

## Defense is going to be just fine

First games mean something. They are a time to get the jitters out, to feel the turf under your feet and find out exactly where your team stands after fall camp.

We all saw where Nebraska's offense stands - near the top in the country.

Crouch and Co. mowed over Spartan after Spartan on their way to 596 total yards and looked virtually unstoppable.

And then there was the defense.

They missed tackles, blew some coverages and looked somewhat vulnerable. I don't know what stunk more, NU's tackling or Huskervision pumping up the crowd with Bahamen's "Who Let the Dogs Out," to lead the Blackshirts onto the field.

The corny song plus the Husker defense, who had already allowed Whitaker to run wild, created a scene that was, admittedly, pretty funny.

But the defense's performance against the Spartans is about as important to Saturday's Notre Dame showdown as "Who Let the Dogs Out" is to Eric Clapton.

Believe it fickle Husker fans. A week ago, the word around campus was that the Big Red Bomb was going to blow up in South Bend - on both sides of the ball.

How quickly opinions change.

Now, those same people are ranting about how the Blackshirts better be on their toes and wake up. People are scared.

Scared of what I don't know. Craig Bohl, who undoubtedly had jitters of his own on Saturday, will make the necessary adjustments (consisting of focusing half the practice on wrapping up a runner) and the Big Red will roll.

Because the Huskers won't leave anything in the sack when facing the Irish.

"Notre Dame deserves our best effort," Loran Kaiser said. "We better show up with it or they could catch us off guard."

Not gonna happen. NU will find its identity on the hallowed field of Notre Dame Stadium on Saturday due to several factors.

Kaiser and the defensive line can only get healthier. The holes that Deonce Whitaker found so pleasing in the opener won't be there.

Kaiser, who played nearly 25 pounds lighter than what he is used to, said he didn't have his feet under him versus San Jose State.

Can you blame him? The guy had an appendectomy nearly two weeks ago and raiding the refrigerator has beefed him up to 270 already.

Kaiser said Jason Lohr was playing at about 85-percent and he admitted that Jeremy Slechta's repaired knee was giving him fits.

Add all of this to a group of outside linebackers that were probably in la-la land for the entire first quarter due to the first starts of their careers, and you get the disaster that was the opening period.

But if you look past the first quarter, NU shut down Whitaker and only allowed one Spartan score.

The secondary was surprisingly good and looked to be on a mission to prove all of their naysayers wrong.

"I seen that coming," Kaiser said. "They've been doubting the whole defense. Our defensive back's get doubted every year and end up coming through."

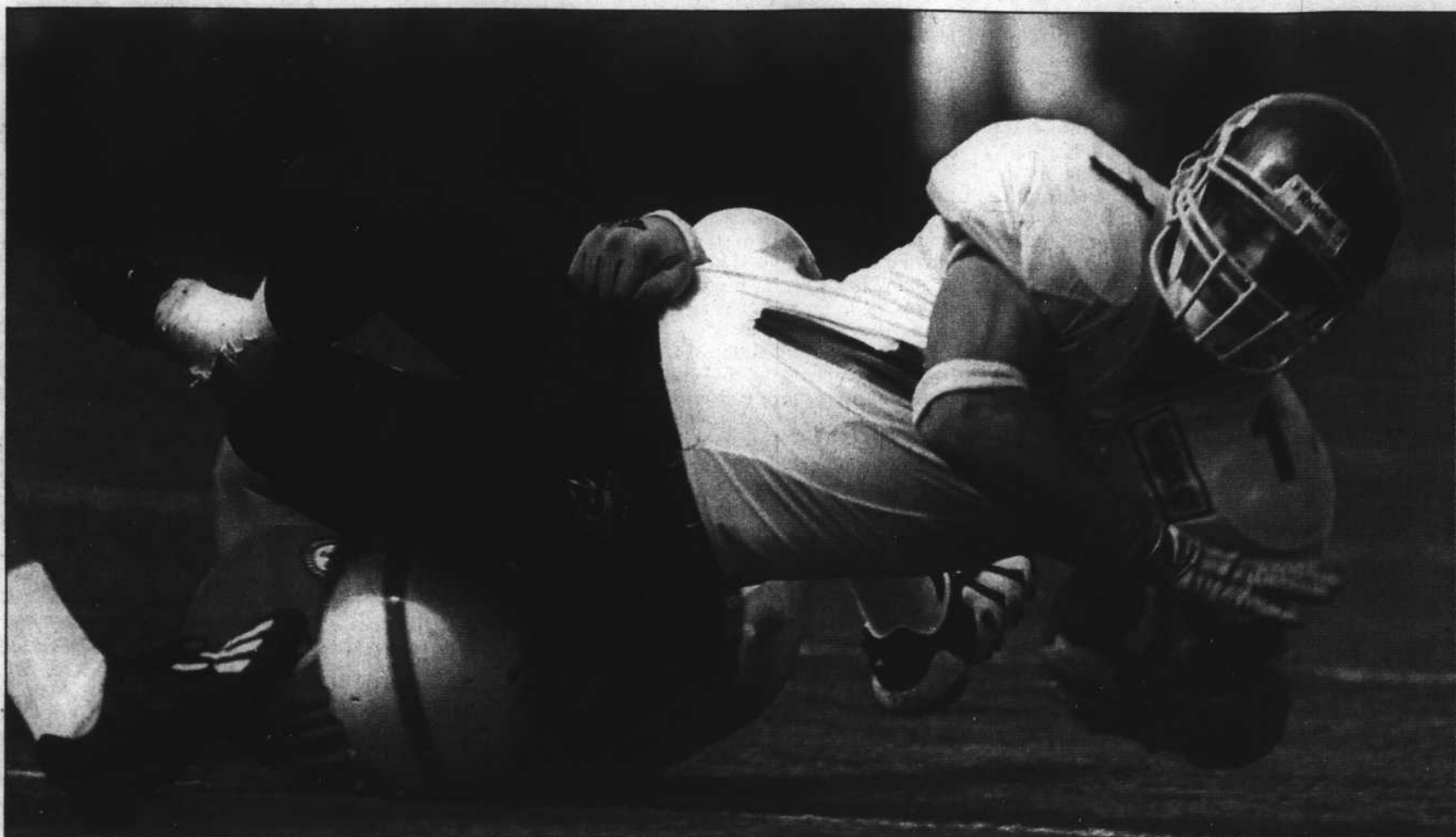
Besides, who looked at SJSU as a real challenge? Nebraska knew they could put it on cruise control and still escape with a 30-point plus win.

Something still says to me that the Blackshirts minds were somewhere else.

I'm not buying the one game at a time slogan that was uttered by nearly every player on the team.

Husker fans need not worry. The Blackshirts will be prepared and Irish quarterback Arnaz Battle will be exposed as the poor-man's Tee Martin that he is.

So will every quarterback after that, because Carlos Polk, Kyle Vanden Bosch and Kaiser won't accept anything less.



Josh Wolfe/DN

Husker fans will be able to see Husker defenders attempt to swarm the Notre Dame offense from the fold-out seats of the Devaney Center this Saturday. The game will be aired live on the giant Huskervision screens at the Devaney Center.

## Devaney Center site of Irish 'watch party'

■ Watching the biggest television available for NU/ND matchup isn't in most student's plans.

BY DAVID DIEHL

Senior Dawn Filsinger is heading across the country to watch the Notre Dame game at a South Bend, Ind., bar or local party.

Levi Grosskopf, a sophomore, will be cheering on the Big Red while snacking on homemade buffalo wings at a friend's house.

Who will be at the marketing department's "Watch Party" at the Devaney Center?

Not many NU students, apparently.

Of the 50-plus people the Daily Nebraskan spoke with, only a handful said they were planning on attending.

"I don't know how many people will show up to it," Grosskopf, an Omaha native,

said. "It would be cool if a lot of people did show up."

For those who do show up, doors open at noon for the 1:30 p.m. game, which will be a live feed of the NBC national broadcast. Souvenir and refreshment stands will be open for the event.

But, it seems, students will prefer grilling out with a small group of friends rather than munching on Fairbury Hot Dogs at the Devaney Center.

"There might be a lack of atmosphere," freshman John Van Ackeran said.

Most people, Van Ackeran said, want to go to small parties with close friends, rather than a large group they don't know.

The marketing department has addressed that problem of atmosphere. Cheerleaders and members of the band not making the trip to South Bend will perform at the "Watch Party," the NU marketing department said.

"We want to have people experience the atmosphere at Memorial Stadium. We're going to try and get it as close to that as we can."

Bill Byrne  
athletic director

"We want to have people experience the atmosphere at Memorial Stadium," Athletic Director Bill Byrne said. "We're going to try and get it as close to that as we can."

The event is the first of its kind at Nebraska, which just installed the replay boards at the Devaney Center last fall. Byrne said it's something he'd like to see happen more often - maybe for all the games that aren't televised.

Byrne said that he has talked to many adults that are driving in to watch the game at the "Watch Party." They are

coming from places like Grand Island and Columbus, he said.

"I think it'll be a pretty good combo," Byrne said of the mixture of adults and students at the event. "It'll be a pretty good demographic."

But one part of that demographic may be looking for something they won't get at the Devaney.

"They probably won't be serving alcohol there," said sophomore Brian Black, who plans to watch the game at a sports bar. "That probably won't appeal to a lot of students."

## KSU exploring ground options

BY SAMUEL MCKEWON

While Kansas State fans still wait for the real Eli Roberson to stand up, the Wildcats' ground game has quietly shown its meddle.

Through two games, albeit against lesser foes, KSU has established a power attack that, if one squints hard, might remind fans of Nebraska's steady diet of toss and isolation plays.

Senior backup Chris Claybon and junior college transfer Josh Scobey filled the shoes of injured starter David Allen nicely in a 54-10 win over Louisiana Tech, combining for 200 yards on 31 carries.

It's a result of adapting to defenses that load up against Kansas State's high-octane passing game, Coach Bill Snyder said.

"We've been looking at what defenses are giving us, and they are mindful of how we throw the ball," Snyder said. "We've been very pleased with Chris's play so far."

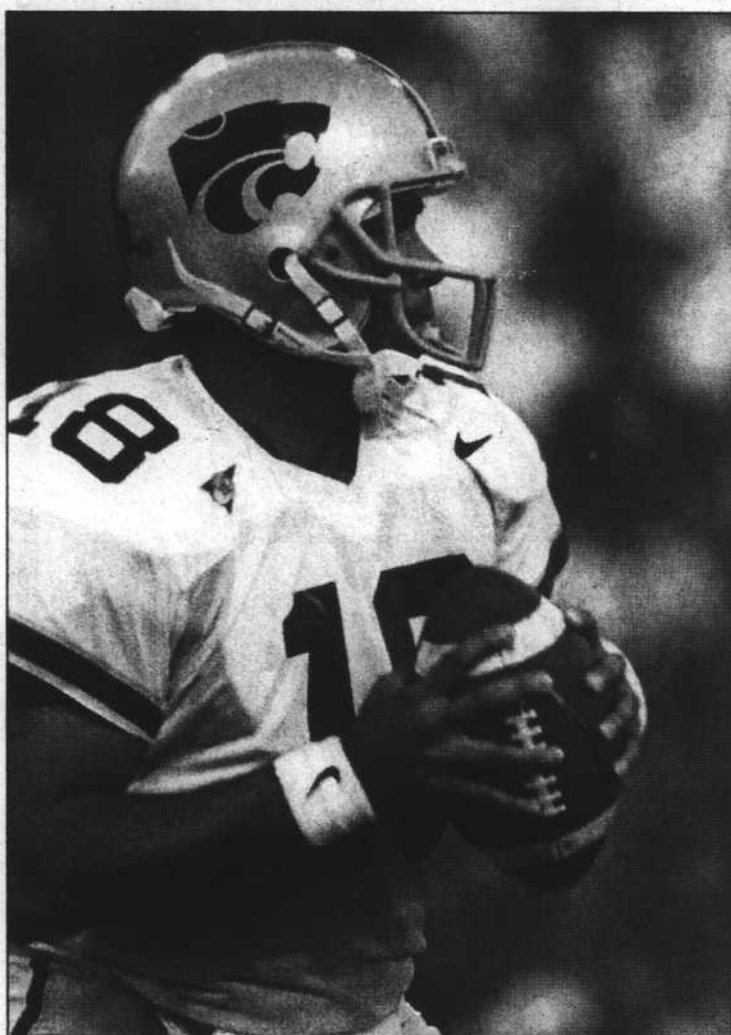
Snyder didn't elaborate on how long Allen, who twisted his ankle in the opening game against Iowa, might stay out. He wasn't missed in the backfield, nor was he particularly missed as a punt returner, as receiver Aaron Lockett returned a punt 69 yards for a touchdown on Saturday.

Claybon, who has been a key performer on the punt return team for two years, had only 11 carries last season.

He's nearly tripled that mark this year with Frank Murphy and Joe Hall, last season's two leading rushers, gone.

Scobey, the largest of the three backs, gained 2,423 yards over two seasons at Northeastern A&M JC. Both Claybon and Scobey, Snyder said, provide a power option to Allen's shifter running style.

So far, they've kept the ball off the turf as well, a welcome



DN File Photo

Kansas State senior quarterback Jonathan Beasley is being pushed for the starting job by freshman Eli Roberson. While Roberson has played springily in the Wildcats' first two games, the KSU faithful are clamoring for more.

change from Murphy's fumbling tendencies in '98 and '99.

"We've worked very hard with our running backs," Snyder said. "Really, we need to make sure that people in other positions who have the ball in their hands are under the same type of management system."

That would include quarterback Jonathan Beasley, who continues to start for KSU. Fans

still clamor for the redshirt freshman Roberson to play more than the sparse snaps he received at the end of the Tech game.

Roberson, whose spring game performance generated comparisons to Michael Bishop, got a larger ovation for simply entering the game than any play Beasley made during the first 3

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A week-long series devoted to taking a closer look at Notre Dame

### Beneath the Golden Dome

## Game day is a special day in South Bend

BY JOSHUA CAMENZIND

Football Saturday is a tradition for many on college campuses around the nation.

At Notre Dame, it's a religion.

Sure, South Bend has tailgaters who fire up the old barbecue at 9 a.m., the old guy who blares ND's fight songs out of his mobile home and plenty of rowdy students looking to down as many alcoholic beverages as they can in a two-hour period. So does Nebraska, Michigan and every other state.

The Irish, though, combine that atmosphere with an almost unexplainable emotion - one borne of pride, heritage and pigskin.

It is an atmosphere that makes even the greatest of athletes speak in mystical tones. "If you could find a way to bottle the Notre Dame spirit, you could light up the universe," said Joe Theisman, former Notre Dame quarterback, Heisman Trophy winner and NFL great in Notre Dame's media guide.

Most would agree that the experience one gets on a football Saturday in South Bend, Ind., is something that will be forever remembered.

"People come from all over the country," said ND senior and band member Meghan Gurgol. "There is sort of a huge convergence of people from all parts on the Notre Dame campus, and the excitement is incredible."

That excitement begins long

before the opening kickoff. Gurgol said that for most, football Saturday begins about 18 hours before game time.

"It starts on Friday night with the pep rally in the Joyce Center," she said. "We pack it with fans, some from the away team, but Notre Dame fans dominate."

The pep rally begins at 7 p.m. and most often includes performances by the band, cheers by the student body (which looks like a rainbow because every dormitory wears a different colored T-shirt), an occasional celebrity appearance and, of course, the team.

"It's been in the Joyce Center since 1969, when it opened," said Joe Doyle, former sports editor of the South Bend Tribune. "They have had a couple of them outside, and the old fieldhouse had wild pep rallies back in the 1930's and 1940's. It is one of the great traditions. They pack the place now and make a scene of it."

Notre Dame Stadium will be the site of the pep rally this Friday night. It will be the fourth time the Irish have held the rally outside in the last half century.

Friday nights also include a spectacle at the stadium that features the painting of the ND helmets. Each week, select students gather and paint the helmets gold in honor of the Golden Dome - the main building on campus.

Please see ND on 11