

LeFlore Proving His Worth On and Off the Field

By Matt Smith, NU Media Relations

Most people who dream of playing major college football at a nationally prominent program like Nebraska, dream of notoriety, adoring fans and the chance to reach the NFL. To senior wide receiver Mark LeFlore, however, the dream of playing at Nebraska had everything to do with family.

"Playing for Nebraska is everything," LeFlore said. "I'm just going to be honest; ever since I was little I wanted to go here. To be able to play in front of people that you know and people that are familiar with you is great.

"To be out here and play in front of your family and friends every time you come out is something a lot of people don't get to experience."

Another thing a lot of people don't get to experience, along with starting nine career games at Nebraska, is the chance to share the experience with a brother. LeFlore's younger brother, Chris, is a sophomore defensive back for the Huskers.

"It's been really great to have my brother here," LeFlore said. "I live with him, I'm there with him every day and he's probably the most positive influence in my life. It's great to play with him. I don't think there's ever been a time where I've been away from him, other than my freshman year and that was kind of a difficult time for me."

An Omaha native, LeFlore has shared many joys with his brother and his family during his career at Nebraska. But as someone who grew up a Husker fan, LeFlore feels like he has an outside family, the legions of fans who support the Big Red every week.

"Nebraska's always been good and we'll always be a great program," LeFlore said. "But when you come out and see everybody in red and see them being enthusiastic, it's great. Win or lose, we sell out here and that's important. It's the fans that make Nebraska the top program in the nation."

One of his first impressions of his switch from Husker fan to Husker player was his first tunnel walk before the Arizona State game in 2002.

"It was fantastic, it was like nothing I've ever felt before,"

LeFlore raved of the walk. "I get chills every time I come out of the tunnel, but the first time after coming down for games and watching everyone else come out, I think you can't compare it to any place in the nation."

While fans have given LeFlore great moments every home Saturday, LeFlore hopes

to return the favor by giving fans plenty to cheer about this season. LeFlore has shown glimpses of greatness in his first three years. Among his highlights have been a 74-yard touchdown reception and 100-yard receiving game against Texas Tech last season, and a 64-yard touchdown run on the first play he touched the ball in 2002 against McNeese State as a freshman.

LeFlore said he enjoys his role in the West Coast Offense. Although he was slowed by a foot injury early last season, LeFlore made 12 catches for a career-high 208 yards.

One of five returning lettermen at the receiver position, LeFlore has shown the ability to be a big-play receiver. In addition to his 75-yard touchdown grab against Texas Tech last season, LeFlore averaged 17.3 yards per reception in 2004, tops among all Huskers with at least 10 receptions.

Off the field, LeFlore's family has seen his growth as a person, something that has proved beneficial to LeFlore's Husker family. According to LeFlore, he has

matured a lot from his days at Omaha Central when he earned the nickname Prime Time after Deion Sanders.

LeFlore was selected to the 2005 Brook Berringer Citizenship Team and it was a well-deserved honor. LeFlore has been active in the Lincoln community, volunteering his time in several ways. LeFlore has spoken at numerous schools in Lincoln, has visited numerous local hospitals and has been active in School is Cool Week and American Education Week. For his efforts, LeFlore has been elected the 2005-06 Community Outreach Officer for Nebraska's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee.

A merging of two worlds and the passage from fan to player have occurred during his time at Nebraska. But when LeFlore looks back at what he's accomplished by growing from a kid catching passes from his dad in the street to a mature, community-oriented man, he is quick to credit his family.

"I want to give a special thanks to my mom and dad," LeFlore said. "I can always call them and they're always there for me to give me a positive outlook."

LeFlore's family values, growth as a person and his appreciation and understanding of Husker fans are just another example of why There is No Place Like Nebraska.



Mark LeFlore's Career Statistics

Year	G/S	No.	Yds.	Y/R	Y/G	Long	TDs
2002	13/1	6	24	4.0	1.8	9 at Kansas State	0
2003	13/5	19	197	10.4	15.2	55 at Missouri	2
2004	10/3	12	208	17.3	23.1	74 at Texas Tech	1
Totals	36/9	37	429	11.6	12.3	74 at Texas Tech	3

Single-Game Bests:

Receptions—6, at Missouri, 2003
Receiving Yards—110 at Texas Tech, 2004
Long Reception—74 at Texas Tech, 2004