

Huskers Battle Bulldogs in Season Opener

By Andy Anderson, NU Media Relations

A high level of excitement surrounds Memorial Stadium today, as the 117th season of Nebraska football kicks off this afternoon with a nationally televised matchup between the Huskers and Louisiana Tech. The 2006 season opener marks the 276th consecutive sellout of Memorial Stadium, in addition to NU's seventh straight season opener at home.

The Huskers, who enter the season ranked in both the coaches and AP top-25 poll, aim for their NCAA-leading 21st straight win in a season opener today, a streak that extends back to a 17-13 loss to Florida State in 1985. Also at stake this afternoon is an eight-game unbeaten streak against teams from the state of Louisiana. Nebraska has never lost to a team

Dillard, Freddie Franklin and Patrick Jackson. Only two defensive starters are back—linebacker Brannon Jackson and safety Dez Abrams. For more on the Bulldogs, see pages 88 through 90.

Looking Back at 1998: High-Octane Affair

Today's matchup marks the second meeting between the Bulldogs and Huskers, and the first since a 56-27 win by NU in a Memorial Stadium shootout that kicked off the 1998 season in the Eddie Robinson Classic.

The game, which marked Nebraska's first contest in 36 years without former Head Coach Tom Osborne on the sideline, featured more than 1,000 yards of total offense. Despite being outgained by a 569 to 462 margin, the Huskers utilized a 143-yard rushing

Nebraska-Louisiana Tech Series

Games: 1
 Standing: Nebraska leads, 1-0-0
 At Lincoln: Nebraska leads, 1-0-0
 At Memorial Stadium: Nebraska leads, 1-0-0
 Current win streak (start): Nebraska, one game (1998)

Last Meeting

Date	Site	Rank NU/LTU	Result	Score
8/29/98	Lincoln	4/	W	56-27

Series Notes: The win in the first meeting was NU's 15th in a row during a 19-game Husker winning streak that stretched from the 1996 Orange Bowl to a 1998 loss at Texas A&M... the Eddie Robinson Classic matchup provided NU with a 13th game during the 1998 season, one of only 12 seasons in school history with as many games... the Huskers scored on all five first-half possessions to take a 35-6 halftime lead... I-back Correll Buckhalter, who currently plays in the NFL with the Philadelphia Eagles, rushed for a then-career-high 143 yards and two scores, while quarterback Bobby Newcombe completed 9-of-10 passes for 168 yards in his first career start... Bulldog receiver Troy Edwards set an NCAA record that still stands with 405 receiving yards while hauling in 21 receptions, including four touchdowns... the individual yardage and receptions marks still easily rank as Nebraska opponent records as well... Tech quarterback Tim Rattay totaled 590 yards through the air on 46-of-68 passing, with the yardage and attempts still ranking as Husker opponent records.



Head Coach Bill Callahan's squad boasts 15 returning players with starting experience from a team that won its final three games in 2005 and finished the season ranked 24th in both major polls.

from the Pelican State, owning a combined 7-0-1 mark against LSU (5-0-1), Louisiana Tech (1-0) and McNeese State (1-0).

The 2006 campaign begins with a sense of optimism for Nebraska fans following a successful conclusion to the 2005 season that featured three straight wins including an Alamo Bowl victory over Michigan. The three consecutive triumphs to end the season marked a first for the Husker program since the 1999 season.

Adding to the enthusiasm surrounding the Husker program is the debut of the Osborne Athletic Complex and expansion of Memorial Stadium. With 6,400 more seats, today's crowd will easily be the largest in school history with more than 84,000 expected in attendance.

Louisiana Tech enters Memorial Stadium today after posting a 7-4 record in 2005 that included a season-ending road upset of then-No. 23-ranked Fresno State. The Bulldogs return seven starters on offense, including a trio of running backs that combined for nearly 1,500 yards a year ago in Mark

effort by sophomore I-back Correll Buckhalter, in addition to a 9-for-10 performance through the air by sophomore quarterback Bobby Newcombe, to cruise to victory.

However, it was the Bulldogs who ruled the air on the day, as quarterback Tim Rattay completed 46 of

68 attempts for an eye-popping 590 yards and four touchdowns in a losing effort. Tech wide receiver Troy Edwards propelled himself into the national spotlight by setting an NCAA record with 405 yards receiving on 21 catches, including four for scores. Included among the Bulldogs' multiple connections on the day were three scoring bombs that went for more than 50 yards.

Talented Husker West Coast Offense Returns

NU will feature a potentially explosive offense in 2006, as eight players with starting experience return. The skill positions are especially deep, as returning starters are back at all spots except I-back.

This season, Nebraska will feature a returning starter

(continued on page 6)

2006 Nebraska Schedule

Date	Opponent (TV)	Time/Result
Sept. 2	Louisiana Tech (FSN)	2:30 p.m.
Sept. 9	Nicholls State	TBA
Sept. 16	at USC (ABC)	7 p.m.
Sept. 23	Troy	TBA
Sept. 30	Kansas	TBA
Oct. 7	at Iowa State	TBA
Oct. 14	at Kansas State	TBA
Oct. 21	Texas	TBA
Oct. 28	at Oklahoma State	TBA
Nov. 4	Missouri (Homecoming)	TBA
Nov. 11	at Texas A&M	TBA
Nov. 24	Colorado (ABC)	2:30 p.m.
Dec. 2	Big 12 Championship (at Kansas City)	TBA

Final 2005 Big 12 Standings

North	Overall Record	Big 12 record
Colorado	7-6	5-3
Iowa State	7-5	4-4
Nebraska	8-4	4-4
Missouri	7-5	4-4
Kansas	7-5	3-5
Kansas State	5-6	2-6

South	Overall Record	Big 12 Record
Texas	13-0	8-0
Texas Tech	9-3	6-2
Oklahoma	8-4	6-2
Texas A&M	5-6	3-5
Baylor	4-5	1-5
Oklahoma State	4-7	1-7

On the Cover

Today's cover features the Osborne Athletic Complex, the crown jewel of the North Stadium expansion project that began more than two years ago. The facility provides the Huskers with top-notch training and medical facilities as NU builds toward another championship.

For more information on the new construction around Memorial Stadium, see pages 12-14 of today's program.

Also pictured on the front cover are defensive end Jay Moore and defensive lineman Barry Cryer.

Next Up for the Huskers

Nebraska continues action at home next weekend when the Huskers play host to their second straight team from the state of Louisiana as Nicholls State comes to Lincoln. The game between the Huskers and Colonels will not be televised, but can be heard throughout the state and around the world on the Pinnacle Sports Network, including Sirius Satellite and at Huskers.com.

For more information about the Huskers' on the radio, see page 156.

On Today's Ticket

Each week this season, football game tickets will honor Nebraska's rich academic tradition. Husker football players have accounted for 54 of NU's nation-leading 233 academic All-Americans.

Today's ticket features Pat Clare and Don Fricke, Nebraska's first football academic All-Americans in 1960. The pair earned the first of the program's 66 academic All-America certificates.

Clare, who is currently the chief of staff for the Husker athletic medicine team, lettered for the Huskers in 1960 and 1961. Fricke was a three-year letterman (1958-59-60) from Hastings, Neb.

Athletic Department Calendar

See page 92 for the Husker fall sports schedules, including upcoming events and recent scores.

Today's Band Performance

Percussion Solo
Nebraska Fanfares
There Is No Place Like Nebraska
Visitor's Fight Song
Star Spangled Banner
Mr. Touchdown USA/University of Nebraska March (medley)
March Grandioso/March of the Cornhusker (medley)
Hail Varsity

Today's Halftime Music

The Sound of Simon (Alumni Band Day)
You Can Call Me Al
Late In the Evening
There Is No Place Like Nebraska
Bridge Over Troubled Water/Loves Me Like A Rock
Hail Varsity

starter at quarterback for the first time in Head Coach Bill Callahan's three-year tenure with senior signal caller Zac Taylor under center. The Norman, Okla., native was instrumental in helping the Huskers' strong finish to the 2005 season, as he concluded his junior season with NU single-season records for passing yards, completions and attempts.

The most experienced position group on this year's offense will be receiver, as both sophomore Nate Swift and junior Terrence Nunn rank in the top 15 on NU's career receptions list. Junior Frantz Hardy and sophomore Todd Peterson, who each made significant contributions a year ago, also return, while newcomers Maurice Purify, Will Henry and Menelik Holt each could earn playing time.

Also back for 2006 is talented senior tight end Matt Herian, who returns after missing all of 2005 with a leg injury. Herian, only eight receptions shy of the all-time Husker position record, leads a battle-tested group of tight ends that also includes juniors J.B. Phillips and Josh Mueller.

The Nebraska offensive line returns two full-time starters in addition to three talented young players who earned starting experience in the second half of the 2005 season. Senior Kurt Mann, who is a two-year starter at center, will be the centerpiece of the famed Husker "Pipeline," while the versatile Greg Austin could see action as both a starting guard and reserve center during his final campaign at NU. Also returning are junior Chris Patrick and sophomores Lydon Murtha and Matt Slauson, each of whom earned starting nods at tackle during some point of 2005. Sophomores Andy Christensen and Mike Huff are just two of a host of others who could be in the mix for extensive playing time.

A new starter will grace the I-back spot this season for the first time since 2003, as former Husker Cory Ross graduated and has moved on to the NFL ranks. A deep stable of returning backs led by sophomores Cody Glenn and Marlon Lucky and junior Brandon Jackson will compete for playing time at the position, while junior college transfer Kenny Wilson could also make an immediate impact. Dane Todd also returns for another season as NU's starter at fullback.

Experienced Front Seven to Lead Blackshirts

Nebraska enters the season with outstanding experience in the defensive line and linebacker positions. Five of the front seven positions return starters from a unit that ranked in the top 30 nationally for total defense in 2005.

Senior defensive ends Adam Carriker and Jay Moore will provide the cornerstones for a defensive line that must replace both starting defensive tackle spots. Carriker and Moore combined for 12 1/2 and 31 of NU's nation-leading totals of 50 sacks and 124 tackles for loss, respectively, last season. Sophomore Barry Turner also returns after a breakout freshman campaign, while seniors Barry Cryer and Ola Dagunduro vault into starting roles on the inside after seeing significant playing time as reserves in 2005.

The Huskers' deepest unit in 2006 should be the linebacker position. Five players with starting experience return, including second-team All-Big 12 MIKE linebacker Corey McKeon and three-year starter at the SAM slot, Stewart Bradley. Also back are junior WILL linebackers Steve Octavien, who was lost for nearly all of last season, and Bo Ruud, who filled in for Octavien as a starter for 10 games before breaking an arm during bowl preparations. Junior Lance Brandenburgh played exceptionally when thrust into the starting role during the Alamo Bowl win over Michigan.

The defensive backfield lost a key member during fall camp when senior Zackary Bowman was lost for the season with a knee injury, but a mix of seasoned veterans and talented youngsters will attempt to pick up the slack.

Junior Courtney Grixby enters his second season as a full-time starter at cornerback after earning honorable-mention All-Big 12 honors a year ago, while junior Tierre Green (strong safety) and senior Andrew Shanle (free safety) looked to earn starting spots during fall camp. Several Huskers could see playing time at the other cornerback spot, including junior Titus Brothers and junior college transfer Andre Jones.



Senior Zac Taylor will lead the Huskers' West Coast Offense that features eight players with starting experience entering in 2006.