

Cornhuskers Need Martinez Sharp As Passer And Runner

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska wants Taylor Martinez to become a better passer this season. Along with that, the 17th-ranked Cornhuskers need him to be the runner he used to be.

Lost in the scrutinizing of Martinez’s throwing motion — a popular pastime for folks in this football-crazy state — has been the drop-off in his rushing numbers the second half of last season.

Martinez prioritized his throwing mechanics in the offseason with the idea that defenses will be hesitant to load up to stop the run if he’s more effective passing. He hired a personal quarterback coach and attended the Manning Passing Academy last month. Coaches and teammates say they see a difference through two weeks of preseason practice.

“I think his best football is ahead of him,” coach Bo Pelini said. “He’s had a tremendous offseason. I’m glad he’s our quarterback.”

The Huskers ran more than two-thirds of the time last season, with Rex Burkhead getting most of the carries.

Second-year offensive coordinator Tim Beck is planning a more balanced spread-option scheme, but he knows how dangerous Martinez can be if he’s running well. The junior is 17-8 as the starter, including 8-0 when he runs for 100 yards. The Huskers are 4-6 when he’s held under 50.

Nagging injuries have limited Martinez since the second half of the 2010 season. He said he’s 100 percent now.

“Hopefully this year I can take more hits and run the ball a lot more,” he said.

Martinez averaged 97 yards rushing as the Huskers started 5-1 last season. He ran for 41 yards a game during a 4-3 finish.

He completed 56 percent of his passes for 2,089 yards, with 13 touchdowns against eight interceptions. Dropped balls hurt his numbers, but so did poor throwing form. He often put the ball behind and over receivers. He would miss the mark on long passes when he leaned back and threw awkwardly off his back foot.

Martinez spent his spring break with Los Angeles-area quarterback coach Steve Calhoun, who changed his footwork and delivery. Martinez worked with other college quarterbacks at the Manning camp, picking up tips on mechanics and leadership from NFL stars Peyton and Eli.

He immersed himself in film study this summer with graduate assistant Joe Ganz, the Huskers’ quarterback in 2008.

The first day of preseason practice, Martinez raised eyebrows when he said his goal was to complete 70 percent of his passes this year.

Told that only eight FBS quarterbacks with a minimum of 15 attempts a game were able to achieve that mark last year, the 57-percent career passer didn’t waver.

“I don’t look at what other quarterbacks do,” he said. “That’s what I want to reach.”

Martinez’s confidence is fueled by the fact that the Huskers will be entering their second year in Beck’s spread-option system and second year in the Big Ten.

“Last year we kind of switched it up a lot and we really didn’t know what coach Beck wanted early on in the games,” Martinez said. “We really didn’t know how to prepare for them, and a lot of times when we went into a game, we had to change up our game plan. We know what defenses are going to give us this year, so it’s a lot better for us and coach Beck.”

Tight end Ben Cotton said Martinez saw his reads, stuck to his reads and got the ball where it needed to be during this summer’s seven-on-seven passing drills.

“I’m proud to say Taylor has come a long way as far as being more comfortable and more confident,” Cotton said.

Nebraska didn’t play a spring game because of inclement weather, so fans haven’t seen Martinez throw a pass since the Capital One Bowl loss to South Carolina. That hasn’t stopped them from slicing and dicing his passing skills on Internet message boards and radio shows.

“He was a freshman and sophomore, and people were critiquing the degree of his arm when he threw it and the steps he was taking,” receiver Kenny Bell said. “Obviously, the fundamentals are important. But, heck, if you make plays, you’re good with me.”

Cook, Rudolph Recovering From Concussions

EDEN PRAIRIE, Minn. (AP) — Minnesota Vikings cornerback Chris Cook and tight end Kyle Rudolph are recovering from concussions.

Both players were banged up in Friday’s preseason game against Buffalo and held out of Sunday’s practice as a precaution. Coach Leslie Frazier said they’re still in the evaluation phase of their injuries, but that they’ve passed all of their tests so far.

Running back Adrian Peterson will continue to have his participation ramped up this week, with his rehabilitation from reconstructive surgery on his left knee nearly behind him. Frazier said the team would decide by Tuesday or Wednesday whether he’ll play in this week’s preseason game against San Diego.

YHS 1-2 In Opening Quad

The Yankton Gazelles finished a season-opening girls’ tennis home quadrangular at 1-2, thanks to a split of two matches Saturday at the YHS/SAC Tennis Courts.

Watertown beat Yankton 8-1 earlier in the day, but the Gazelles rebounded to defeat Vermillion 9-0.

Yankton’s only victory over the Eastern South Dakota Conference (ESD) rival Arrows came from Sarah Rockne at flight one singles. Despite trailing 4-7, Rockne came back to beat Mariah Hericks 10-7.

In the win over Vermillion, the Gazelles got victories from Rockne, Sarah Santos, Alexa Bryan, Kim Cap, Anna Kokesh and Maddie Logue. Rockne and Taylor Rothenberger teamed up to win at flight one doubles.

Vermillion finished the weekend at 0-3, picking up a total of 11 wins along the way. The Tangers return to action Tuesday at a triangular in Mitchell, while Yankton

will compete in a quadrangular in Brookings next Saturday.

WATERTOWN 8, YANKTON 1
SINGLES: Sarah Rockne YHS def. Mariah Hericks 10-7; Rachel Gauger W def. Sarah Santos 10-1; Jonna Vachal W def. Alexa Bryan 10-1; Sydney Strait W def. Kim Cap 10-2; Rachel Kjelland W def. Anna Kokesh 10-0; Emma Kays W def. Maddie Logue 10-0
DOUBLES: Hericks-Vachal W def. Rockne-Taylor Rothenberger 10-4; Gauger-Erin Bones W def. Bryan-Cap 10-4; Strait-Kays W def. Santos-Logue 10-0
JV: Erin Bones W def. Jaclyn Arens 10-0; Kjelland-Allie VanDerWede W def. Arens-Kokesh 10-0

YANKTON 9, VERMILLION 0
SINGLES: Sarah Rockne YHS def. Abby Weis 8-2; Sarah Santos YHS def. Audrey Miller 8-0; Alexa Bryan YHS def. Hope Knedler 8-0; Kim Cap YHS def. Alex Rosdall 8-0; Anna Kokesh YHS def. Brandi Styles 8-1; Maddie Logue YHS def. Kirstyn Bohn 8-1
DOUBLES: Rockne-Taylor Rothenberger YHS def. Weis-Miller 8-1; Bryan-Cap YHS def. Knedler-Rosdall 8-1; Santos-Logue YHS def. Styles-Bohn 8-0

WATERTOWN 9, VERMILLION 0
SINGLES: Allie VanDerWede W def. Abby Weis 10-1; Jani Moran W def. Audrey Miller 10-0; Abbey Cerry W def. Hope Knedler 10-0; Ali Cummings W def. Alex Rosdall 10-0; Abbey Rieber W def. Brandi Styles 10-0; Jordan Poppen W def. Kirstyn Bohn 10-0
DOUBLES: Mariah Hericks-Jonna Vachal W def. Weis-Miller 10-2; Rachel Gauger-Erin Bones W def. Knedler-Rosdall 10-0; Sydney Strait-Emma Kays W def. Styles-Bohn 10-0

RAPID CITY STEVENS 9, VERMILLION 0
SINGLES: Hallie VanderWell RCS def. Abby Weis 10-3; Harmoni Bahr RCS def. Audrey Miller 10-0; Kimmy Christopher RCS def. Alex Rosdall 10-0; Annika Hammerquist RCS def. Brandi Styles 10-0; Katie Sedevie RCS def. Kirstyn Bohn 10-0
DOUBLES: Sydney Moyle-Taylor Messenger RCS def. Weis-Miller 10-0; Kristina Hammerquist-Kate Salbowski RCS def. Knedler-Rosdall 10-0; Sarah Kelly-Stephanie Griffith RCS def. Styles-Bohn 10-0



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

Yankton's Taylor Rothenberger returns a shot during a matchup with Watertown as part of a girls' tennis quadrangular on Saturday at the YHS/SAC Tennis Courts.

SEASON-OPENING SOCCER SWEEP



JEREMY HOECK/P&D

Brandon Valley's Amy Steffen, 5, rushes past Yankton goalkeeper Katie Greeneway, middle, for a first-half score in their girls' soccer opener Saturday afternoon at Lewis & Clark Soccer Park. Yankton claimed a 4-2 victory over the Lynx.

Gazelles Top Brandon Valley In Opener

Megan Ford scored two goals to lead the Yankton Gazelles past Brandon Valley 4-2 in Saturday afternoon’s girls’ club soccer opener at Lewis & Clark Soccer Park.

Morgan Tessier and Brianna Benjamin scored the other goals for the Gazelles, who allowed four shots on goal. Brianna Newman

recorded two assists and Benjamin added the other.

Goalkeeper Katie Greeneway recorded two saves in the win. Yankton also got strong defensive efforts from Morgan Bakke, Carli Al-Azzeh, Taylor Ruter, Amanda Grayholt and Danielle Beckmann.

Yankton returns to action Tues-

day night at Sioux Falls Washington.

In the junior varsity game, Yankton beat Brandon Valley 2-1 thanks to goals from Kami Cornemann and Madison Tessier.

Raquel Cole made eight saves at goal for the Gazelles.

Bucks Shut Out Lynx 8-0

Thanks to a quick start and a balanced offense, the Yankton Bucks boys’ club soccer team shut out Brandon Valley 8-0 in season-opening action Saturday afternoon at Lewis & Clark Soccer Park.

Yankton scored three goals in the first seven minutes of the first half and took a 6-0 lead into halftime.

The Bucks limited the visiting Lynx to only two shots on goal, one in each half — saved by goalkeeper Landon Breen.

Yankton had six different players score on the day. Dylan Becker recorded two goals and two assists, while Zach Benjamin had two goals and one assist.

Osmar Pacheco added one goal and three assists, while Derek Brenner and John Dannenbring each had a goal and an assist. Andrew Hummel chipped in with the other goal.

In the junior varsity game, Yankton beat Brandon Valley 5-3. Cole Lewno and Gabe Wenzlaff each scored twice for the Bucks, while Patrick Weinandt added the other. Cristian Slate made four saves at goal in the first half and Jameson Mitchell had four saves in the second half.

Yankton travels to Sioux Falls on Tuesday night for a varsity/JV double-header at Washington.



JEREMY HOECK/P&D

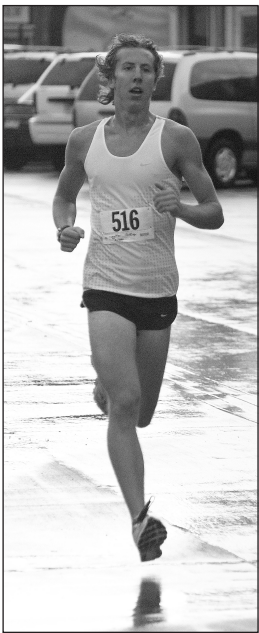
Yankton's Zach Benjamin uses his chest to corral a sharp pass during Saturday afternoon's boys' club soccer opener against Brandon Valley at Lewis & Clark Soccer Park.

COYOTE RUNNERS CHAMPS AT RIVERBOAT DAYS 5K



JILANNE DOOM/P&D

Carol Miller, left, and Jeffrey Mettler, both runners at the University of South Dakota, won their respective age divisions at the Mount Marty College Riverboat Days 5K on Saturday morning. The race began and ended in downtown Yankton.



JILANNE DOOM/P&D

Jeffrey Mettler approaches the finish line to take first place at the Mount Marty College Riverboat Days 5K, which was held Saturday morning in downtown Yankton. Mettler finished in a time of 15:21 to win the male 20-29 age division.

Tennessee, Texas, Stay Unbeaten At Little League World Series

SOUTH WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. (AP) — After his home run sailed over the left-field fence, Brock Myers raced around the basepaths as if he was running a 40-yard dash.

The soft-spoken, Myers played it cool later in front of reporters, but Tennessee manager Joey Hale insisted on giving the 12-year-old Myers and his clutch-hitting teammates the star treatment.

Jayson Brown broke a 5-5 tie by hitting a 1-2 pitch down the right-field line for a two-out, two-run triple in the top of the sixth, and Myers followed with his two-run shot to left to lift the team from Goodlettsville to a 9-6 win over the prolific sluggers from Petaluma, Calif., on Sunday at the Little League World Series.

Tennessee is unbeaten in the tournament, joining Texas in the U.S. bracket after the San Antonio sluggers beat New Castle, Ind., 13-3.

In the international bracket, Japan and Taiwan played the nightcap after Panama started off Sunday’s action with an 8-3 over Canada to remain undefeated.

Hale’s team had a tougher time against a California club that belted four homers on the afternoon. Petaluma’s powerful hitters are rarely out of any game the way they swing the bats, so Myers’ blast helped ease his skipper’s mind.

“They were pretty big ... Brock. Going up by four, it was pretty nice,” Hale said.

Myers smiled briefly and shrugged his shoulders.

Brown, also 12, simply said afterward the big inning was “pretty awesome.”

But the game was pretty tight going into the sixth, with 17,000 fans watching in the stands and millions more watching on national television.

After scratching out two first-inning runs on a fielder’s choice and passed ball, Petaluma turned up the power. Six-foot-3 Bradley Smith, 12, got the spree started with a homer down the left-field line.

With two blasts in two games, Smith has already become one off the most feared hitters in South Williamsport.

“If you’re hitting the ball like that, you want him to step up to the plate as much as possible, but the rules only call for you to hit at certain times,” manager Eric Smith said.

Kempton Brandis and Porter Slate also homered on the afternoon, and Cole Tomei slugged a solo shot with two outs in the sixth.

Slate then draw a walk, but reliever Jake Rucker got a force at second to end the game — two batters before Smith’s