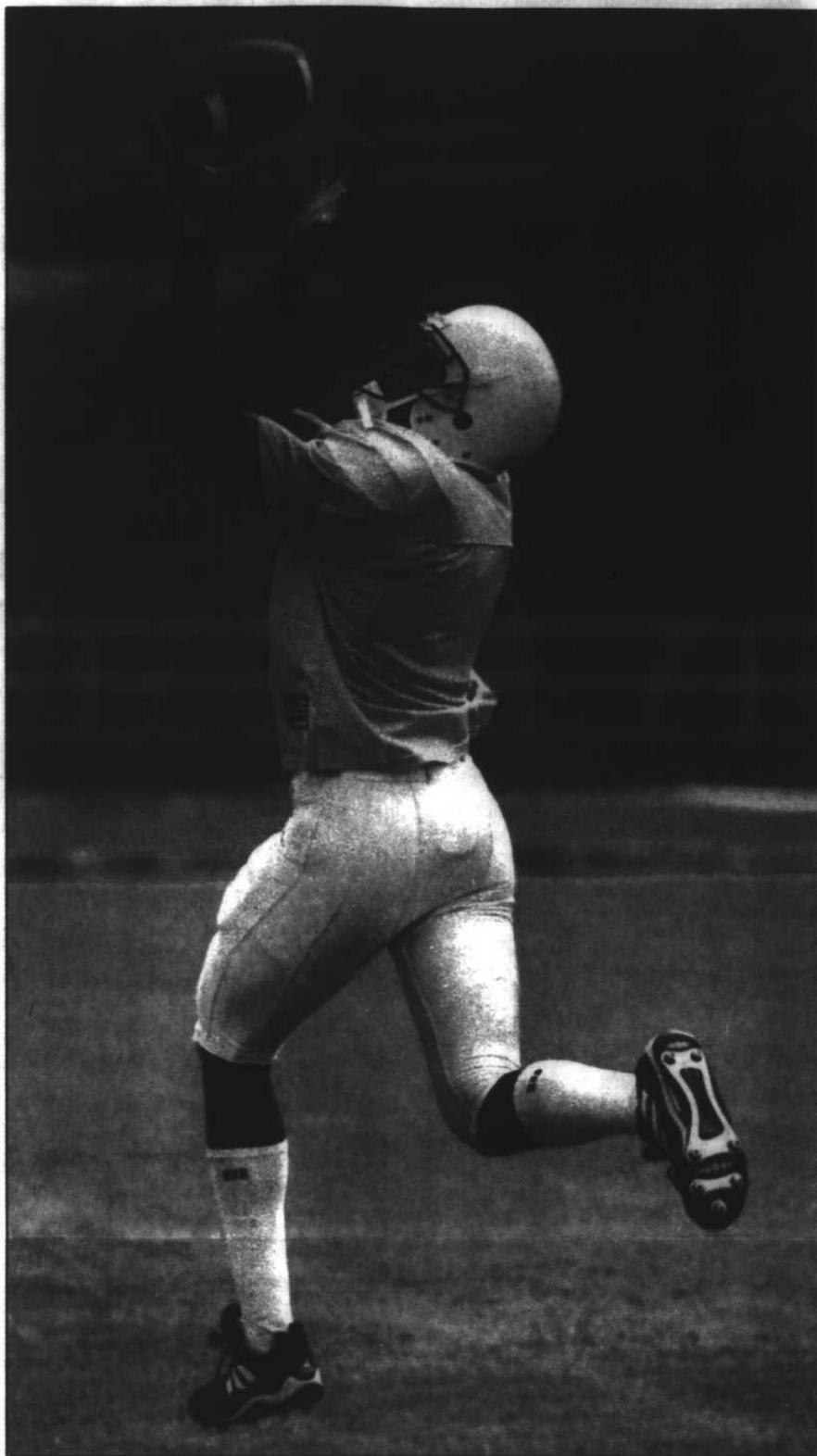
"People said it would come. But I've been in so many football games that it was kind of familiar. You stand in the same place, you fold your arms in the same way, and you're looking for that final detail to go over."

**Baylor**  
After one full off-season with his team, BU Coach Kevin Steele is anxious to see Thursday if his team is as good as he thinks it is. Baylor will play against North Texas in Denton.

"We know what we have; we've known that," Steele said. "Now we've got to show it between the white lines."

**Iowa State**  
The Cyclones shouldn't be overlooking anybody, but just in case ISU is looking past Ohio this Saturday toward intrastate rival

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Mike Warren/DH

Freshman defensive back Willie Amos runs through drills on the grass practice fields north of Memorial Stadium on Monday afternoon. Amos could be one of the freshmen who sees playing time this season.

## Oklahoma looking to confuse foes again

BY SAMUEL MCKEON

It is not the run and shoot. It is not the bombs ahoy attack of Kansas State, nor the occasional chuck-and-duck attitude of OU's wishbone past. It's little like Brigham Young's passing game, a lot like Kentucky's and the exact same as Texas Tech, whose new coach implemented the offense for the Sooners. Then he went to Lubbock.

And just maybe, it's not all that different from those plays you scrawled in the dirt during grade-school recess.

It takes that much just to describe Oklahoma's new-age, high-volume, relatively low-octane passing offense. Imagine running it.

Oklahoma senior Josh Heupel did last season, efficiently enough to lead the Big 12 Conference in yards (3,539) and touchdowns (31). His performance helped OU finish 7-5 and receive an Independence Bowl berth.

Heupel's arm, which he ranked as "average," had less to do with the Sooners' success than another attribute of his. The calm, even-toned captain tapped his head and smiled at the reporters circled around him.

"It's all right here," Heupel said. "It's all about knowing what your job is on every play, knowing the defense, knowing what the defense will give you and taking it. You don't have to have a super-strong arm."

Heupel is a good fit for Oklahoma's passing plan, which doesn't require a super-vertical game. Heupel, a lefty, was at his best last year throwing shorter slant and hook routes to the four receivers on the field, according to OU Head Coach Bob Stoops. Stoops is a former defensive coordinator at Florida and Kansas State.



Courtesy Photo

OU Coach Bob Stoops hopes to see more running in 2000. Oklahoma rushed for only 105.5 yards per contest in 1999, but Stoops has made the ground game a priority this season.

The coach's goal this season will be to establish a better running game and eat more clock-off drives. (OU's running game was worst in the Big 12 last year.)

The conference-high 15 interceptions from Heupel didn't bother Stoops so much as the 12 fumbles did.

"Ninety percent of games are won by the teams (who) win the turnover battle," Stoops said. "At times last year, we didn't do that."

Saddled with a tougher schedule that includes Nebraska and Kansas State, OU must make the offense work without offensive coordinator Mike Leach.

He left after one season to coach Texas Tech. Leach brought the offense from Kentucky, where he turned Tim Couch into an eventual No. 1 NFL draft pick.

In his place is former All-American Iowa quarterback Chuck Long, who played several years for Detroit in the NFL. He called plays smoothly in his debut when the Sooners played in the Independence Bowl, even though they lost 27-25 to Mississippi.

"It's good to have a guy (who) has been through the same things you have," said Heupel of Long, the 1985 Heisman Trophy runner-up. Heupel added he expects few

## BIG XII PREVIEW

### Oklahoma Sooners

- Preseason Rank: 2nd (South Division)
- 1999: 7-5 (5-3 Big XII, 2nd in South)
- Offensive Starters Returning: 7
- Defensive Starters Returning: 8
- Prognosis: Pass-happy Sooners hope rest of conference won't catch on in year of unusual aerial attack.

changes in the play calling.

Even if there were, a called play in OU's offense stands only until the whistle blows. Then, it's Heupel's responsibility to read what's given and make decisions based on it. Heupel often has to improvise. He calls it a "midplay adjustment."

What it takes is good rhythm between the quarterback and his skill players. Oklahoma may have problems early, as it has to replace two starting receivers from last season, although Stoops expected improvement.

The coach expected the same from the defense, which was seventh in the Big 12 last year. OU will still employ the "46" defense and emphasize creating pressure and turnovers.

Seven returning starters should produce better results, said linebacker Rocky Calmus, who was fifth in the conference in tackles last year with 114.

"We want to be more aggressive," Calmus said. "We forced like 10 fumbles last year. (It was seven.) We've got to get more

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## Coaches find way to beat heat

■ Missouri's Smith remembers what it was like when getting a drink was a sign of weakness.

BY SAMUEL MCKEON

There are war stories of college football's past.

When the phrase "two-a-day practice" ran neck and neck with medieval disemboweling in enjoyment.

When oppressive heat — the kind of heat that has blasted the Plains states during the last week — was the ominous, looming enemy for the mortal pigskin player.

Missouri Coach Larry Smith remembers. As a Bowling Green player in the summer of 1961, there was no water during practice. Spit had to do. No sloughing off, either. It was taboo — a practice viewed as a weakness among college coaches — to allow players any mercy.

Player hid lemons in their helmets to quench their thirst. They swallowed their spit ... and they liked it.

But one day, the clouds broke, the sun rose and, at least at Bowling Green, there was a water break.

"We thought we had died and gone to heaven in the middle of practice," Smith said. "We thought the coach was going soft on us."

"It was really a smart thing to do because we ended up having

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