



Sports

MSU football notebook

Injuries force freshmen into game

By Chad Courrier
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MANKATO — Minnesota State planned for a physical game against Nebraska-Omaha on Saturday, but several players had to get help from the medical staff during Saturday's 21-14 homecoming loss to Nebraska-Omaha at Blakeslee Stadium.

"(Trainer) Jeff Chambers earned his money this week," coach Jeff Jamrog said.

Defensive tackle Chris Brunkhorst suffered a knee injury in the second quarter on a play that occurred behind the line of scrimmage. While the Nebraska-Omaha running back was finishing an 18-yard gain, Brunkhorst was hit behind the play by guard Randall Jantzen, who was assessed a personal foul and ejected on the play.

Nebraska-Omaha coach Pat Behrns said he didn't think the play was serious enough to warrant an ejection, but he said it wasn't a smart play.

Brunkhorst didn't return, and with Spencer Dickinson playing just two series before injuring his groin, redshirt freshmen Brad Diel and Jared Schwanz both played the entire second half at defensive tackle.

"I'm proud of some guys that played way more snaps than I ever envisioned," Jamrog said. "The future looks bright, but we're learning the hard way."

Diel, from Mankato East, made six tackles, including two for loss, and Schwanz, from St. James, made one tackle. Along with end Randy Earl, the Mavericks had three redshirt freshmen playing the defensive line in the second half.

"Brad Diel and Jared Schwanz wanted this as much as anybody," said middle linebacker Tony Hunter, who is a true sophomore. "Everybody out there was doing their job."

Tight end Jeff Fiedler (ribs), Hunter (leg), Earl (leg), running back Julian Phipps (shoulder) and receiver Bryan Dalton (ribs) were



Minnesota State safety Allen King lines up Nebraska-Omaha quarterback Zach Miller Saturday. Miller rushed for 165 yards and two touchdowns in Nebraska-Omaha's 21-14 victory.

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MSU COACH JEFF JAMROG

also attended to by trainers, but all of them returned to the game.

Receiver Tyrell Smith was injured on the second-to-last play and was helped off the field, favoring his knee.

Coordinators in the box

Offensive coordinator Dan Ragsdale and defensive Ken Gordon both watched the first half of Saturday's game from the press box atop the home side of Blakeslee Stadium. Gordon had been on the sideline until the game at Augustana two weeks ago, but this was the first game in the box for Ragsdale.

"We've played pretty good defense with coach Gordon in the box," Jamrog said. "He gives us another set of eyes. That's what seems to be best for the team."

Ragsdale lasted just the first half and was back on the sidelines for the third quarter. "He tried it, and we'll have to see what happens," Jamrog said.

Spencer gets kicks

Freshman Ben Spencer, who had been handling kickoffs, got his first chance at PATS on Saturday and was 2 for 2. He also showed good depth on kickoffs despite a tricky wind at Blakeslee Stadium.

"I'm very excited about that young man's future," Jamrog said. "He says he can get (a field goal) from 50."

Jason Tompkins kicked in the season-opener but hasn't played since because of an injury to his leg. Johnathan Christensen, the team's punter, has also done some kicking.