

NU, KSU similar save QBs



Matthew Hansen

The Huskers and Wildcats stand toe to toe, staring at each other, and it's like looking in the mirror.

Not a pretty sight, either – the image is one of fat, cartoonish Lil' Red mating with the ridiculous Powercat to produce a bastard offspring that both stands on his head and uses his arms to expertly spell out the letters, "K," "S" and "U."

Power Red, Lil' Cat. A creation from mascot hell.

The similarities are so many and varied that it's hard to imagine Saturday's game being anything but close, though not necessarily well played.

Both teams are chock full of talent. They have more than anyone else in the nation save Florida State.

Both teams have underachieved this season. Both were beaten by an Oklahoma team that had no business beating them. The Sooners just wanted it more.

Both teams have spectacular field generals – Eric Crouch, Michael Bish ... oh.

It's not Bishop, but a pawn named Jonathan Beasley that leads these Wildcats. He interrupts the utter duplicity of the Corncats, the Wildskers, Saturday,

he will be the difference, a negative difference, for KSU.

Nebraska will not win this game so much as Beasley will get knocked down by another round of big-game football.

Jonathan, meet canvas yet again. This time, neither ice nor the Missouri Tigers will make the bruises disappear.

All this big-game pummeling started with Nebraska last season, when Beasley attempted 19 passes and scattered 16 of them across the Memorial Stadium turf.

Of course, to hear K-State coaches and Beasley tell it this week, his shoulder was gruesomely separated.

Not buying it. Yes, there's no doubt that Beasley was banged up. If he'd been seriously injured, though, why didn't capable backup Adam Helm start?

The results weren't much better when Beasley's shoulder was all better. In the Wildcats' loss to Oklahoma this season, it was 22 incomplete passes and two interceptions.

More? Twenty-five incomplete passes and two picks came in a loss to Texas A&M.

His totals – three big games, 31 of 94 passing (32 percent), 538 yards (179 yards/game) and four interceptions.

Joe Montana he ain't. Let's not forget the games where KSU unexpectedly struggled, with Beasley at the helm.

In close wins over Iowa State last season and Texas Tech this season, Beasley threw for a whopping 184 yards combined.

The opinion behind all these numbers is that Beasley can't do it when the bright lights are on. His stats are padded beyond belief by easy wins over mediocre Big 12 teams and nonconference door-mats.

The burning speed of Aaron Lockett and Quincy Morgan has a lot to do with Beasley's inflated numbers.

But come game time, real game time, Beasley won't show up. You can bet that Eric Crouch will. Nebraska by two touchdowns.

Otherwise, these teams might play forever.

Two boring coaches with questionable big-game juevos, good offensive and defensive lines, religious zealot fans who insist on the mass wearing of bright, ugly colors, Lincoln, Manhattan ... oh.

Huskers shatter A&M win streak

■ Nebraska maintains perfect record by defeating the Aggies in tough College Station atmosphere.

BY KRISTEN WATERS

The Huskers ended two Texas A&M streaks and kept their own undefeated streak going as they beat the Aggies in four games, 8-15, 15-6, 15-13 and 15-9.

With the win, Nebraska ended A&M's 28-match home winning streak. The Huskers also snapped their own two-match losing streak in College Station.

NU moved its record to 23-0 and kept their No. 1 ranking intact, but it wasn't easy.

In a hostile crowd of 2,130, NU lost its first game of the match to the Aggies, (15-5, 10-4 in conference play), something it has

only done three times this season to Colorado State, Texas and UCLA.

"It's a hard place to play here," Head Coach John Cook said in a post-game radio interview. "They got the troops rallied up tonight. But for the most part we were able to keep our focus and win."

Nebraska started the night out strong in the first game as sophomore setter Grechaly Cepero served four straight points for NU, leaving A&M down 4-0.

But the Aggies were able to fight back as the Huskers had a hard time controlling the ball and executing an offense. The bad passing, missed hits and serves allowed Texas A&M to slip by the Big Red in an easy 15-8 first-game victory.

Nebraska stepped up its fundamental play in the second game as they shot down 11 points before the Aggies could put up two. A&M didn't buy into the Husker intimi-

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John Cook
NU volleyball coach

dation and crept back into the game by capitalizing on Nebraska's errors.

But the six kills and three stuff blocks by Junior Jenny Kropp was too much for A&M to handle. In a quick thirty minutes Nebraska ran away with a 15-6 win.

The Huskers started the third game with a 4-1 run, but couldn't hold on to its lead. Nebraska was sluggish as they continued to suffer from missed hits and serves. The Aggies stepped back in the game with five straight points to tie the game at 6-6.

Nebraska and A&M were in a dog fight

Please see VOLLEYBALL on 10

Line prepares for KSU's rushing attack

■ With the defensive front healthy, Nebraska looks to shut down K-State's running game.

BY SAMUEL MCKEOWN

It was reminiscent of an NFL Films serial – Nebraska defensive lineman Jeremy Slechta sticking a giant white bear claw in celebration of his first interception of the season against Kansas Saturday.

The claw was actually a giant cast on Slechta's right hand, the result of yet another injury to a Cornhusker interior lineman. KU quarterback Dyleen Smith searched for a Jayhawk receiver over the middle. Slechta was back in shallow coverage.

"I was in the right place, right time," said the junior from Papillion.

Slechta watched as the ball stuck in his arm like a rock would in a slingshot. It was almost too easy. And for the NU interior linemen, it was about time something happened without the difficulty of a kidney-stone passing.

As the key trio of Slechta, Jason Lohr and Lorin Kaiser prepare for one of the better rushing foes of the season in No. 16 Kansas State – yes, Kansas State. The Wildcats bring with them nine games' worth of pain, injury and lost time.

At different times of the season, each player has either been injured or, as in Lohr's case, out of condition after being injured for two-a-day practices.

"It's been one thing or another most of the season" said Lohr, who leads the defensive tackles with 32 stops in 2000. "As soon as it looks like one guy's healthy, another guy would get hurt."

Right now, all three are healthy enough to play, as Kaiser, the senior from Grand Island, saw extended action against Kansas after playing sparingly in the loss to Oklahoma. Before that, he sat out three games with a sprained foot.

Nebraska Defensive Coordinator Craig Bohl said it continues to hamper Kaiser's production, but he could start on Saturday.

Slechta's broken hand was



Nebraska defensive tackle Jeremy Slechta celebrates with teammates after his interception during the Huskers' win against Kansas Saturday.

Steven Bender/DN

received against OU. Besides having to take awkward notes in class and occasionally use an awkward three-point stance, the 6-foot-6, 285-pounder has lost the ability to grab and throw offensive linemen.

Instead, he uses the cast as a human billy club of sorts to smack linemen out of the way.

"That's worked a couple of times," he said. "But it's still been tough at times."

Despite the turmoil, there have been few rushing defenses better than the No. 4 Huskers. They give up only 101 yards per game, good for 19th nationally.

Despite the injuries, NU Defensive Line Coach Jeff Jamrog said he hasn't detected opponents attempting to exploit an injured middle.

The most rushing yards this season weren't relinquished in the 27-24 overtime win against

Notre Dame as some might expect, but against Missouri, when a number of quarterback scrambles netted the Tigers 203 rushing yards overall.

That was the only NU opponent over the two-century mark this season. San Jose State weighed in with 193 yards. ND had 184. Only Oklahoma, with 118 yards, managed triple digit rushing figures otherwise.

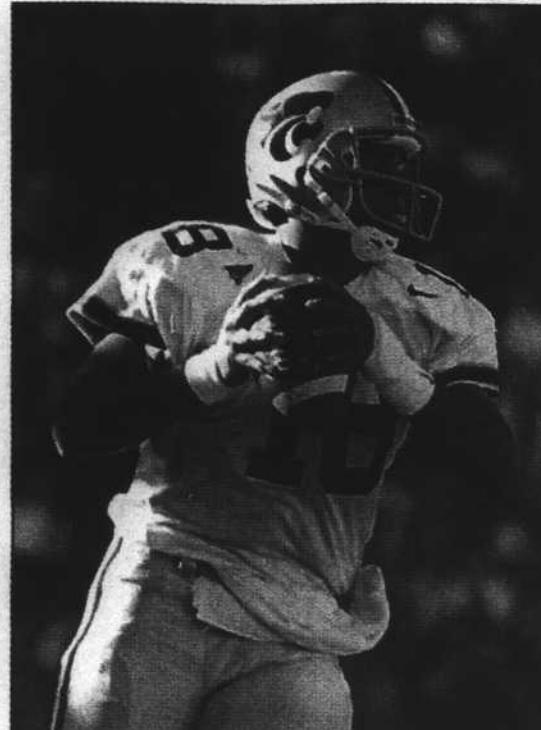
Kansas State, if it has its way,

would be No. 5.

Though KSU's 214 rushing yards per game pales in comparison to the 381 yards Nebraska averages, the Wildcats, with running backs Josh Scobey and David Allen, have struck a balanced offense that relies equally on a diet of wide off-tackle plays, quarterback draws from

Please see DEFENSE on 10

KSU still has bite after losses



Courtesy Photo

Kansas State quarterback Jonathan Beasley and the Wildcats have a lot left to play for this weekend against Nebraska.

■ After a rebound victory over Iowa State, Kansas State still has Big 12 title hopes coming into the NU game.

BY JOHN GASKINS

MANHATTAN, Kan. – Kansas State football players, coaches and fans had to swallow a lot of purple pride in October, and it didn't go down easy.

First, now-No. 1 Oklahoma blazed into Manhattan gun slinging and shot down the Wildcat's national title hopes 41-31 on Oct. 14.

If that wasn't bad enough, K-State had to endure the agony of the Aggies and a deafening 12th-man crowd two weeks later. KSU lost 26-10 at Texas A&M in an ugly game where nothing went right.

But despite losing national respect and being in grave danger of losing three games for the first time in four years, the 11th-ranked and four-point-underdog Wildcats (6-2, 4-2 in the Big

12) said Tuesday that they haven't lost their bite.

They'll need it coming into Saturday's 6 p.m. contest with No. 4 Nebraska (8-1, 5-1) – a team KSU is always charged up for.

"The fans aren't going to want to come here anymore just to watch a good football game and see Nebraska play," KSU junior linebacker Ben Leber said. "They're going to be more excited. The community is more excited."

Even K-State's morbidly stoic coach, Bill Snyder, said he wants and expects his team to play like there is plenty to play for.

"If you attempt to play without any (emotion), you set yourself up for some difficult times," said Snyder, who is 1-10 against NU.

"I would suggest that if you're 21 years old and you're going to play year-in and year-out one of the finest football

Huskers to play Richmond first

FROM STAFF REPORTS

The question surrounding the fourth-seeded Nebraska soccer team was who it was going to play in its first match of the NCAA Tournament Wednesday night it was answered resoundingly.

Richmond blew past West Virginia 5-1 with forward Brooke Sands leading the way.

Sands, Richmond's all-time leader in points (124) and goals (51), scored two goals and two assists for the Spiders, which scored on four of their first six shots on goal.

The Mountaineers were unable to put any points on the board until the 56:36 mark in the second half.

NU Coach John Walker said his team will begin preparations for his team's matchup with Richmond Saturday at 7 p.m. at the Abbott Sports Complex.

Walker said he spoke with coaches around the country, trying to get as much information about Richmond and West Virginia, but won't have a chance to look at game film until tomorrow.

The Spiders will enter the contest with a program-best 13-6 record, while NU has only one blemish on its 21-1 record.

Please see WILDCATS on 10