



## Neutz is UB's top receiver

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Published: August 7, 2012, 9:48 PM

Updated: August 8, 2012, 7:44 AM

Alex Neutz can't believe where the time has gone. Wasn't he just a redshirt freshman soaking up all the knowledge he could from the likes of fellow receivers Naaman Roosevelt and Brett Hamlin? Could it really be that he's now the No. 1 target in UB's receiving corps, the wideout from whom the most is expected?

"That's weird to hear," Neutz said after Tuesday's practice at UB Stadium. "I'm getting old, man. I'm getting old. This is my fourth year here. That's crazy."

Neutz is the latest in the line of No. 1 wideouts hailing from Western New York. The stretch began with Roosevelt, the St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute grad who obliterated the receiving record book before moving on to the Buffalo Bills. It continued with Lackawanna's Marcus Rivers, who led the Bulls in receptions as a junior and senior and got a look from the Green Bay Packers. And now it's on to Neutz, the two-time first-team all-WNYer out of Grand Island.

Neutz seemed primed to wrestle the No. 1 distinction away from Rivers last year until injury intervened. He was being tackled from behind near the end zone against Miami (Ohio) and stretched to break the goal line with the ball while pressing his left hand against the turf. The wrist rolled and surgery was required to mend a fractured bone. He still led the team in receiving yards (641) and receiving touchdowns (four) despite missing the final three games.

"It's coming back," said Neutz, who's shed the wrist brace he wore during spring practice. "I don't have full range of motion back. I never will. It's probably like 75 percent. Sometimes I'm a little bit tentative still. Blocking can still throw you off a little bit. But for the most part, no problems. Little stiff but other than that it's pretty good."

Neutz has been perhaps UB's most consistent receiver since his redshirt freshman season, totaling 69 catches for 1,055 yards and eight touchdowns. He has size (6-foot-3) and sure hands that enable him to come down to the high throw. He works the middle of the field and the sidelines and rarely drops a pass. It was evident something was wrong when a ball sailed through his grasp when he continued to play after suffering the injury against Miami.

"That's when I knew I was hurting the team more than helping it," he said. He came out of the game and soon learned his season was over.

Neutz figures to command increased attention from defenses this year. Fred Lee looks like a lock at one of the other wideouts after coming on strong last season following the injury to Neutz. Devon Hughes (18 catches last year) and Cordero Dixon (three appearances, no catches) came out of spring deadlocked for the No. 3 spot. But history makes Neutz the apparent go-to guy, meaning he could draw a lot of double-team attention from opposing defenses.

"That's a possibility," said Bulls offensive coordinator/receivers coach Alex Wood. "That's something we're going to see how it goes. There's always schemes that teams have ways to double (team) receivers."

Neutz deflects credit for his rise to the distinction of No. 1 receiver. He was merely a willing listener eager to apply all he could he learn.

"A lot of credit goes to my teammates," he said. "I had great mentors like Naaman Roosevelt and Brett Hamlin to teach me the ropes. Then I had Marcus and TJ (Terrell Jackson) to teach me. And then No. 18, Fred Lee, who's probably my best friend on the

whole team, my roommate. I look up to him because his mental attitude is just always there. When I'm having a bad day I look to him to give me inspiration. I might be considered the No. 1 guy but I couldn't do it without my teammates to be honest with you."