

# SPORTS

## ALAMO BOWL

**N** NEBRASKA 32 | **M** MICHIGAN 28

# Unforgettable

NU holds off Michigan in an Alamo Bowl that Husker fans are sure to remember

By DIRK CHATELAIN  
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

SAN ANTONIO — Marching band drummers and defensive tackles and little kids in red jerseys stomped celebratory balloons. Fireworks sparkled above the 50-yard line.

A sea — make that a lake — of red thundered “Husker Power.” Titus Adams and Barry Cryer cradled the Alamo Bowl trophy like an infant.

For the first time in many a winter, Nebraska football and its legion of followers can hibernate with a smile. The Huskers, who spit and sputtered through three-straight losses late in the season, somehow, some way, outlasted Michigan 32-28 Wednesday in the Alamo Bowl.

“I can’t be any prouder of this team the way they fought and came back,” Nebraska coach Bill Callahan shouted to a pro-Husker crowd afterward.

The last time Nebraska won its last three games was 1999. The Huskers opened the ensuing fall ranked No. 1 in the country. That won’t happen in 2006.

But the seed of redemption, a seed planted in the foothills of the Rockies a month ago, sprouted on a warm December night under the dome lights for all this football-loving, ESPN-watching country to see.

Few — even those who wondered for so long if Big Red had the right man at the top or the right quarterback or the right attitude — could question that.

Few could question a team that trailed 28-17 in the fourth quarter against the winningest program in college football history and rallied with two key turnovers and two key touchdowns that commenced a New Year’s-like jubilation, the kind that seemed a stranger since that morbid winter night in Pasadena four years ago.

“This is another huge building block for our program,” said linebacker Lance Brandenburg.

Whether the seed survives this cold, hard winter and then programs like Texas and USC, well, that’s a topic for another day. Just like the question of what the heck happened on the last play when Michigan almost mastered its impression of Cal-Stanford ’82.

On this night, in this fair city where thousands of Midwestern families spent thousands of dollars and chanted “Go Big Red”



REBECCA S. GRATZ/THE WORLD-HERALD

Nebraska I-back Cory Ross runs out of the grasp of Michigan’s Mike Massey during the third quarter Wednesday night at the Alamodome in San Antonio. Ross carried 28 times for 161 yards and a touchdown as the Huskers rallied from deficits of 14-7 and 28-17. Nebraska ended the season 8-4 just one season after missing postseason play for the first time in 35 seasons.

thousands of times, Nebraska stamped itself back on the national map.

“I don’t know what the ramifications will be,” Callahan said. “But I can tell you about the excitement in that locker room. We’ve been through quite a bit of adversity this year and to culminate this season with this type of victory feels very good.”

The key plays in the fourth quarter alone were almost too many to count.

There was Cory Ross’ 31-yard burst off left tackle to cut the Michigan lead to 28-25. There was Blake Tiedtke’s sack and forced fumble of UM quarterback Chad Henne that handed an inconsistent Husker offense the short field in the final minutes.

There was Zac Taylor’s strike to Terrence Nunn on third-and-six from the Michigan 14-yard line to boost NU to its first lead since early in the third quarter.

The biggest: On fourth-and-nine from the Nebraska 19 with 2:39 left, Zack Bowman tipped away a Henne pass to Mario See *Huskers: Page 2*



MATT MILLER/THE WORLD-HERALD

Nebraska offensive tackle Chris Patrick celebrates with fans after Wednesday’s win. NU closed the season with three consecutive wins.

### More Huskers

**Red hots, Page 3**  
**M is for mad:** Michigan QB Chad Henne and his coach weren’t pleased with some of the officials’ calls. **Page 4**  
**Memorable finish:** Michigan put up a good fight on a wild final play. **Page 5**

### Alamo yardstick

UM		NU
130	Rushing yards	151
270	Passing yards	167
400	Total yards	318
31:21	Time of poss.	28:39
3	Turnovers	2
6-49	Penalties	9-76

Complete box score, **Page 4**

## Huskers unearth lost ground game

■ A 161-yard game by Cory Ross seemingly came out of nowhere.

By RICH KAIPUST  
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

SAN ANTONIO — The Nebraska running game that was just about ready to be reported missing turned up Wednesday night at the Alamodome.

Getting it back resulted in Nebraska beating Michigan 32-28 in the Alamo Bowl and I-back Cory Ross being named offensive most valuable player.

“It was just working,” Ross

said. “When you got that offensive line clicking the way they were, and creating holes the way they were, there’s nothing to do but play running football. All I did was run through the holes.”

There were enough for Ross to rush for a season-high 161 yards. That was a significant total considering:

■ The senior hadn’t reached the 100-yard mark in the Huskers’ previous eight games.

■ Nebraska had spent the better part of the past five games wondering what happened to a rushing offense that was doing OK earlier in the season.

Ross credited an NU line See *Ross: Page 2*

CREIGHTON 78, MISSOURI STATE 56

## Bluejay defense manhandles Missouri State

By STEVEN PIVOVAR  
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Creighton dismantled Missouri State’s high-powered offense Wednesday night while putting some juice in its own attack.

The Bluejays held Missouri State to season lows for points and shooting percentage in a 78-56 victory that delighted the 11,547 fans who showed up at Qwest Center Omaha for the Missouri Valley Conference

opener. The paid attendance for the game was 13,898.

The Bears came into the contest leading the league in scoring at 89 points a game and in shooting, having made 50.7 percent of their field-goal attempts in a 7-1 start. Against the Bluejays, Missouri State shot 34.5 percent from the field and made just two 3-point field goals, seven below its Valley-leading average.

“They showed that they don’t need one of the best players in the league to play well,” Missouri State guard Blake Ahearn said. “It just came down to they wanted it more. We came out with no sense of urgency, they did. Our whole mind-set is attack, and they came out and attacked us, and we didn’t respond.”

Wednesday’s game was the fifth straight the Bluejays have played without All-America candidate Nate

Funk. Creighton has won four of them, and stands 7-2 heading into a two-game stretch on the road that will see the Bluejays play Saturday at Illinois State and Monday at Bradley.

Creighton should take some renewed offensive confidence on the road with it after coming within two percentage points of matching its season-high shooting effort. The See *CU basketball: Page 2*

Creighton’s Johnny Mathies, left, searches for a teammate while being guarded by Missouri State’s Kellen Easley. Mathies scored 18 points.



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