



DeJuan Groce All-American

5

POS. Right Cornerback
HT./WT. 5-10 / 190
YEAR Senior
LETTERS Four Letters
HOME Garfield Heights, Ohio
H.S. St. Edward

- 2002 First-Team All-American Return Specialist (AFCA)
- 2002 First-Team All-American Punt Returner (CNNSI.com)
- 2002 Second-Team All-American All-Purpose (Associated Press)
- 2002 Third-Team All-American Kick Returner (The Sporting News)
- 2002 Fourth-Team All-American Cornerback (The Sporting News)
- 2002 First-Team All-Big 12 Kick Returner (Coaches, Kansas City Star, DMN)
- 2002 Second-Team All-Big 12 Cornerback (Coaches, AP, Kansas City Star, DMN)
- 2002 Second-Team All-Big 12 All-Purpose (Associated Press)
- 2002 The Sporting News National Player of the Week (Troy State, 8/31)
- 2002 Big 12 Defensive Player of the Week vs. Utah State (9/7)
- 2002 Big 12 Special Teams Player of the Week (Troy State, 8/31; Missouri, 10/12)
- 2002 Nebraska Team Captain (one of three)
- 2001 Third-Team All-Big 12 Cornerback (Coaches)
- 2001 Honorable-Mention All-Big 12 Cornerback (AP)
- 2001 Big 12 Special Teams Player of the Week vs. Missouri (9/29)
- Tied NCAA Season Record with Four Punt Return Touchdowns (2002)
- Tied NCAA Record with Two Punt Return Touchdowns vs. Troy State (8/31)
- Set Nebraska Season Record with Four Punt Return Touchdowns (2002)
- Nebraska Single-Season Punt Return Yardage Record Holder (732 yards, 2002)
- Second in Nebraska Career Punt Return Yardage (1,218 yards)
- Second in Nebraska Career Punt Return Touchdowns (6 TDs)
- School Record Holder for Season Pass Breakups (17 in 2000)
- Tied for Sec on Nebraska Career PBU Chart (41)

In his third season as Nebraska's starting right cornerback, DeJuan Groce (pronounced Deh-WAN GROSS) established himself as one of the top cover men and punt returners in the nation. The 5-10, 190-pounder from Garfield Heights, Ohio, is one of the nation's top dual-threat players as reflected by his postseason honors.

Groce finished fourth nationally in yards per return at 17.0 per attempt (43 returns, 732 yards, 4 TDs), and was selected as a first-team All-American punt returner by the American Football Coaches Association and CNNSI.com. Groce was a second-team All-America pick as an all-purpose player according to the Associated Press and *The Sporting News* named him its third-team All-America punt returner. In addition, he also earned first-team All-Big 12 honors as a punt returner from the Big 12 coaches, the *Kansas City Star* and the *Dallas Morning News*.

Groce finished his Husker career in record-setting fashion against Ole

Miss in the 2002 Independence Bowl. Groce had eight punt returns for 102 yards and returned a second-quarter punt 60 yards for a touchdown. The punt return touchdown was his fourth return for a score this season, tying the NCAA record held by nine other players.

Groce joined 1972 Heisman Trophy winner Johnny Rodgers as the only players in NU history to amass 1,000 career punt return yards. Groce ranks second in school history with 1,218 yards and his 732 yards this season broke Rodgers' single-season record of 618 yards in his Heisman Trophy-winning 1972 season. Groce's six career punt return touchdowns also trail only Rodgers' eight in school history.

Groce ripped off the third-longest punt return in school history with an 89-yard touchdown in NU's 24-13 win over Missouri. With his third punt return touchdown of the year, Groce tied Rodgers' school single-season record set in 1971. Groce's first two punt return touchdowns of 2002 came against Troy State on returns of 83 and 72 yards. The two return touchdowns set a Nebraska record and tied an NCAA record with two punt return touchdowns in the same game. Groce finished the regular season with six punt returns of 25 yards or more this season.

In addition to his lethal abilities as a punt returner, Groce continued to be one of the top cover men in the conference. He was a second-team all-league selection as a cornerback by several sources and was a fourth-team All-America corner according to *The Sporting News*. He finished the season with 61 total tackles, including 38 solos, and tied for the team lead with four interceptions. He has also added eight pass breakups on the year to run his career total to 41, tied for second in Nebraska history.

Groce picked off two passes in back-to-back games against Troy State and Utah State to become just the second player in school history to record two interceptions in consecutive games, joining Bill Kosch, who picked off a pair of passes against Iowa State on Nov. 7, 1970, and two more against Kansas State on Nov. 14, 1970.

Groce had a career-high 15 total tackles against Texas, including 12 solo stops, the most by an NU defensive back since Mike Brown's 19 vs. Texas in 1998. He finished his NU career with 142 career tackles, just outside the top 50 in school history and 10th all-time among Husker defensive backs.

Groce completed his undergraduate work last semester and graduated with a degree in communication studies.

2002: Arizona State - Groce started the season by posting three tackles and returning four punts for 30 yards, including a 22-yard return, in a 48-10 victory in the BCA Classic. **Troy State** - Groce put on a punt return

Nebraska Top Punt Return Careers				
No.	Yards	Player, Pos., Year	(Returns/TD)	
1.	1,515	Johnny Rodgers, WB, 1970-71-72	(98 ret./7 TD*)	
2.	1,218	DeJuan Groce, RCB, 1999-00-01-02	(78 ret./5 TD*)	

* Rodgers and Groce each had one additional punt return TD in a bowl game.

Nebraska Top Four Punt Return Seasons				
No.	Yards	Player, Pos., Year	(Returns)	
1.	732	DeJuan Groce, CB, 2002	(43 ret.)	
2.	618	Johnny Rodgers, WB, 1972	(39 ret.)	
3.	548	Johnny Rodgers, WB, 1971	(33 ret.)	
4.	469	DeJuan Groce, CB, 2001	(33 ret.)	

■ Career Statistics and Personal Bests

Year	Defense (-----Tackles-----)					Fum.				QB Int.		
	G/S	UT	AT	TI	TFL	Sacks	C-R	BK/PBU	PI	Hrv.Csd.		
1998												
		Redshirted										
1999	12/0	12	12	24	0-0	0-0	1-0	0	2	0	0	
2000	11/2	20	6	26	1-6	0-0	1-0	0	17	1	0	
2001	11/11	19	12	31	1-3	0-0	0-0	1	14	3	0	
2002	14/14	38	23	61	2-3	0-0	1-0	0	8	4	0	
Totals	48/27	89	53	142	4-12	0-0	3-0	1	41	8	0	

Interceptions: 8-75-0 total; 1-0-0 in 2000; 3-49-0 in 2001; 4-26-0 in 2002
Punt Returns: 78-1,218-5 total; 2-17-0 in 1999; 33-469-1 in 2001; 43-732-4 in 2002

2000 Fiesta Bowl vs. Tennessee: Tackles, 1 UT, 0 AT, 1 TT
2000 Alamo Bowl vs. Northwestern: Tackles, 5 UT, 1 AT, 6 TT
2002 Rose Bowl vs. Miami: Tackles, 3 UT, 1 AT, 4 TT; PR 3-85-1 (71 TD)
2002 Ind. Bowl vs. Ole Miss: Tackles, 2 UT, 3AT, 5 TT; PR 8-102-1 (60 TD)

Tackles—15 vs. Texas, 2002

Solo Tackles—12 vs. Texas, 2002

TFL—1-6 vs. KU, 2000; 1-3 vs. KSU, 2001; 1-2 vs. MU, 2002; 1-1 vs. OSU

Quarterback Hurries—None

Passes Broken Up—5 at Iowa State, 2000; at Missouri, 2001

Interceptions—Total 8-75-0: 1-0 vs. San Jose St., 2000; 1-40 vs. Notre Dame (career long), 2001; 1-9 vs. Iowa State, 2001; 1-0 vs. Kansas, 2001; 2-5 (career high) vs. Troy State, 2002; 2-21 (career high) vs. Utah State, 2002

Blocked Kicks—1 (41-yard field goal) vs. Rice, 2001

Most Punt Return/Yards—2-155 vs. Troy State, 2002

Long Punt Return/TD—89 yards vs. Missouri, 2002, TD (71 vs. Miami in 2002 Rose Bowl, TD)

Number of Career Punt Returns of 25-Plus Yards—10 total; 4 in 2001; 6 in 2002

and defensive back clinic by setting a school record and tying an NCAA record with two punt return touchdowns and a pair of first-quarter interceptions in a 31-16 win over Troy State. Groce's first return went for 83 yards and a score in the second quarter to give NU a 14-0 lead. He added a 72-yard touchdown return in the third quarter to give the Huskers a 24-10 advantage. He was named the Big 12 Special Teams Player of the Week and *The Sporting News* National Player of the Week. **Utah State**-Groce snagged two interceptions for the second consecutive game, which he returned 21 yards, to earn Big 12 Defensive Player-of-the-Week honors. Both of Groce's interceptions set up NU touchdowns in a 44-13 win. He added one assisted tackle and one breakup. He also returned four punts for 66 yards, including a long return of 27 yards. **Penn State**-Groce had one punt return for 12 yards, while adding five tackles, including four solos. **Iowa State**-Groce posted six total tackles, including three solos. He added one punt return for minus-one yard.

McNeese State-Groce returned two punts for 23 yards, added one solo tackle and broke up one pass. **Missouri**-Groce produced the third-longest punt return in school history with an 89-yard return for his third punt return touchdown of the year. He added four tackles, including two solos, and his first tackle-for-loss of the year, which stopped Missouri on a third-and-goal at the 1-yard line. **Oklahoma State**-Groce had seven tackles and his second TFL of the season, in a 24-21 loss. Groce also returned three punts for 32 yards, including a 22-yarder to set up NU's first touchdown. **Texas A&M**-Groce set a season high with three pass breakups, while adding three tackles in NU's 38-31 come-from-behind win over the Aggies. He added three punt returns for 50 yards, including a pair of 21-yard returns. **Texas**-Groce set a career high with 15 total tackles, including 12 solo stops. He put the Huskers in a position to tie or win the game with his 44-yard punt return with less than a minute left to give NU a first down at the UT 16. **Kansas**-Groce posted three tackles, including two solos, to go along with his seventh pass breakup of the year. He also had five punt returns for 61 yards, including a pair of 24-yard returns in the 45-7 win over Kansas. **Kansas State**-Groce notched three tackles, including two solo stops, while returning three punts for 27 yards and a long return of 16 yards in a loss to KSU. **Colorado**-Groce notched four tackles and had two punt returns for 17 yards in NU's regular-season finale. The 17 yards on punt returns allowed him to establish a new school single-season record for punt return yardage. **Mississippi**-In his final game as a Husker, Groce scored on a 60-yard punt return touchdown against the Rebels. The touchdown was his fourth via a punt return in 2002, tying an NCAA record. Groce added five tackles and a pass breakup.

Career: In 2001, Groce shined on special teams, serving as a gunner on punt coverage and as one of the nation's top returners. He had four returns of 25 yards or more, including a 60-yard touchdown in a 31-21 win over Kansas State. He ranked ninth nationally and third in the Big 12, at 14.2 yards per return, while his 469 yards ranked third in school history and better than the team total of 102 of the Division I-A teams. Groce helped the Blackshirt defense rank in the top 10 nationally in four defensive categories, including second in pass efficiency defense (83.8), sixth in scoring defense (15.8 ppg), eighth in total defense (287.2 ypg) and ninth in pass defense (170.3 ypg). He notched 31 tackles, including 19 solo stops, and a team-high 14 pass breakups, a total which ranks third in school history. He had four tackles in the 2002 Rose Bowl against Miami, including three solo stops. He had three punt returns for 85 yards including a 71-yard touchdown in the fourth quarter. Groce had an excellent sophomore season when he played in every game and alternated with Erwin Swiney at right corner. He also played left corner in NU's nickel package. Groce had 17 pass breakups, two more than Ralph Brown's previous school record of 15 in 1999. Groce had six tackles in the 2000 Alamo Bowl, including five solo stops. In his freshman campaign, Groce played in every game as the backup left corner. He also played a key role in NU's nickel defense. Groce finished the season with 24 tackles. Against Tennessee in the Fiesta Bowl, Groce had one tackle in the 31-21 win. Groce redshirted in 1998 in his first season in the Husker program.

For more information on DeJuan Groce, please see pages 110-111 of the 2002 Nebraska Football Media Guide.

Top NU Season Pass Breakups

1. 17 DeJuan Groce, RCB, 2000
2. 15 Ralph Brown, RCB, 1999
3. 14 DeJuan Groce, RCB, 2001
- 14 Ralph Brown, RCB, 1998

Top NU Career Pass Breakups

1. 50 Ralph Brown, 1996-99
2. 41 Keyuo Craver, 1998-01
- 41 DeJuan Groce, 1999-02

Groce's Game-by-Game

1999 # - Touchdown; * Games started												
Defense Opponent	(Tackles)			Fum.			Int-Yds.	Punt Ret.				
	UT	AT	TT	TFL	C-R	BK		PBU	No.	Yds.	Lg.	
Iowa	1	2	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0-0	0	0	0	
California	1	0	1	0-0	1-0	0	0	0-0	2	17	12	
S. Miss.	2	0	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0-0	0	0	0	
Missouri	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0	1	0-0	0	0	0	
Oklahoma St.	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0-0	0	0	0	
Iowa State	1	3	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0-0	0	0	0	
Texas	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0-0	0	0	0	
Kansas	2	2	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0-0	0	0	0	
Texas A&M	0	2	2	0-0	0-0	0	1	0-0	0	0	0	
Kansas State	2	0	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0-0	0	0	0	
Colorado	2	0	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0-0	0	0	0	
Texas (B12)	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0-0	0	0	0	
Totals	12	12	24	0-0	1-0	0	2	0-0	2	17	12	
2000 Fiesta Bowl vs. Tennessee:												
	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0-0	0	0	0	
2000												
Defense Opponent	(Tackles)			Fum.			Int-Yds.	Punt Ret.				
	UT	AT	TT	TFL	C-R	BK		PBU	No.	Yds.	Lg.	
San Jose St.	3	1	4	0-0	0-0	0	4	1-0	0	0	0	
Notre Dame	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0-0	0	0	0	
Iowa	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0-0	0	0	0	
Missouri	2	0	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0-0	0	0	0	
Iowa State	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	5	0-0	0	0	0	
Texas Tech	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0-0	0	0	0	
Baylor	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0-0	0	0	0	
Oklahoma	6	1	7	0-0	0-0	0	1	0-0	0	0	0	
Kansas	3	1	4	1-6	1-0	0	1	0-0	0	0	0	
Kansas State*	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0	3	0-0	0	0	0	
Colorado*	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0	3	0-0	0	0	0	
Totals	20	6	26	1-6	1-0	0	17	1-0	0	0	0	
2000 Alamo Bowl vs. Northwestern*:												
	5	1	6	0-0	0-0	0	0	0-0	0	0	0	
2001												
Defense Opponent	(Tackles)			Fum.			Int-Yds.	Punt Ret.				
	UT	AT	TT	TFL	C-R	BK		PBU	No.	Yds.	Lg.	
TCU*	3	1	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0-0	1	11	11	
Troy State*	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	2	0-0	2	19	16	
Notre Dame*	7	1	8	0-0	0-0	0	1	1-40	4	24	10	
Rice*	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	1	1	0-0	4	58	20	
Missouri*	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0	5	0-0	7	145	26	
Iowa State*	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	0	1-9	2	38	34	
Baylor	Injured - DNP (bruised ribs)											
Texas Tech*	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0	2	0-0	2	36	19	
Oklahoma*	3	2	5	0-0	0-0	0	1	0-0	5	40	33	
Kansas*	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	0	0	1-0	3	20	19	
Kansas State*	1	2	3	1-3	0-0	0	1	0-0	2	70	60#	
Colorado*	1	3	4	0-0	0-0	0	1	0-0	1	8	8	
Totals	19	12	31	1-3	0-0	1	14	3-49	33	469	60#	
2002 Rose Bowl vs. Miami*:												
	3	1	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0-0	3	85	71#	
2002												
Defense Opponent	(Tackles)			Fum.			Int-Yds.	Punt Ret.				
	UT	AT	TT	TFL	C-R	BK		PBU	No.	Yds.	Lg.	
Arizona St.*	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0-0	4	30	22	
Troy St.*	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	1	2-5	2	155	83#	
Utah St.*	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	1	2-21	4	66	27	
Penn St.*	4	1	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	0-0	1	12	12	
Iowa St.*	3	3	6	0-0	1-0	0	0	0-0	1	-1	-1	
McNeese St.*	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	1	0-0	2	23	21	
Missouri*	2	2	4	1-2	0-0	0	0	0-0	4	114	89#	
Okl. St.*	5	2	7	1-1	0-0	0	0	0-0	3	32	22	
Texas A&M*	1	2	3	0-0	0-0	0	3	0-0	3	50	21	
Texas*	12	3	15	0-0	0-0	0	0	0-0	1	44	44	
Kansas*	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0	1	0-0	5	61	24	
Kansas St.*	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0-0	3	27	16	
Colorado*	2	2	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0-0	2	17	10	
2002 Independence Bowl vs. Ole Miss*:												
	2	3	5	0-0	0-0	0	1	0-0	8	102	60#	
Totals	38	23	61	2-3	1-0	0	8	4-26	43	732	89#	