



CHRIS MACHIAN/THE WORLD-HERALD

# HOLE LOT OF PAIN

Gophers' ground game buries Husker defense in rout; QB O'Brien plays second half as migraine sidelines Lee

By SAM MCKEWIN  
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

MINNEAPOLIS — Go! Go! Nebraska Athletic Director Bill Moos yelled Saturday in excitement to a long De'Mornay Pierson-El catch-and-run. This was before NU's run defense had collapsed and the Huskers lost their starting quarterback to a severe migraine.

As the game wore on, Moos' box of visitors — including his boss, UNL Chancellor Ronnie Green — dialed down to mild applause to chatter quiet enough that reporters could no longer hear it.

Suddenly, noise came from the box again on a fourth-down sack of Husker backup quarterback Patrick O'Brien.

"NO!"  
Later, in the fourth quarter, a frustrated bellow erupted after a long Minnesota run.

"OH NO!"  
Consider that line — and Nebraska's 54-21 loss to the Gophers Saturday — as a stamp on the 2017 season, now inexorably headed toward a coaching change.

The Gophers took the lead on the game's opening play — a 100-yard kickoff return for a touchdown by running back Rodney Smith — and thereafter shoved Nebraska's defense into submission with 409 rushing yards — gained at a 9.1-yard-per-carry clip. Only twice during NU's Big Ten tenure — the 2012 conference title game and the 2014 game at Wisconsin — did a Husker opponent have more. Minnesota quarterback Demry Croft had 183 of them running the option, and Nebraska's defense, coordinated by Bob Diaco, appeared to have no idea on how to stop it.

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MINNESOTA 54  
NEBRASKA 21

Fourth-and-one attempt for NU blows up in the second quarter and Minnesota lays it on. **12CF**

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Watch Sam McKewon provide his postgame analysis of the Huskers.  
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Nebraska's Lamar Jackson sits on the ground after missing a tackle on a second-quarter touchdown run by Minnesota's Kobe McCrary.

*Dust for fingerprints  
and you'll find many*



Tom Shatel

COLUMNIST

MINNEAPOLIS — Fire Shawn Eichorst again.

This is his mess that unfolded here on Saturday, this 54-21 debacle loss to Minnesota that was perhaps the lowest point in the last 65 years of Nebraska football.

The comparisons to the 76-39 loss at Kansas in 2007, but that was a good Kansas team, a KU team that ended up ranked No. 2 in the nation. But who's counting?

Eichorst is gone, and so is former NU Chancellor Harvey Perlman, and the state of the program goes on their tab, certainly. At this point, it doesn't really matter if Eichorst hired Bob Diaco or Billy

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