



CHRIS MACHIAN/THE WORLD-HERALD

FIRST WON, AT LAST

NEBRASKA 53,
MINNESOTA 28

Things get skittish in third quarter, but Huskers regain control for coach's first win

By SAM MCKEOWN
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

LINCOLN — Scott Frost didn't wait. He started walking onto the field well before the final seconds of Nebraska's 53-28 win over Minnesota had ticked off the clock, and the Memorial Stadium crowd, still packed into their seats, rose and roared. Fans had waited 357 days for a Husker win. For Frost, it was seven gut-wrenching weeks — six straight losses and a rainout — until the moment when that red sea could send a rush of celebratory noise toward him.

"That's what it's supposed to feel like out there," Frost said afterward.

A game ball — given to him by the team — sat on the wall behind him. He was still a little damp from a Gatorade shower and visibly relieved. Even this game — a blowout by the final margin — came with the usual sweat and worry that have accompanied every other Nebraska game this year. There were penalties, special teams breakdowns and a defense so vulnerable that Minnesota's backup

See Huskers: Page 15



Z LONG/THE WORLD-HERALD

Adrian Martinez, above, runs for a big gain in the fourth quarter. At top, Scott Frost smiles after Stanley Morgan catches a 67-yard TD pass in the fourth quarter, all but securing the victory.

UP NEXT: VS. BETHUNE-COOKMAN

11 a.m. Oct. 27 • Memorial Stadium • BTN; 92.3 FM, 590 AM

MORE INSIDE

Fans and team rewarded Saturday, Dirk Chatelain writes. **14C**

MORE ONLINE

See additional video and postgame reaction from the Huskers, plus more photos from Lincoln. **Omaha.com/bigred**

A game Frost will likely remember, and an offense that opponents won't forget



Tom Shatel

COLUMNIST

LINCOLN — They stood. And cheered. And waited.

Of course they did. They had been waiting since August for this moment. So what was a few more minutes, when Scott Frost was somewhere out there on the field, lost in a victory scrum, performing the winning coach's duty of talking on TV?

Did I say winning coach? Yeah. Finally, he emerged. And Frost, in gray hoodie and red hat, started jogging toward the northwest tunnel at Memorial Stadium. He could have milked the moment by walking, letting the applause build the closer he got to the exit.

But perhaps Frost knew what would happen to him, how he would probably start bawling like a kid — the kid who grew up in Wood River and saw his dreams unfold in this stadium for all Nebraska to see.

He "about teared up" as he ran off the field, he later admitted.

He collected himself just in time to give us the keepsake of the day, this

See Shatel: Page 2

MSRP \$45,760



2018 FORD
F-150 SUPER CREW
STX 4x4
#T183272

LEASE FOR **\$249**/mo*

*24 months/10,500 miles per year. **\$2,000 down.** First payment and \$199 doc fee due at signing. Security deposit waived. Tax, title, license extra. WAC. Expires 10-31-18.

WOODHOUSE
BLAIR



2546 Hwy 30 | Blair NE 68008 | (402) 426-4126 | woodhouseford.com

Shatel: Husker offense shows it will be a load to deal with

Continued from Page 1

first day of the rest of Frost's Nebraska coaching career.

Just as he was about to leave the field, he doffed his red hat and waved to the crowd.

There's your moment. There's your photo.

There's your first victory, 53-28 over Minnesota.

Frost will remember that scene, and those chills, for as long as he coaches. He'll likely never forget that game ball the team gave him afterward, the one he clutched to his side in the interview area and locker room, as tight as any ball he carried running the option.

Will we remember this? Maybe. Frost's career looks like an open road ahead, the canvas still blank, full of possibilities. There surely will be bigger games, bigger wins ahead, that will eventually push this one into the back.

First wins are more footnotes than landmarks. Bob Devaney's first win was 53-0 over South Dakota at Memorial Stadium, but most fans of that generation recall the next week — the 25-13 win at Michigan's Big House — that was Devaney's first real, or big, win.

Tom Osborne's first win was 40-13 over UCLA in the 1973 season opener at home. The Bruins were ranked 10th. The bar was set high. Osborne would beat Alabama in 1977, then finally Oklahoma in 1978. For many, that was like Osborne's first win.

This one feels like it might stay with us, though. It was so unusual and hardly an afterthought. It came on Oct. 20, in the seventh game of the season.

Later on, when we look back through the records at Frost's career, that 0-6 start will jump off the page. So will the 53-28 win over the 3-4 Gophers. What did it mean? At the time, relief. Joy, too.

Maybe, too, the day the floodgates opened.

Or, at least, the day the door cracked.

We can only imagine what lies ahead for Frost and the offenses he plans to create here. What he's done in seven games with a true freshman quarterback and personnel he did not recruit looks mighty impressive already.

Whatever lies ahead, this might be known as the first time Frost's Nebraska crossed 50 points. Before Saturday, the Huskers hadn't made it past 31.

This was the day quarterback Adrian Martinez looked locked in: going 25 of 29 for 276 yards and three touchdowns. Just dialing it in from everywhere.

This was the day that three NU rushers went for 100: Martinez with 125 and running backs Devine Ozigbo and Maurice Washington going for 152 and 109 yards.

That was the first time the Huskers had a three-headed 100-yard rushing game since the 2010 game at Washington.

The big plays. Touchdown runs of 59 and 40 yards. A 53-yard run by Martinez. Touchdown passes to



RYAN SODERLIN/THE WORLD-HERALD

Maurice Washington was one of three Huskers with over 100 yards rushing.

TOM'S TAKES

1. The first email I received after the first win ... ripped the Nebraska defense. Do what you must. I thought the Blackshirts had a solid game and played well at times. When the Gophers took over on NU's 44 in the first half, the defense held them to a three-and-out. They got the turnover — an end zone interception by Dedrick Young — when Minny was about to cut a 17-point lead back to 10 with seven minutes left. As for the Gophers' second-half surge, it had a lot to do with the switch to redshirt freshman quarterback Tanner Morgan after Zack Annexstad left with an injury. With Morgan, Minnesota started running option, and it was obvious NU hadn't prepared for that. Two takes: Nebraska's defense didn't play badly. And I wonder why Morgan isn't starting for the Gophers.

2. The last time Nebraska had three players rush for 100 yards in one game? I would have said the mid-'90s, with some sort of Tommie Frazier-Lawrence Phillips-Damon Benning-Ahman Green combo. And I would have lost that bet. The correct answer is the 2010 Washington game, when freshman quarterback Taylor Martinez went 19 for 137 yards, senior running back Roy Helu rushed 10 times for 110 yards and Rex Burkhead rushed 13 times for 104 yards. That was Taylor Martinez's coming-out party. I wouldn't say the same for Adrian Martinez on Saturday. But it felt like a beginning of sorts for Frost's offense.

3. The Bethune-Cookman game now looks perfectly placed, giving Nebraska a chance to build on this game rather than have a week off and head to Ohio State. Momentum is big early in the development of a program. Next week should provide that opportunity. It might also be a good time to rest some beat-up starters and build some depth, including a guy named Noah Vedral.

Stanley Morgan of 67 and 35 yards.

Then there was the fun stuff. A Statue of Liberty play early. A fake Statue of Liberty. A play where Washington went wide and threw a ball downfield. It fell incomplete. But it was the thought that counted, and it had to be keeping Minnesota coach P.J. Fleck off balance.

"That was a pretty good show out there today," Frost said.

Overall, there were 383 yards rushing and 276 passing for a monster 659 total yards by Nebraska. It was the Huskers' first time over 600 this season, and they've gone for at least 475 in five of the seven games, and four times over 500.

And now their per-game average is up to 471.7. This is video game stuff, and remember, this is only

through seven games of the man's first year.

Let's also remember, those numbers are part of a 1-6 start.

The reasons for that are multiple. Frost will have to sort out the things like special teams, penalties and defense, what they mean to him, and where they fit in his grand scheme of winning championships.

But we can see what offense means to the man. The Huskers have put up good numbers against good defenses most of the season, but haven't scored or finished nearly enough because of their own mistakes.

What we witnessed Saturday was a young coach, a young quarterback and first-year offensive players start to get out of their own way,

start to hit big plays, and start to feel this offense in a very big way.

It felt and looked like the beginning of something — the next step or progression for the offense. It's becoming faster, more second nature. And if the blocking is there, the execution is cleaner, the play-caller will start expanding the imagination.

We saw this new look emerge at just the right time, midway through the third quarter. Or, as about 90,000 called it: Panic Time.

A 28-0 lead was down to 28-22 with 7:16 left in the third quarter. The fade had come later at Northwestern. Now it was here with way too much time left.

Nebraska needed a hero, or a playmaker, to step forward and stop the boulder rolling down hill. Better yet: a group of them.

Nebraska's offense to the rescue. Taking over at its 26, the offense began with a 6-yard completion on first down. Then back-to-back runs of 22 and 11 yards by Washington to the Minnesota 35.

Then came the 35-yard touchdown pass that Martinez said Frost cooked up during the week while trying to find ways to highlight Morgan's talents.

"That was one of a couple instances where Coach Frost called the perfect play," Martinez said.

You know what he did? He kept attacking. Last weekend, at Northwestern, Frost got conservative late, and while he said the players' body language was not good in that game, the coach's approach seemed to follow suit. Play not to lose.

This time the Huskers played to win. With Minnesota still within range, Martinez was used to run. A pair of Washington runs set up a 67-yard touchdown pass to Morgan. The line had one of its better games.

Execution, playmaking, poise — it all happened together at the crucial time in the game. That's why there's a first victory.

How many more this year? You saw the formula on Saturday. They're going to ride an offense that grows every week and now has the ultimate proof in football: a win.

After next week, there are four Big Ten games left. The road games at Ohio State and Iowa are tough sledding and strictly uphill. But the Buckeyes' defense isn't great. Can NU make that one interesting? Can this offense make the Iowa game a shootout?

Suddenly, the Michigan State game doesn't look as daunting. The Spartans' offense may not be up to the task of keeping up with Frost's offense — especially with leading receiver Felton Davis having suffered an Achilles injury on Saturday.

There's no reason for predictions — except this one: The Nebraska offense is going to be a load to deal with.

"Sometimes when you break through the dam, the floodwaters come," Frost said.

Is that how we'll remember this day? Let's see where the river leads.

tom.shatel@owh.com, 402-444-1025
twitter.com/tomshatelOWH

Huskers: NU's offensive output finally buries Gophers

Continued from Page 1

quarterback threw for 214 yards in the second half. The Gophers chomped a 28-0 Husker lead down to six, and Frost, having seen the kitchen sink of errors this season, got a little worried.

"I even thought it to myself — I've seen this movie before," he said. Last weekend at Northwestern, he did.

But Frost's hand-picked true freshman quarterback, Adrian Martinez, answered the bell. So did senior wideout Stanley Morgan. The Nebraska defense, on the ropes, dodged a few Minnesota punches inside its own 10. And what looked like potential collapse instead turned into history.

"We weren't taking that 'L' today," said Morgan, who had a career-high 10 catches for 163 yards and two touchdowns.

"It sucks that it took so long — and (Frost) deserved one a long time ago," outside linebacker Luke Gifford said. "But it is really cool to be a part of that and be the foundation of this thing, this machine that's about to get rolling here."

Gifford meant Nebraska's program as a whole. He could have meant NU's offense in particular.

The Huskers (1-6, 1-4 Big Ten) racked up 659 yards of total offense — at nine yards per play — with three 100-yard rushers (Martinez, Devine Ozigbo and Maurice Washington) for the first time since joining the Big Ten. Martinez also completed 25 of 29 passes for 276 yards and three touchdowns, which Frost called "senior numbers."

NU's offense had 40- and 59-yard touchdown runs from Ozigbo in the first quarter, and Martinez ripped off a 53-yard run on top of that in the second quarter. Three of the first-half touchdown drives lasted fewer than three minutes, and Nebraska rolled to a 28-0 lead on the back of 398 first-half yards. Frost called both a Statue of Liberty play and a fake off of it. He designed a halfback pass from Washington to tight end Austin Allen that would have scored a touchdown if Washington had seen Allen earlier in the play.

"Get your ears back, go forward, attack the defense," left guard Jerald Foster said. "I love the way our offense goes."

Those lightning strikes can leave Nebraska's defense in tough spots, though, and after NU forced five punts and a turnover on downs to start the game, Minnesota's offense got going late in the first half with an eight-play, 68-yard touchdown drive that left Nebraska leading 28-8 at halftime.

With backup quarterback Tanner Morgan entering the game to start the third quarter — the start-



RYAN SODERLIN/THE WORLD-HERALD

Nebraska coach Scott Frost congratulates sophomore right tackle Matt Farniok, left, as the final minutes tick away against Minnesota. Redshirt freshman lineman Matt Sichterman is at right.

CARRIKER CHRONICLES



Nebraska hall of famer Adam Carriker shares his gut reaction to NU's win over Minnesota for Scott Frost's first victory as Husker coach.

"It's been over a year since a win in Memorial Stadium, and it's been about year since we won a game. Ladies and gentlemen, we got a win today. And I think more importantly than anything, than the length of time since we've had a

win, or getting the first win — I think you saw a glimpse of what we can expect from Nebraska going forward."

Watch the latest episodes of the "Carriker Chronicles" and find transcripts of every show. Omaha.com/Carriker



er, Zack Annexstad, left with an internal injury, according to Minnesota coach P.J. Fleck — the Gophers (3-4 and 0-4) scored touchdowns on back-to-back drives. NU led 28-22. The 89,272 fans at Memorial Stadium got skittish.

Martinez settled in. "I talked to the guys in the huddle before we ran out to the field," Martinez said. "We all knew what we needed to do. We needed to put together a good drive, go down there and score."

Nebraska did. Martinez hit Morgan for 6 yards. Then Washington ripped off runs of 22 and 11 yards, setting up NU at the Minnesota 35.

Frost found another new play on his sheet. Martinez gently rolled to his right while Morgan worked a post route out of the slot back toward the middle of the field. Morgan broke free, Martinez hit the senior in stride,

the clock on a subsequent field goal drive. The Huskers relinquished an 87-yard kickoff return, but promptly intercepted Morgan when Husker linebacker Dedrick Young gobbled up a deflected pass.

Three plays later, Morgan snuck past Minnesota's entire defense for a 67-yard score that slammed the door. When Morgan reached the sideline, Frost picked him up in a bear hug while Morgan slapped him on the back.

Frost said he'd talked to players during the week about what they'd been thinking as Northwestern erased a 10-point deficit last weekend. He wanted his players to have a "killer instinct" and not be afraid to fail.

"At some point it's got to come from inside them to finish it, to go out and make the play to finish it," Frost said. "I saw it today. I saw guys fight back and not worry about them scoring a couple times. I saw guys go out and take the game over."

Maybe it had to be this hard, the lessons this bitter, for it to finally sink in. Nebraska dominated the first and fourth quarters. It rushed for more yards than it has in any game since 2014. Minnesota converted only 6 of 17 third and fourth downs. NU committed six penalties — four fewer than its average and two fewer than the Gophers.

The little things added up. And with them, Nebraska's historic losing streak ended at 10 games. Now, Frost said, the Huskers have to build on it.

For a night, the process could wait. Nebraska could enjoy this. Frost got the Gatorade shower — "inappropriate," he joked, because it was too cold — from redshirt freshman offensive lineman Broc Bando and Ozigbo. As he talked to the Big Ten Network, Frost got a neck pat from Morgan. In the locker room, Frost was about to speak to the team, players said, before defensive coordinator Erik Chinander interrupted and gave Frost the game ball.

"You could tell it was a big moment," Ozigbo said. "Everybody was happy for him."

The lasting image may be Frost's run to the tunnel. He jogged fast. The team tried to catch up with him, but Frost was ahead of the pack. The reception in the northwest corner of Memorial Stadium was thunderous. Before he ran inside, Frost took off his red cap and tipped it toward the noise that grew louder and louder.

"I almost teared up running off the field," he said. "That was a special moment."

sam.mckewon@owh.com, 402-219-3790
twitter.com/swmckewonOWH