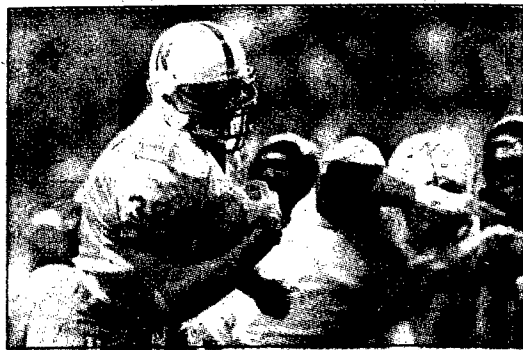


Football



The 'N' Stands For 'No Contest'



Huskers Vent Frustrations

San Antonio

There YOU are.

A Nebraska offensive line that was going to four-wheel this offense all the way to January.

A defensive line that gave a great, push and shove.

Dan Alexander breaking into the great wide open.

Bobby Newcombe making a catch, a juke, a spin and a dash to the end zone.

A Blackshirt defense with all its bases, and receivers, covered.

"Special" teams.

And, finally, that long-awaited pass by Newcombe. For a touchdown, in fact, to Matt Davison.

And wasn't that Newcombe sprinting downfield to jump into Davison's arms? And Crouch joining them in a group hug? Hope somebody had a camera.

It was that kind of warm and fuzzy scene in the Alamodome on Saturday night. Nebraska put the wood to Northwestern — ouch! — in a big way, 66-17, to win the Alamo Bowl.

The Huskers beat the Wildcats like a pinata, over and over and over, until the game finally broke apart and spilled all over the rug.

What did it mean? Nada. Nobody's at the Orange Bowl saying, "Boy, I'm glad we don't have to play those guys." Nobody's going to vote Nebraska No. 1 next year based on this game. It looked like a second straight year in which the Huskers went to a bowl that wasn't in the plans and took out their frustrations against an overmatched opponent.

That they put it all together for one game so decisively can only add to their fans' frustrations. Where was this kind of game when they needed it? In Norman? Manhattan?

Well, obviously, the Huskers' problem this year was that they didn't play in the Big Ten.

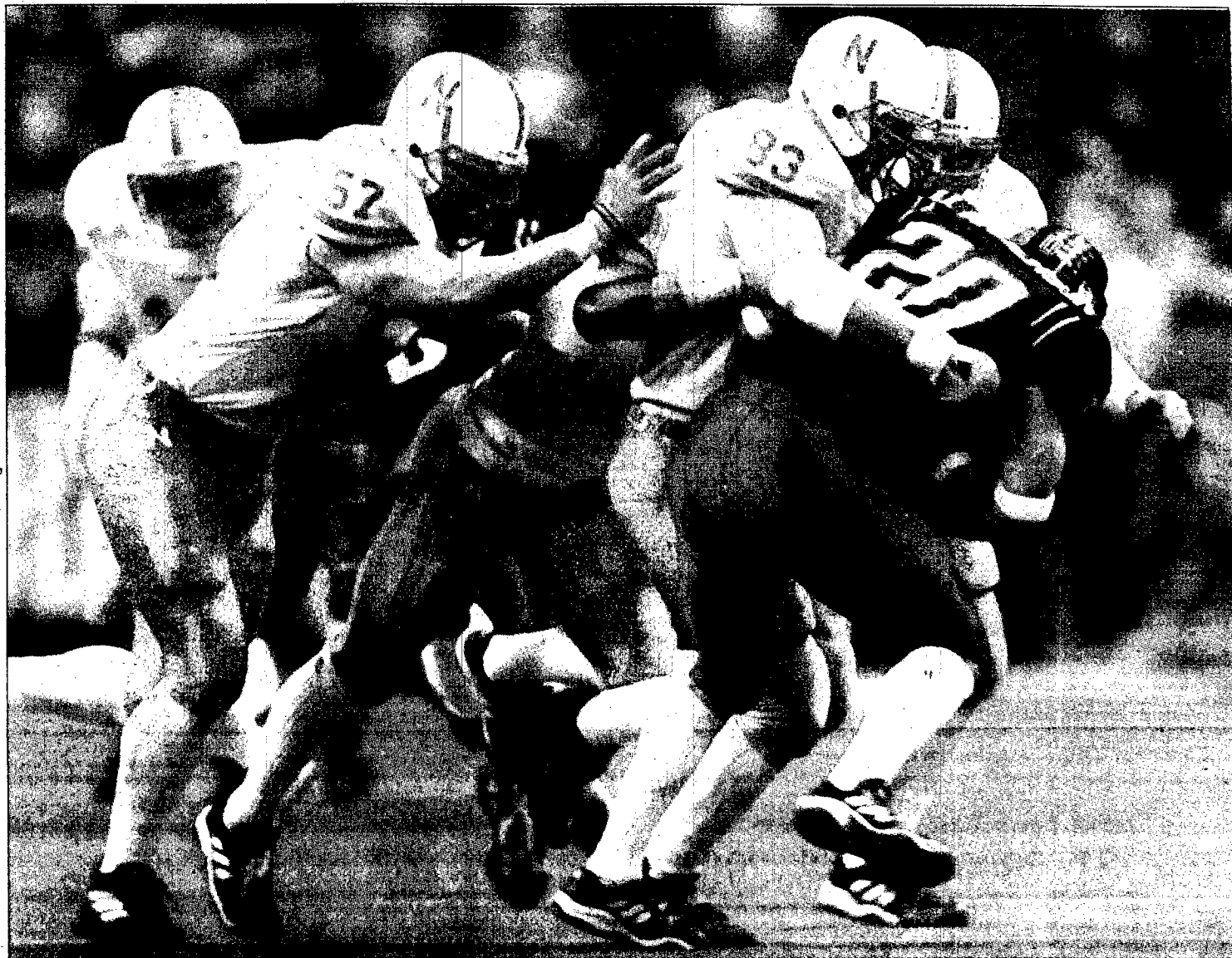
Northwestern was a co-champion of the Big Ten. In fact, if the Wildcats had won at Iowa, they would have gone to the Rose Bowl. They actually complained about having to fall to the Alamo Bowl, as if it were beneath them.

On Saturday night, the only thing that was beneath the Wildcats was the hard green turf as they got their faces rubbed in it.

What a dud. This actually looked like an intriguing bowl matchup. Brains vs. Brawn. Underdog vs. Big Dog. High-Tech U. vs. Old School. The Pass vs. The Run.

All week, to add to the spice, the Wildcats were yapping. They talked about how they were going to rough

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DOMINANT: At top, Dan Alexander scores NU's first touchdown, a 15-yard run. Above, Kyle Vanden Bosch, No. 83, leads a swarm of Huskers bringing down Northwestern's Damien Anderson.



ESCAPE: NU's Bobby Newcombe eludes Jack Harnedy on a 32-yard punt return that gave NU a first-and-goal at Northwestern's 8-yard line.

Nebraska's Romp Puts to Rest Questions About Complacency

BY STEVEN PIVOVAR
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

San Antonio — Nebraska closed its season Saturday night with a performance designed to shut the mouths of Northwestern's players.

The Huskers pulverized the Nos. 18 and 19 Wildcats 66-17 in the Sylvania Alamo Bowl before 66,028 at the Alamodome. The 66 points were the most ever scored by a team in a postseason bowl game, and the scoring total was one of a number of records the eighth- and ninth-ranked Huskers set in finishing off a 10-2 season.

"They came in here like a team with something to prove," Northwestern Coach Randy Walker said.

Nebraska's mission, several Huskers said, was to show Northwestern that it should be careful for what it wishes. The Wildcats had talked in the days leading up to the game that they relished the thought of standing in the trenches and going toe-to-toe with a Nebraska team that led the nation in rushing.

Saturday's game showed they couldn't. Nebraska middle linebacker Carlos Polk said.

"They were cheap-shot artists," Polk said. "They have a good back, but he can't do it all. We came out here with something to prove. Coach told me earlier in the week to hush up a little bit, but I knew it was going to be like

this." Nebraska's degree of domination reached levels that set or tied countless national, school and Alamo Bowl records. The records don't compare, Husker center Dommie Raiola said, to putting the co-champions of the Big Ten Conference in their place.

"These guys were disrespecting us all week," Raiola said. "They showed us no respect, and we came out here tonight to show them that the Big 12 is a dominant conference. We wanted to shove it down their throats, and that's what we did."

"They tried to keep up with us, but they couldn't. I don't think they

See ALAMO Page 5

Dolphins Rally Past Colts To Remain in the Hunt

Miami (AP) — Lamar Smith carried the ball an NFL-record 40 times. He carried cornerback Jeff Burris into the end zone for the winning score in overtime.

And when jubilant Miami Coach Dave Wannstedt jumped on his back as they headed for the locker room, Smith carried him, too.

Smith rushed for 209 yards, including a 17-yard touchdown run in overtime, and the resilient Dolphins rallied past the Indianapolis Colts 23-17 in an AFC wild-card playoff game Saturday.

"Everyone got their money's worth," Wannstedt said.

Jay Fiedler overcame three first-half interceptions to lead a comeback from a 14-point deficit in the second half, and Miami tied the game in the final minute of regulation.

The surprising Dolphins (12-5), AFC East champions for the first time since 1994, advanced to the second round next Saturday at Oakland. The Colts (10-7) were eliminated in their opening playoff game for the second year in a row, and Coach Jim Mora fell to 0-6 in the postseason.

Smith's 40 carries were a league

playoff record, and his 209 yards ranked second in postseason history behind Eric Dickerson's 248 for the Los Angeles Rams against Dallas in 1985.

"I'm just happy to be part of the victory," Smith said. "We had to overcome a lot of obstacles."

The Dolphins were lucky, too: Indianapolis' Mike Vanderjagt made three field goals, but pushed a 49-yard attempt wide right 5:44 into overtime. He then went to the bench and buried his head in his hands while the Dolphins drove for the winning score.

"I let my teammates down. I let the organization down. I let the city of Indianapolis down," Vanderjagt said. "It's a pretty big burden to carry into the offseason, but nothing can change that now."

Miami marched 61 yards in 11 plays for the victory, with Smith carrying six times and catching a pass to account for 40 yards. On second-and-4 at the 17, he started inside, bounced outside, cut back and ran through Burris.

The touchdown put the Colts behind for the first time.

"Once Lamar got to the 10, I said, See DOLPHINS Page 2



JUMP BALL: Indianapolis' David Macklin, right, tries to break up a pass intended for Miami's Orlande Gadsden during the first half. The pass fell incomplete.

NFL Playoffs This Weekend

AFC	NFC
Miami 23 Indianapolis 17, OT	New Orleans 31 St. Louis 28
Denver at Baltimore 11:30 a.m. today	Tampa Bay at Philadelphia 3 p.m. today

Saints Hold Off Rams For First Playoff Win

New Orleans — The nice comeback couldn't overcome the deficit or the demise of the St. Louis Rams, one-year wonders of the NFL.

By the time they got their "Greatest Show on Earth" going Saturday, New Orleans Saints had pulled the tent stakes and set up a sideshow of their own — the first playoff win for the 33-year-old franchise.

The Saints hung on for a 31-28 victory after taking a 31-7 lead with 11:57 to play, an embarrassing hole for the world champions to dig. The Saints will travel to Minnesota to play the Vikings next Saturday. The Rams will go home and wonder why the glory days were so short.

They scored 21 points in 9½ minutes just to remind everybody they could, then rationalized that time ran out and promised to come back, leaving as suddenly as they arrived.

"We played well enough to win this thing and couldn't get it done," said Rams Coach Mike Martz, who was outmaneuvered most of the day by another first-year coach, Jim Haslett.

"It hurts because we know we're as good as anybody out there," said quarterback Kurt Warner.

Six days after Marshall Faulk ran for 220 yards against the Saints to get into the playoffs, Haslett again dared Martz to run, playing six and seven defensive backs early. Martz tried to defy the strategy by passing and Warner ended up throwing three interceptions and fumbling once. Faulk got only 24 yards rushing in 14 carries.

Warner and Faulk, the league's last two MVPs, were outdone by Saints newcomers Aaron Brooks and Willie Jackson. Brooks, obtained from the Green Bay Packers on July 31 after just one season, threw four touchdown passes and continued his crusade to make Saints' fans forget injured Jeff Blake. Jackson, cut by the lowly Cincinnati Bengals, caught three of those touchdowns after No. 1 receiver Joe Horn went out with a sprained ankle on the third play.

The Saints won the NFC West and beat the Rams twice in 35 days without their injured running back, Ricky Williams, the player Mike Ditka

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