

College Football

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Tom Shatel

Notre Dame Lacking Magic

South Bend, Ind. — Let the game begin. Let the hype kick off. Let Nebraska and Notre Dame fans start their World Wrestling Federation war of words. Let the dozens (40?) of Nebraska tailgate tents go up. Let Touchdown Jesus open His arms and welcome the hordes of red. Let the fleeing of Nebraskans (\$180 a night at the South Bend Holiday) begin.

Let the imaginations soar. Nebraska vs. Notre Dame. Big Red vs. Big Dome. The Four Horsemen vs. The Five Diesels. College football's dynasty of the first 50 years of the last century against the game's dynasty of the second half. In the new century.

Finally, let the predictions begin. Let the overconfidence flow from overzealous Husker fans who dare to run smack about kicking the feisty leprechaun on his home turf by 40.

Such bravado is justified. Nebraska 45, Notre Dame 13.

Special Place

Somewhere, Irish eyes are laughing. Bring it on, Cornheads. Notre Dame is a magical place. A proud place. Nobody pushes ND around here. So Nebraska's No. 1? Uh...oh...Now the Irish have the Huskers where they want them. Strange things happen to No. 1 teams that come to South Bend. They lose. Remember 1993? Florida State came rolling into town, with war flags waving and horns honking and No. 1. The 'Noles left with an

The Irish will be ready. Before they even took on Texas A&M in Saturday's season opener, they were hawking T-shirts for the Nebraska game that read, "Traditions Collide."

It's liable to be a train wreck. Notre Dame may lead the nation in tradition and ghosts, but the Huskers lead the country in football. The Irish are going to need more than a "Gipper" speech. Sure, they won their opener, 24-10. They survived the brutal heat and adversity. A goal-line stand. A touchdown bomb. Irish win, Irish win.

But this Aggie crew should not be confused with what's coming to town next week. Texas A&M is rebuilding. The Aggies look like the third-best group in the Big 12 South and sixth- or seventh-best overall. Nebraska looks like the best team in the nation.

Big and Fast

Do the Catholics have a prayer? Well, if the Huskers fumble 10 times. And quarterback Eric Crouch gets a free wardrobe at Oak View Mall this week.

Nebraska is bigger, faster and badder than the Irish. Whatever happened to all those years ND won the recruiting polls? They don't have a big-time I-back or receiver. Their defense is slow. Crouch might sprint for 250 yards.

Texas A&M came in with a rookie quarterback (sophomore Mark Farris) and a beat-up offensive line and gave ND all it could handle. The Aggies started the third quarter with a 15-play, 75-yard scoring drive that self-destructed at the goal line with a motion penalty. What's Nebraska's O-Line, the Five Diesels, going to do?

The Irish secondary had three pass interference calls and survived two dropped touchdown passes by A&M. They can't count on that next week.

Nebraska's battle depends on ND quarterback Arnez Battle, a fine talent who still shows his Irish green in experience. On a steamy afternoon, the junior (6-foot-1, 211 pounds) flashed hot and cold. He mistimed several passes but threw a brilliant 46-yard touchdown strike to Javin Hunter.

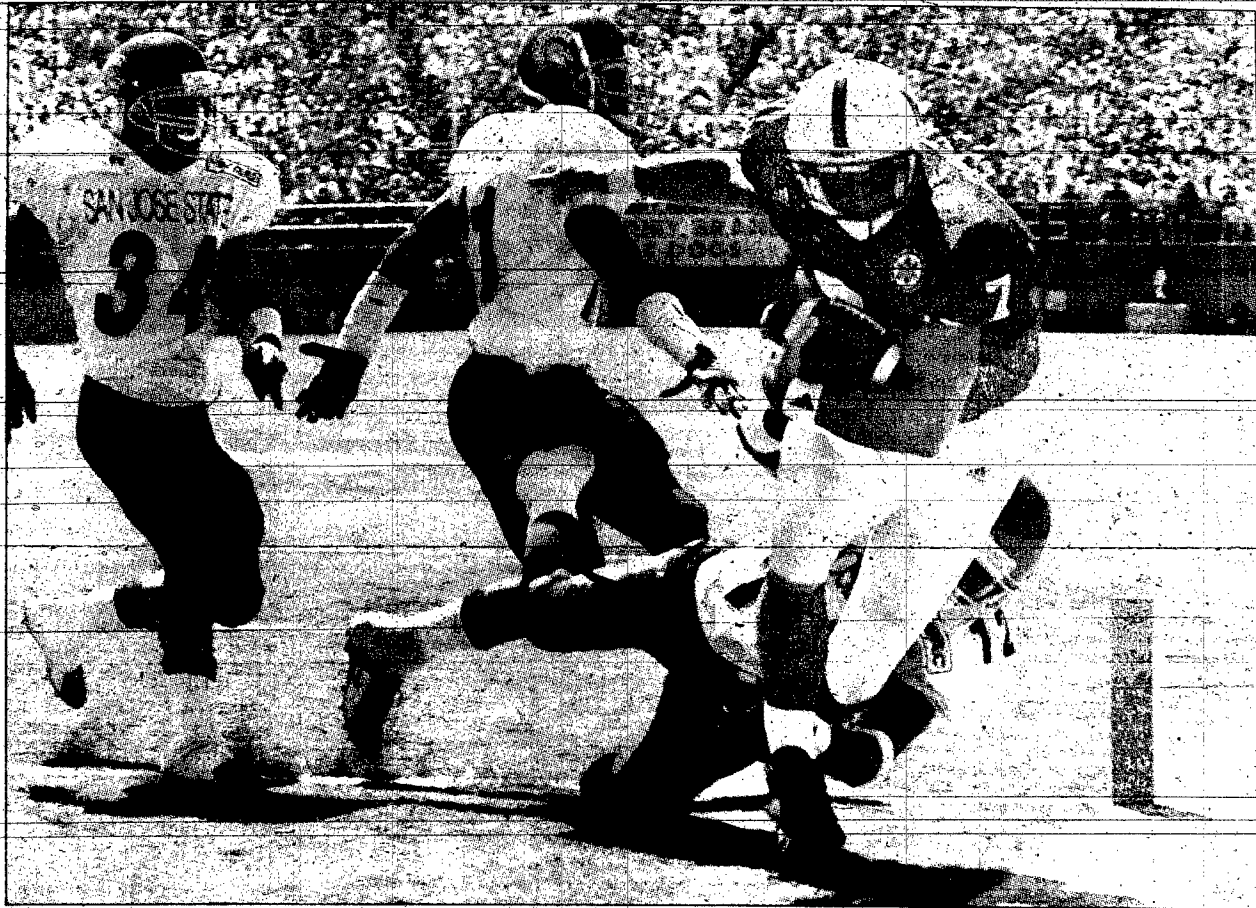
Mobile QB

It was the kind of quarterback play that has given NU's 4-3 defense fits: a mobile QB who can run his way out of trouble and hit intermediate passes. But with NU's speed at linebacker and powerful rush ends, Battle's options aren't going anywhere. He's in for a Battle royale.

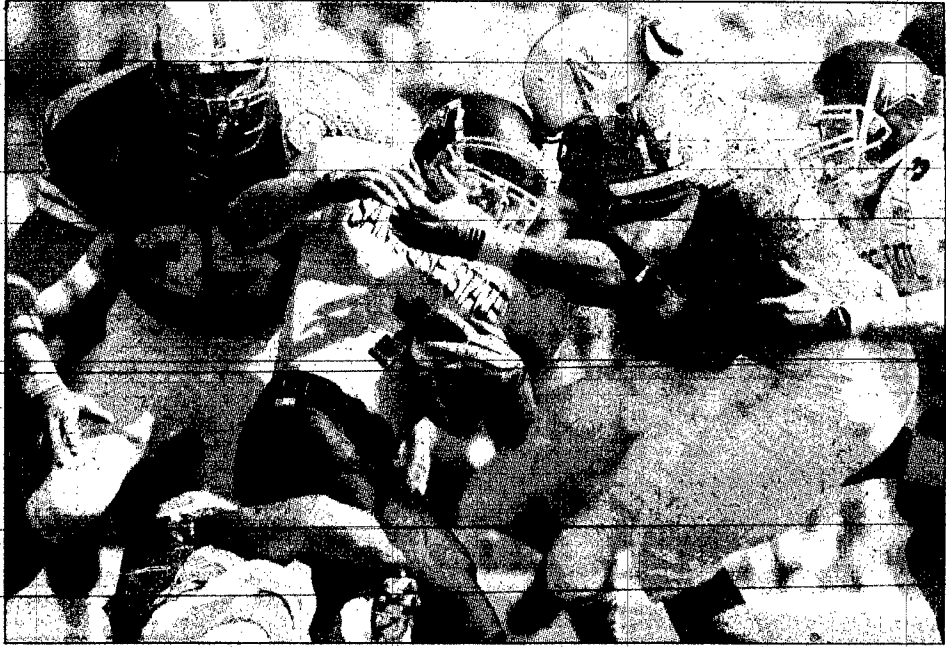
The only thing the Irish have going for them is all the pomp and circumstance that comes with running down the tunnel and wailing on the visitor's sidelines. But if Texas A&M didn't flinch, don't expect Crouch and Co. to either.

Lots of folks do care. This will be a great week in the bars, the parking lots and the chat rooms. Traditions colliding is what college football is all about. This week is for the fans. Better still if you're a Nebraska fan.

Nebraska Brings the Heat



HIGH EFFICIENCY: NU quarterback Eric Crouch scores his second touchdown Saturday, a 4-yard run with 10:56 to go in the second quarter. Crouch had eight carries and threw 10 passes — and produced four touchdowns. The San Jose State defenders, from left, are Kenny Sanchez, Willie Adams and Ricky Lavender.



NO ROOM: Nebraska's Carlos Polk, bottom, drags down San Jose State kickoff returner Casey LeBlanc in the first quarter as teammates Jon Coyne, left, and T.J. Hollowell close in. LeBlanc was stopped at San Jose's 18-yard line.

Mercury Hits 100; Huskers Stop at 49

BY STEVEN PIVOVAR
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Lincoln — Nebraska's season opener Saturday proved to be no sweat for the top-ranked Huskers.

With triple-digit temperatures turning Memorial Stadium into the state's biggest oven, the Huskers showcased their offensive efficiency in grilling overmatched San Jose State 49-13.

Nebraska scored on seven of its first nine possessions, covering distances of 80, 80, 80, 97, 71, 65 and 82 yards on the touchdown drives.

"We felt like we could run anything we wanted to out there," Husker quarterback Eric Crouch said.

Crouch scored three touchdowns and passed for another as the Huskers won their opener for the 15th straight season. Many of the 234th straight sellout crowd of 77,728 stuck it out until the end in spite of temperatures that soared past 100 degrees by game's end.

The temperature on the field was more than 120 degrees.

"It was definitely smoldering inside the helmets today," Nebraska offensive guard Russ Hochstein said. "But the coaches did a great job of getting us ready for this, and we definitely wore them down."

The Huskers' highly regarded offense produced 596 yards on 73 snaps, an average of 8.2 yards per play. Nebraska rushed for 505 yards, with senior I-back Dan Alexander leading the way with 208 yards on 17 carries.

"That offensive unit is very, very dominant," San Jose State Coach Dave Baldwin said. "We couldn't stop them."

Alexander's career-high output was the most by a Nebraska player in a season-opening game since 1950, when Bobby Reynolds gained 187 yards against Indiana. Alexander's final carry of the day produced a 56-yard touchdown early in the third quarter, and he also had gains of 39 and 32 yards.

Teammate Correll Buckhalter added 117 yards on 13 carries, while Crouch pitched in with 57 yards and fullback Willie Miller 51. Perhaps the most impressive statistic concerning Nebraska's rushing production was that none of the 11 players who carried a total of 60 times lost a yard.

"I give all the credit to my Lord for allowing me to run and run fast," Alexander said. "But right after Him comes our linemen. Those holes were just huge. Pretty much anything we could have tried would have worked today because of them."

San Jose State also enjoyed some success offensively, which didn't set well with Nebraska's coaches and defensive players. The Spartans rushed for 193 yards — the most since Kansas State gained 212 in 1998 — and

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For Openers

■ **Dan Alexander's** 208-yard rushing day was his first 200-yard rushing game at NU. His previous highs:

- 180 vs. Colorado, 1999
- 136 vs. Texas, 1999
- 135 vs. Iowa State, 1998 and Texas A&M, 1999

■ San Jose State's **Deonce Whitaker** rushed for 147 yards Saturday, the most against NU since Texas' Ricky Williams gained 150 in a 1998 game.

■ **Dan Hadenfeldt's** one-game suspension didn't affect NU much — his replacement, Josh Brown, punted just once for 28 yards.

■ Nebraska ran only seven more plays than San Jose State, 73-66, but outgained the Spartans by 250 yards.

■ Nebraska didn't fumble Saturday, coming off a 1999 season in which NU fumbled 49 times and lost a nation-leading 25.

Irish Rally; NU Game Now Looms

BY LEE BARFKNECHT
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

South Bend, Ind. — Remember the old one-game-at-a-time speech every football coach trots out before the season opener?

Notre Dame's Bob Davie gave his version during practices preceding Saturday's 24-10 win over 23rd- and 25th-ranked Texas A&M, but defensive end Anthony Weaver admits not everyone paid full attention.

Not with No. 1 Nebraska coming to town next.

"Even though we were concentrating on A&M," Weaver said, "in the backs of our minds, we had to be thinking about the Nebraska game."

"Opportunities like this don't come along very often. As a college player, this is what you dream about — having a chance to knock off a No. 1 team. I can't wait."

Davie said he wouldn't mind some extra preparation time for the Huskers, the opponent this Saturday at 1:30 p.m. in front of what will be the 151st straight sellout at Notre Dame Stadium.

"We realize we have a long, long, long way to go as a football team in a short amount of time," Davie said. "The football team coming in here next week is probably as good as a team as I've seen in a long time."

"We've spent a lot of time looking at Nebraska. They will present a tremendous challenge. But we're

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Haywood Heats Up, Boosts Stagnant ISU

BY KEVIN WHITE
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Ames, Iowa — As the mercury rose, so did Ennis Haywood's confidence.

The junior tailback raced 73 yards for a touchdown midway through the third quarter, securing Iowa State's first double-digit lead of the day, and the Cyclones wore down Ohio University 25-15 before a crowd of 34,385 on a sizzling Saturday

afternoon at Jack Trice Stadium.

A morning fog kept the game-time temperature at 74 degrees, but it reached 91 degrees midway through the fourth quarter. Iowa State, led by Haywood's 207 total yards, battled through the heat to record a successful — if unspectacular — season debut.

"We're not hooting and hollering and jumping around celebrating," said Iowa State Coach Dan McCarney, whose team has now won

six straight non-conference games. "But half the teams in the country are 0-1 today. We're proud and excited to be 1-0."

After an even first quarter in which the Cyclones led 7-6, the home team took control in the middle quarters. McCarney's squad limited the Bobcats to just 79 total yards in the second and third periods.

Kevin Kerr booted a 33-yard field goal to put Ohio in front 9-7 with 13:19 remaining in the second

quarter. But Iowa State answered with Mike McKnight's 27-yard field goal to go up 10-9.

The Cyclones forced a three-and-out and continued to move the ball. A swing pass from quarterback Sage Rosenfels to Haywood on third-and-15 netted 32 yards to the Ohio 6; and Rosenfels scored three plays later on a 1-yard quarterback sneak to make it 16-9 with 2:47 left in the half.

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UNO Can't Close Out Bearcats Down Stretch

BY RICH KAPUSTI
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Maryville, Mo. — Postgame opinions differed about Northwest Missouri State's 24-17 victory over UNO on Saturday.

On one side, the Bearcats thought they got what they deserved in extending their winning streak to 14 games. It also avenged their only loss in 31 outings since 1998.

On the other, the Mavs thought they let one get away. "I think we did a decent job, just some little things that happened took us down in the end," UNO cornerback Taree Kelley said. "Things happened in the end that shouldn't have happened."

The University of Nebraska at Omaha failed to build on an early lead and was left clinging to a 10-3 advantage with six minutes left in the

third quarter. That's when Northwest Missouri State took over, sandwiching two scoring drives around Fony Miles' 65-yard punt return to pick up 21 points in a seven-minute span.

The way it started out, it was going to be about who made something happen," UNO Coach Pat Behrens said. "They obviously made more plays down the stretch than we did."

Northwest Missouri started its run at a third straight NCAA Division II championship with an effort that Coach Mel Tjeerdema called "very average." But the numbers backed up the Bearcats' thinking that they were the better team before a crowd of 8,500 at Rickenbrode Stadium.

Offensively, NMS had a nice balance with 171 yards rushing and 185 passing. Defensively, the Bearcats allowed only three UNO possessions.

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TD FOR MAVS: UNO receiver Fletcher Smith comes down with a 35-yard touchdown catch in front of Northwest Missouri State cornerback Clinton Hurd in the first quarter. The pass from Seth Turman gave the Mavs a 7-0 lead.

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