

Nebraska Football Weekly Press Conference
Nebraska vs. Kansas State Game Week
Tuesday, Oct. 19, 2004

Kevin Cosgrove, Defensive Coordinator

On Kansas State's quarterback situation:

"I think there are two different types of quarterbacks. Dylan's (Meier) a very good thrower. He's completing over 60 percent of his passes right now. The other quarterback, he's a good thrower, but he's a bigger threat, I think, at running the football a little bit. They seem to run the same offense whichever quarterback is in there."

On why teams have been able to shut down Darren Sproles easier this year than last:

"I don't know. He's a tremendous back. He's got 700-and-some yards. He has tremendous speed, he could be nicked up a little bit, but I don't know that. That could be a factor."

On the need to stop Darren Sproles on Saturday:

"I don't think there's any question about that. He's the one that makes their offense go. He is a tremendous running back, he's got a big and physical offensive line and a big tight end. I think people have been trying to do that, and when you do that it opens up other things. But he's a tremendous back."

On Kansas State's spread offense against Oklahoma:

"(Sproles) was in the game when they were doing that, they just spread him out, too. They have showed a lot of emptying in the past, not quite as much as they did last week, but they were looking at what gives them the best chance to have success. They went into the empty formation quite a bit in that game trying to spread Oklahoma out, and they had success doing it."

"I think we'll see a mix of formations from them. I don't know exactly, but you do have to anticipate they will be in some empty, because they did have some success. But they're going to do what they do. They run the option and power, and the quarterback is involved big in their one-back running game."

On the NU defense's problems with pass defense during the past two games:

"It comes back down to definition of technique and fundamentals. We have to improve, it's obvious."

On his concern with busts in coverage during the past two games:

"We did have a few busts in coverages, didn't get the proper checks. I think once they saw how easy it was (to correct), I don't think we'll have a problem with that again."

On which Kansas State quarterback he anticipates seeing play:

"I think you have to anticipate (Meier) will be in there. He's their guy, and I'm sure they are going to do anything to make sure he can play. I think they're comfortable with their backup situation if he has to be the man."

On problems with the transition of the defense this year to a new system:

"They've had three coaches in three years, so there is going to be some transition. Last year they were a big zone team, and we incorporate our zone with man coverage, so there is some change with terminology and things like that. There's going to be some transition, but not as much as you would think."

On Kansas State's 0-3 Big 12 record:

"I think they're a mad team right now. They are a better team than being 0-3 in the league, I can tell you that."

On if there was a lack of focus on defense against Baylor during the second half:

"I had two concerns, one that in the first half we limited them to 115 yards, but they did drive for a field goal on that first possession. Then the first possession in the second half they scored a touchdown. We felt good at the half that we had things under control. But you have to come out (in the second half) with the same fire you started the game with, and we didn't do that."

On the defense's confidence:

"I think they're going to be fine. The guys have played a lot of football. It's obvious after meetings that they knew exactly what was going on. They know what they need to do, now it's about execution and taking care of responsibilities."

On the upcoming game's significance:

"I think that should be obvious to our players. We're 2-1 right now in the conference. I think they understand what a win would do here. They understand it's a tremendous challenge, that Kansas State is a very, very good football team. When you watch them on tape you'll see they have a lot of weapons on offense. They have very good receivers, their tight end is a big physical tight end that runs well and gets open, and Sproles is a tremendous back. And their quarterback is very good. So they have a lot of weapons and they've been able to move the ball on people. We have to take care of our business."

Jay Norvell, Offensive Coordinator**Opening Statement:**

"After reviewing the film, Kansas State will be the best team that we have faced this far in the season. We are really anxious to begin preparing today. Our kids are going to have to be ready to play their best football. The way Kansas State played against Oklahoma; they will really present a challenge for us. This is a good football team, and their record does not reflect the type of football team that they are or what they can be. We are really anxious to go to work today offensively. They are very athletic on defense, well-coached, disciplined, and in a lot of ways are similar to us. They are not the same team they were three weeks ago. They have improved tremendously, and you can see that on tape. So you can throw the records out. They are a very talented team, very well-coached, and they are a physical defensive bunch. They have got rangy athletes up front, and they'll give us a stiff challenge and we'll have to be ready to execute this weekend and get the job done."

On how the team works together:

"We are a team. Our job on offense is to do what it takes to win. Regardless of what the situation is you do what it takes to win. If you get the ball on the 1-yard line, you have got to go 99 to put it in. I just think it is a mindset. I know Coach Cosgrove would tell you the same thing. Whatever you have to do you have to be prepared to do it. When your guys get into that frame of mind that is where you want to be. We are striving for consistency. We want to be a consistent football team, and on the offensive side of the ball we haven't gotten that yet. We want to be consistent. We want to perform every week at a level that we are cited for, and we are not there. We continue to strive for it, and continue to work for it, and in the course of that we have got to stay humble. We have got to keep our eye on the prize, and continue to work for what we are trying to get to. We have to work hard, and put ourselves in the position now to play some meaningful games if we continue to improve. So this is kind of the stretch run of that."

On how the opponent's defense effects how NU plays offense:

"We try to score. That is what we do, we try to score points, and move the ball. We try to control the clock; we try to protect the ball. There are certain situations in games where it changes the game. We have been in games where we had to score quickly. At Texas Tech we put ourselves in that position offensively by turning it over. We go out and try and move the ball, control it, and score points. Regardless of what happens on the other side of the ball we are a team first, and I think the defensive guys would tell you the same thing."

On Brandon Jackson improvements from the first game until now:

"His overall understanding and feeling comfortable with what we are doing. Some I-backs just have to get their hands on the ball, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 times before they really get rolling. Brandon is a physical I-back, and is a guy who is starting to understand our blocking schemes. He is feeling more comfortable. Coach Randy Jordan works his tail off everyday, and has really pushed him and stretched him as a player. He is really contributing. He made a major contribution last week in his play. This is a physical conference, and you have got to have physical runners to win tough games down the stretch, and he has given us that kind of play. We are real pleased with his progress."

On comparing Brandon Jackson to Oklahoma's Adrian Peterson:

"I have not seen Adrian Peterson in person, but I have seen him on film. He is a talent, and like our guys, our talent. They are both physical style runners, and we will see as time goes along how we compare those guys, but we kind of like our guys."

On Joe Dailey's performance in the Baylor game:

"He played well. He did the things that we asked him to do, and we were real specific with those guys. They kind of challenged each other. The biggest and most exciting thing is when guys start to take over ownership of their play. That is when you know you really have something. I think our guys are starting to take ownership offensively of this offense. They understand what we are trying to get done, and they understand the techniques. We saw it in the film study this weekend. Guys were talking back and forth about what was supposed to happen, and taking a lot of pride in different situations. When you have that you start having real consistent play, and that is what we are striving for. We are striving

for consistency day in and day out, and a standard of performance on the offensive side of the ball, and we are not there yet. We have a lot of work to do, and Tuesday is the day we go back at it. That consistency and standard of performance is what we are striving for.”

On the health of Isaiah Fluellen:

“Isaiah has got some athletic ability, and he can stretch the field. The thing with him is that he hasn’t been healthy enough to be consistent in practice. You can’t just go out and play games, you have got to practice, and get timing and run your routes at the right depths. He is starting to be able to get that consistency in practice, and it is starting to show up on the field on Saturday’s. It is just going back to practice and being consistent, and getting repetitions. When guys work together, then you see the results on Saturday.”

On the balance of running and passing the ball:

“There is no magic number. We do what we feel we have to do to win games, and that doesn’t mean that it will be that way every week. It could change. We will do what we feel we have to do this week to put ourselves in the position to win. Whether that’s throwing it 42 times or running it 42 times, we will come up with that mix as we go through it.”

On Kansas State’s defensive strengths:

“I think they are extremely well-coached. They are in the right spots. They are a physical bunch, and are very rangy on their ends. We think they are very talented in the back ends as well. They are starting to come together as a unit. Like all good teams this time of year they start to gel, and start playing together. You can see that on film. I was very impressed with how they played against Oklahoma. They played them toe to toe, like you would expect from the reigning Big 12 champions. They played with a lot of heart, and we expect the same kind of effort from them this weekend.”