

Bummer Sooner

Topped Again

Nebraska has lost six times when ranked No. 1:

- 1972: UCLA 20, Nebraska 17
- 1984: Miami 31, Nebraska 30
- 1984: Syracuse 17, Nebraska 9
- 1984: Oklahoma 17, Nebraska 7
- 1987: Oklahoma 17, Nebraska 7
- 1996: Arizona State 19, Nebraska 0



Tom Shatel

NU Pushes Panic Button

Norman, Okla. — This wasn't the Game of the Century. This was an episode of "The X-Files."

Nebraska scored on its first two possessions and took a 14-0 lead before some of the Okies got settled onto their bleacher seats.

Husker quarterback Eric Crouch threw and ran for touchdowns before the Sooners knew what hit them.

The Blackshirt defense held Oklahoma's offense and magic man Josh Heupel to 21 points and shut them out for three quarters.

So, obviously, Oklahoma won, 31-14. What in the name of Sooner magic happened?

One minute the Huskers look like they're going to run all the way to the Orange Bowl and back. The next minute they're gasping for air in a crimson and cream tidal wave.

This was weird. Too spooky. But the really, really weird thing about it was how the Huskers got weird. How they appeared to get spooked by a 24-point second quarter that had them down by 10, 24-14, at the half.

It was written all over Crouch's face afterwards. It looked like he'd seen a ghost.

"It's hard to say what happened," Crouch said. "I'll have to go back and look at the tape."

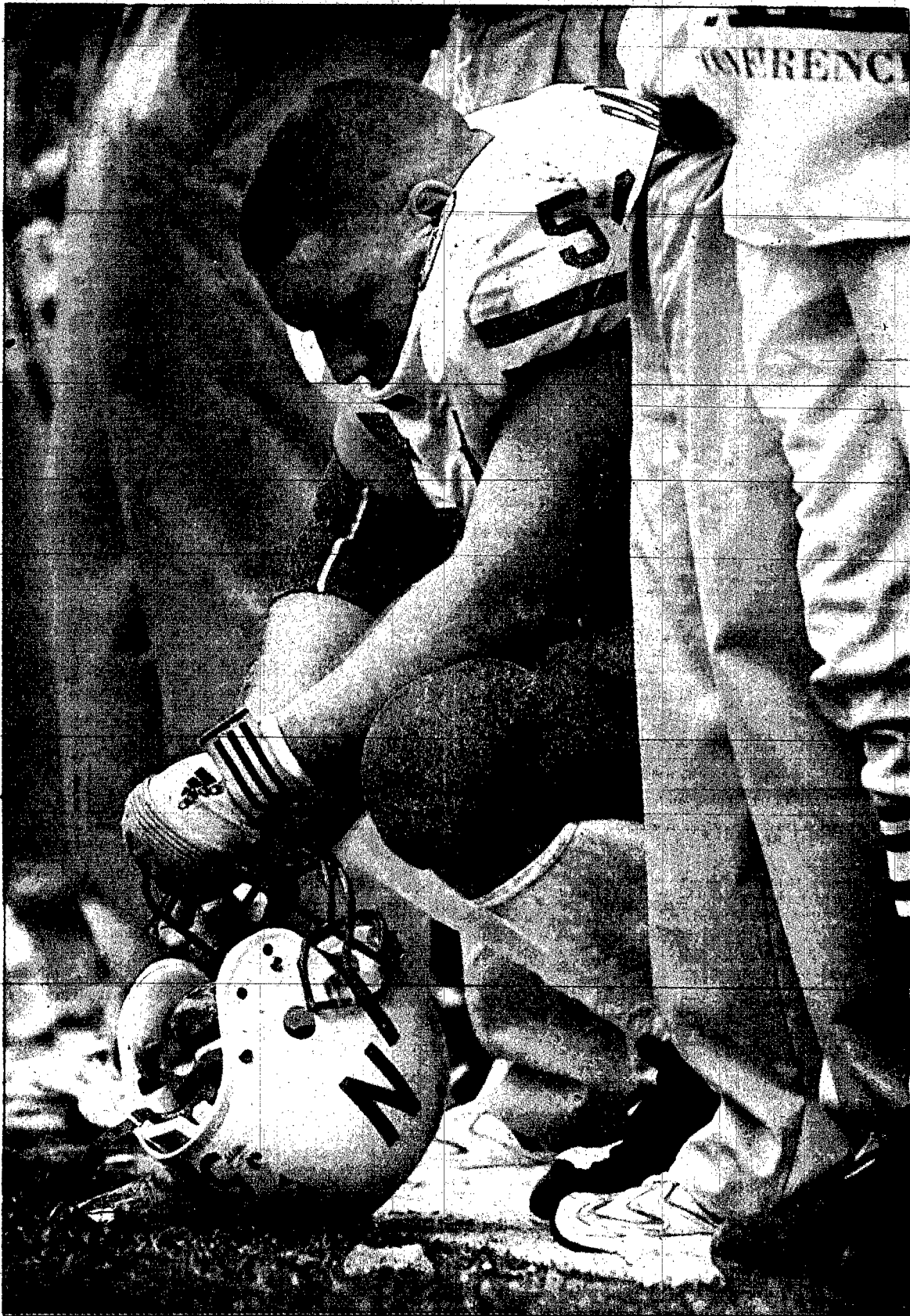
On this day, that was as good an explanation as any. But let's offer two theories, anyway:

1) Oklahoma is that good. The Sooners are all that. They outplayed and outcoached Nebraska. They didn't buckle early. They kept playing. OU, not the Huskers, played like a championship team.

2) Nebraska blinked. Nebraska panicked. Like nobody's ever seen before. This was supposed to be a heavyweight bout, No. 1 vs. No. 2 on the national stage between old rivals. But the Huskers looked more like Andrew Golota. They never answered the second bell.

The Huskers ran and passed and pushed the smaller Sooner defense all

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LONG DAY: Nebraska center Dominic Raiola reacts as time runs out Saturday afternoon in Oklahoma's 31-14 win. The Huskers were outgained 418-328 and gave up 31 points in a row.

Sooner Spoilers

Six times since 1964, Oklahoma has handed Nebraska its first loss:

- 1964: Oklahoma 17, Nebraska 7
- 1966: Oklahoma 10, Nebraska 9
- 1975: Oklahoma 35, Nebraska 10
- 1979: Oklahoma 17, Nebraska 14
- 1987: Oklahoma 17, Nebraska 7
- 2000: Oklahoma 31, Nebraska 14

A reborn Oklahoma powerhouse knocks Nebraska out of the driver's seat in the national title race

BY STEVEN PIVOVAR
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Norman, Okla. — Oklahoma's football resurgence claimed its latest victim Saturday, splattering Nebraska's unbeaten season and scrambling the Huskers' place in the national championship race.

In a performance that illustrated just how far back the Sooners have come in just 19 games under Coach Bob Stoops, Oklahoma handed top-ranked Nebraska a 31-14 defeat before 75,989 at Memorial Stadium and an ABC national television audience.

In doing so, third-ranked Oklahoma finds itself with the inside track to Miami's Orange Bowl, where the national championship will be decided early next year. Not a bad position to be in, considering the Sooners had bottomed out in losing 22 times in 34 games under Stoops' predecessor, John Blake.

"We're starting to get that winning feeling back," said Oklahoma linebacker Rocky Calmus, one of the leaders of a defense that held Nebraska scoreless in the final three quarters. "It's exciting, especially for our older guys who have been working so hard."

"They were here through the hard times, and their hard work has paid off so far."

Saturday's win, which improved Oklahoma to 7-0 and 4-0 in Big 12 Conference play, should vault the Sooners to the top of the Bowl Championship Series standings, not to mention the national polls. Oklahoma stood second in the BCS standings entering Saturday's renewal of a rivalry that once was one of the most intense in college football. The teams had not met since 1997 because of the league's scheduling format.

Oklahoma appeared destined for another fall to the Huskers — Nebraska had won the last seven meetings, the final two by a combined score of 142-28 — after NU's first 11 offensive plays yielded 167 yards, two touchdowns and a 14-0 lead less than seven minutes into the game.

That made what transpired the rest of the way even more dramatic as the Sooners picked themselves off the mat and handed Nebraska its first loss in eight games this season, snapping a 13-game winning streak in the process.

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Cyclones' Win Clinches Bowl

BY KEVIN WHITE
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Ames, Iowa — Bright lights, big victory.

Iowa State clinched its first bowl appearance in 22 years Saturday night, getting 214 rushing yards and two touchdowns from junior tailback Ennis Haywood and outdistancing Missouri 39-20 before a Jack Trice Stadium crowd of 46,599 and a Fox Sports Net national cable television audience.

With the victory, the Cyclones clinched their first winning season since 1989 and are bowl eligible. Iowa

State is 6-2 overall and 3-2 in the Big 12 Conference. Missouri dropped to 2-6 and 1-4.

The Big 12 Conference has made bowl arrangements for its top seven teams. With regular-season games still remaining against Kansas State, Colorado and Kansas and a predicted large fan following, Iowa State is certain to play a 12th game for the first time since losing to Texas A&M in the 1978 Hall of Fame Bowl.

"Instead of going and visiting relatives at Christmas time, this year maybe we can go someplace else and play another game," Iowa State Coach

Dan McCarney said. "It will be nice to go out on the field for the first time knowing that we're going to have a winning season."

In the 10th home night game in school history, Iowa State took control in the second quarter. The Cyclones leaned on the miffy running of Haywood to outscore the Tigers 20-0 and secure a 26-14 halftime lead.

Freshman safety Marc Timmons got the Cyclones rolling in the second half, picking off his second pass of the game and returning it 78 yards for a touchdown to boost the advantage to 34-14. See CYCLONES Page 2

Hokies Survive Ankle Injury to Vick

Blacksburg, Va. (AP) — Pittsburgh knocked quarterback Michael Vick out of the game, but Lee Suggs and Dave Meyer wouldn't let the Panthers knock No. 2 Virginia Tech out of the national title picture.

Meyer replaced the injured Vick just before halftime and directed the Hokies on a 13-play, 74-yard drive to set up Carter Warley's 27-yard field goal with 16 seconds left as the Hokies escaped with a 37-34 victory Saturday.

"That drive, Dave Meyer coming in like he did. If there's a hero tonight, it's Dave Meyer," said Warley, who missed from 46 yards before coming back to make his first-ever game-winning field goal.

Suggs rushed for 164 yards and three touchdowns, but it was Meyer who did most of the work on the winning drive, completing three straight passes for first downs to get the Hokies in Warley's range.

"I was confident," the fifth-year senior said. "I've run this offense here for five years. I was ready to roll."

And it all came in the most unlikely of circumstances, with their leader and top Heisman Trophy contender standing on the sidelines, his sprained right ankle in a brace and crutches under both of his arms.

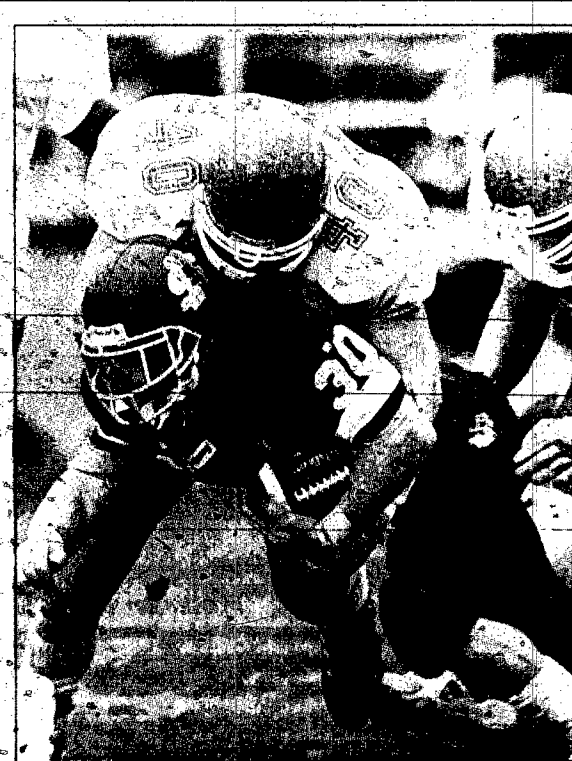
Vick, whose status is day-to-day pending an examination with the

swelling goes down, said it was difficult to watch, but he and the rest of the Hokies said they knew Meyer could lead them to victory.

"The defense feels just as confident with him in there as we do with Mike," defensive tackle Chad Beasley said. "He showed why tonight."

Meyer finished 7 for 13 for 114 yards, the last three completions going for 12, 11 and 11 yards on the drive to Warley's third field goal.

The kick gave the Hokies (8-0, 6-0 Big East) their 19th consecutive victory and conference-record 14th in a row in league play, a streak that figures to be tested next Saturday at No. 4 Miami.



END OF THE LINE: UNO's Ryan Hoffman tackles South Dakota State's Josh Raneck for no gain in the first quarter.

Big Plays From 'D' Lift UNO

BY RICH KAIPUST
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Brookings, S.D. — UNO Coach Pat Behrns saw just enough discouraged faces Saturday to tell him this wasn't the usual halftime deficit for the Mavericks.

South Dakota State was leading 7-3 and moving the football better on UNO than anybody had in recent weeks. The Mavs' offense, meanwhile, was without the services of leading rusher Adam Wright because of a knee injury.

"That was probably the most flustered I've seen us at halftime," Behrns said. "And why, I don't know, because we by far were not out of the game. Maybe it was because of the late score. Maybe it was because we felt like something was getting away from us."

"We spent most of halftime just trying to settle everybody down and get us back into a flow of what we were doing."

The No. 6-ranked Mavs righted enough wrongs in a 21-point second half to carry them to a 24-7 victory.

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