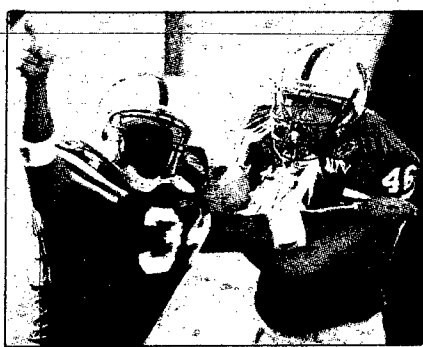
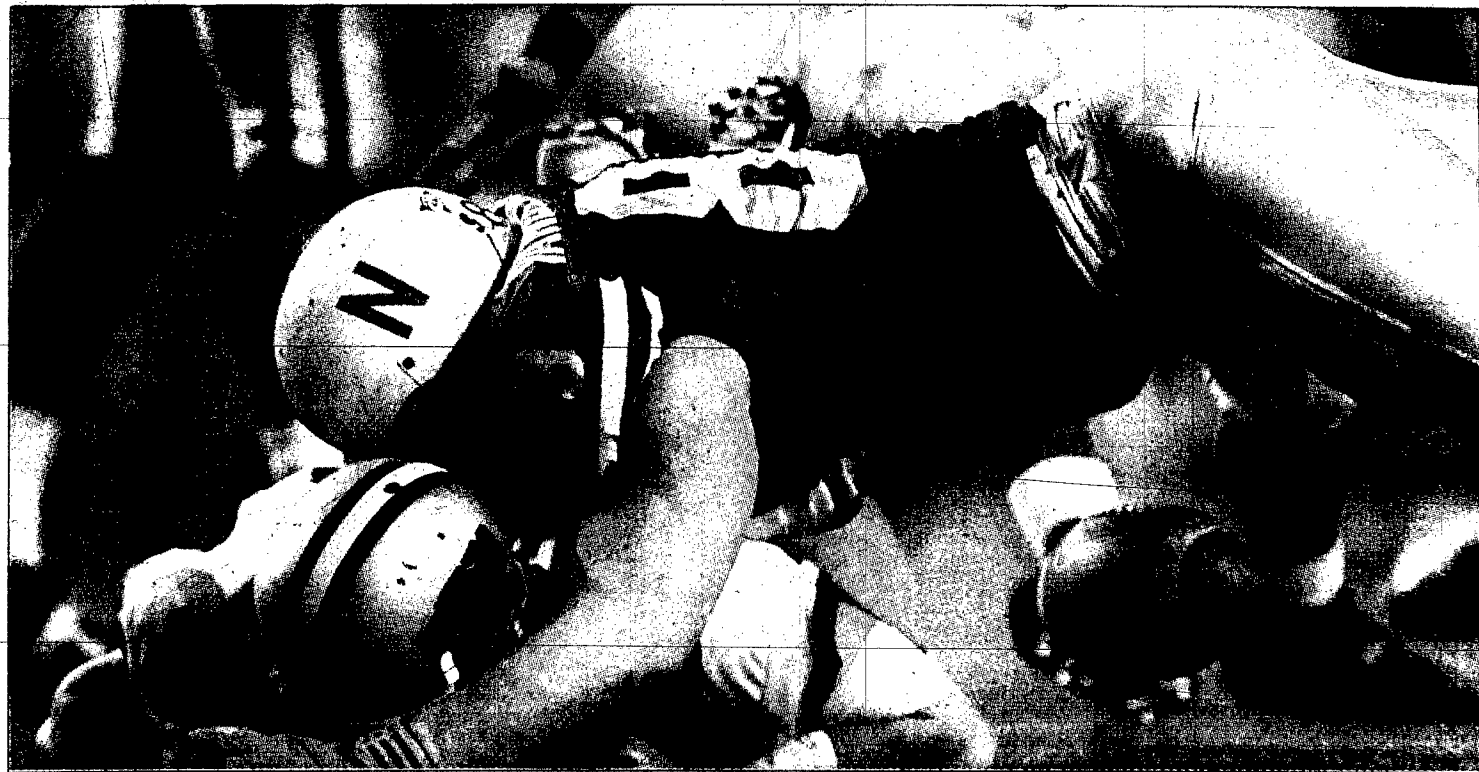


College Football



JEFF BUNDY/THE WORLD-HERALD

NU Restores Order; Title Dream Lingers



JEFF BEIERMANN/THE WORLD-HERALD

After 41-15 victory, the Huskers can earn a spot in the conference championship game by beating Colorado

BY STEVEN PIVOVAR
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Lincoln — Nebraska enhanced its position Saturday to play for a conference championship next month — and perhaps a whole lot more next year.

The Huskers' 41-15 dismantling of fifth-ranked Kansas State on a picture-perfect November afternoon left Nebraska needing to win at Colorado on Nov. 26 to punch its ticket for the Dec. 4 Big 12 Conference championship game in San Antonio.

The victory, coupled with third-ranked Tennessee's loss to Arkansas, could reward the Nos. 6 and 7 Huskers with a big jump in the ratings today. To a man, the Nebraska's players said Saturday that they are not worried about where they might fit into the national picture and the race for the Sugar Bowl, where the title is to be decided Jan. 4.

But the Huskers agree that their national title hopes, seemingly non-existent after last month's loss at Texas, are improving week by week.

"Three weeks ago, we thought we were out of it," Husker linebacker Carlos Polk said. "Now, it's starting to become more of a reality. But we know we have to take care of our side of it before we can even think about that."

The Huskers took care of previously unbeaten Kansas State in such dominant fashion that not even a school-record 10 fumbles — three of which were lost — made a difference in the outcome. The Huskers, with quarterback Eric Crouch leading the way with 158 yards on 27 carries, finished with 378 yards against the country's No. 2 defense.

Nebraska, which came into the game fourth nationally in total defense, matched its average yield by limiting Kansas State to 234 yards. The Huskers forced four fumbles, intercepted a pass, sacked Wildcats' quarterback Jonathan Beasley and Adam Helm five times and harassed

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Huskers Give Solich First 'Big' Win

Lincoln

Welcome to the club, Frank. That is, the "Big Game Club." To get in, you need to beat somebody good, preferably ranked in the top five, with a load of chips on the table, like a conference or even national championship. To get in, you need to prove that you can stand on the sidelines, under the hot lights, with the weight of the college football world on your back, and make the tough decision, the big call, play the right instinct, outfox the fox across the field and sometimes, well, just figure out a way to win.

Well, it took him longer than some



Tom Shatel

folks wearing red hats, red pants and red underwear would have liked, but Nebraska Head Coach Frank Solich joined the club on Saturday. He won his first "big game," in the 10th game

of his second season. Solich and Nebraska thumped Kansas State, 41-15, at Memorial Stadium, in front of 77,000 of his closest friends, now that he's a big-game kind of guy.

Sure, former Husker Coach Tom Osborne always used to say, "They're all big games around here." And everyone would nod and agree. But even Osborne knew that some games are bigger than others. Others are downright end-of-the-world, cats-and-dogs-living-together stuff. That was Saturday.

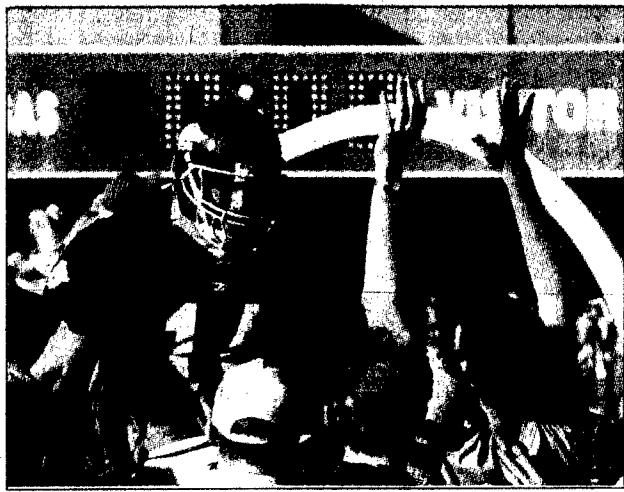
Kansas State and its resident genius, Bill Snyder, were in town to win for the

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JEFFREY Z. CAHNEY/THE WORLD-HERALD

STUFFING: At left, linebacker Eric Johnson scores on a 15-yard return of KSU quarterback Adam Helm's fumble. Helm lost the ball when he was sacked by NU's Kyle Vandenberg. Above, Randy Stella and Brian Shaw celebrate Stella's block of a first-quarter punt for a safety.



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JOY RIDE: Arkansas quarterback Clint Stoerner gets carried off the field after helping the Razorbacks upset third-ranked Tennessee 28-24 Saturday.

Arkansas Hogties Vols' Title Hopes

Fayetteville, Ark. (AP) — With one perfect pass, Arkansas' Clint Stoerner erased a year-old demon and ended Tennessee's chances of repeating as national champion.

Stoerner threw a 23-yard touchdown pass to Anthony Lucas with 3:44 to play Saturday to give Arkansas a 28-24 victory over, the third-ranked Volunteers.

It was Stoerner who fumbled in the final two minutes last year with Arkansas leading Tennessee 24-22. The Vols turned that gift into a 28-24 victory that was vital in their march to the national title.

Saturday's outcome, knocked the Vols (7-2, 4-2 SEC) out of a chance to defend that championship and put Arkansas (6-3, 3-3) in position for a bowl game.

Tennessee Coach Phillip Fulmer said what happened last season could have

been a big part of what happened Saturday.

"Most people don't have a chance to be in it," he said, referring to the national championship race. "Emotion plays a big role in this game. It can make you 50 percent better."

One can only imagine the emotion Stoerner must have felt. As the final seconds ticked away, Stoerner took a couple of steps, bent over and put his hands on his knees. His solitude lasted just seconds before he was swarmed by fans — mostly students. One goal post toppled, then the other.

"What happened to us last year just wasn't right," said Stoerner, adding his feelings were difficult to describe. "I know I hold a lot of stuff in."

Arkansas Coach Houston Nutt showed tears as he spoke of Stoerner in the locker room.

"He's lived with last year's game for a year, even though it wasn't his fault," Nutt said. "He is a man. He never backed down from accepting blame. This victory has to be very sweet for him."

The Vols reached the Arkansas 17 with less than 90 seconds to play, but Tee-Martin's fourth-down pass was too high for Cedrick Wilson.

"We were outcoached and outplayed," said Fulmer, who lost to Arkansas for the first time in seven games. "They ran better than anybody else has against us this year and we had no pass rush."

Tennessee held the only double-digit lead — 24-14 — after Travis Henry's 28-yard touchdown run in the third quarter. That score came three plays after a pass by Stoerner was deflected

twice and then intercepted by Raynoch Thompson.

Less than three minutes later, Stoerner and Boo Williams hooked up on a 53-yard touchdown pass that cut the lead to 24-21 and kept the pressure on the Vols. Williams got a step on Dwayne Goodrich, took Stoerner's perfect throw-in stride and lunged across the goal line with Goodrich wrapped around his legs.

Martin completed three passes for 67 yards to put the Vols at the Arkansas 16, but Ontaria Moss on a blitz grabbed Martin's right arm and then recovered the fumble at the Arkansas 19. Late in the first half, Tennessee reached the Arkansas 14, but Martin — under immense pressure from Moss — was called for grounding and the Vols punted.

Dayne Topples Record; Wisconsin Routs Iowa

Madison, Wis. (AP) — Ron Dayne's four-year run at history is over, and his reward is another bouquet of roses.

On the biggest day in Wisconsin football history, Dayne broke the major college career rushing record as the No. 9 Badgers claimed the outright Big Ten title and earned a return trip to the Rose Bowl with a 41-3 rout of Iowa on Saturday.

Dayne broke Ricky Williams' record with 4:32 left in the second quarter on a 31-yard run toward the Wisconsin sideline. He finished the game with 216 yards rushing and a touchdown on 27 carries, giving him 6,397 yards for his career, or 118 more than the 6,279 Williams gained at Texas.

"The record was broken because we looked at it as a team goal," Wisconsin Coach Barry Alvarez said. "A lot of

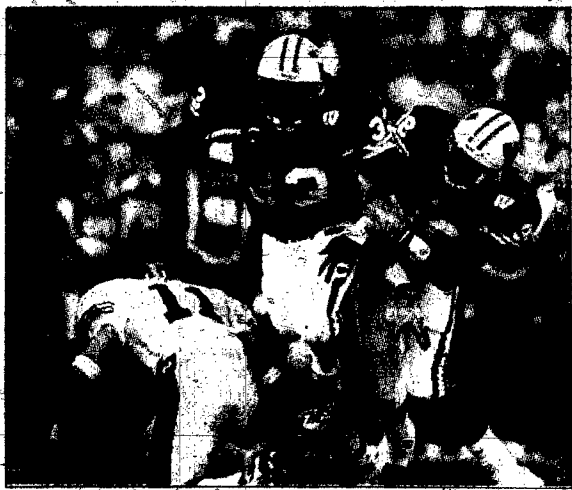
people had to do their job for him to have a chance to achieve that."

The Badgers (9-2, 7-1) finished their regular season by winning seven straight games and clinching a return trip to the Rose Bowl on Jan. 1. Wisconsin, which beat UCLA 38-31 in Pasadena last year, will be playing in consecutive Rose Bowls for the first time in school history.

Williams broke Tony Dorsett's 22-year-old record last season. Dayne, who needed 99 yards on Saturday to beat Williams, gained just 39 yards on his first 12 carries but ended up with the 11th 200-yard rushing game of his career, tying the record held by Williams and Marcus Allen of Southern California.

"I tried to do everything I usually

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THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RECORD RUN: Wisconsin running back Ron Dayne, 33, eludes Iowa's Joe Slattery on a 31-yard run to break the major college career rushing record Saturday.

Behrns Proud of Mavs In Loss to North Dakota

Grand Forks, N.D. — North Dakota showed no mercy Saturday for a UNO football team limping to the finish line.

The Fighting Sioux clinched an NCAA Division II playoff berth and a share of the North Central Conference championship by beating UNO 31-13 at Memorial Stadium. North Dakota pulled away as its NCC-leading defense shut out the Mavericks in the second half.

Before the University of Nebraska at Omaha watched its season end, however, it dealt North Dakota fits for 55 minutes.

The Mavs trailed 14-13 at halftime before going to the fourth quarter behind 24-13. They then moved inside the UND 10-yard line twice in the fourth, but came away empty with a dropped pass in the end zone and a missed field goal.

No. 9-ranked North Dakota tacked on a 73-yard touchdown run by Jed Perkerewicz to finish off UNO with 4:24 left to play.

"It would have been easy for our seniors to walk away and be satisfied with what they've already done, but they came here and played awful hard," UNO Coach Pat Behrns said. "We could have quit here, but we didn't."

UNO bowed out with records of 7-4 overall and 5-4 in the NCC. The Mavs went 2-4 over the final six weeks, slipping out of playoff contention before the trip to UND.

"I'm proud of this team even though we had a little dropoff at the end of the season," senior linebacker Jason Bartling said. "We fought up here. The score doesn't show how close the game was."

With sophomore quarterback Seth

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