

College Football

Tom Shatel



NU's Defense Goes on Offense

NU Rings In Season of D

Lincoln

D-FENCE! D-FENCE!
That's the chant that will ring throughout this season. That's the password as Nebraska knocks on the door for a historic third national championship. Get out the sign with the letter "D" and the drawing of a picket fence and pass it around Memorial Stadium.

D-FENCE! D-FENCE!
After a frighteningly workmanlike 55-14 season-opening victory over Michigan State on Saturday, the No. 1-ranked Nebraska Cornhuskers displayed a national championship defense, national championship special teams and a Haka Bowl offense. But the latter is fine, for now, thanks to a Blackshirt gang that chews up teams like a combine, pillages like pirates, scores touchdowns like most other offenses and provides a most efficient safety net.

For one Scott Frost.

Mixed Results

The junior quarterback from down the (Wood) river had a mixed-results debut Saturday. He misfired on passes, was 4 for 10 on third-down conversions and led his team to three touchdowns. He won. He didn't faint. He didn't make anyone forget Tommie Frazier. He ran for one touchdown and passed for another. He didn't throw an interception or fumble a pitch-out. He won.

The most celebrated Husker debut since, well, Frazier, was overshadowed by a giant Blackshirt. The best thing Frost did was that he didn't do anything wrong. He was good. He wasn't great. But then, at least until November, he doesn't have to be.

D-FENCE! D-FENCE!
The question of the debut was simple and to the point: Can Frost lead this team to a third national crown? Answer: After a day in which the defense scored on two interceptions and NU had a touchdown on an electrifying punt return by Mike Fullman, the Huskers will be fine if Frost keeps the machine on the road.

Conservative Calls

"My only expectation was to win," said Frost, a transfer from Stanford. "We kept the play-calling conservative, for a reason. New quarterback with a new system. I thought I executed pretty well. There's no sense of taking chances with a defense and special teams like that. It's going to be a luxury for a quarterback like me this year."

And this offense looks like it will need that cushion to fall back on. The Huskers lost the possession battle, 34:28 to 25:32, punted six times and ran for a paltry (for them) 184 yards while throwing just 15 times. But Nebraska's Mr. Offense, Coach Tom Osborne, wasn't ready to panic after a day in which his defense was too good. With so many defensive and special-teams scores, the Blackshirts hogged the stage.

"I wasn't totally pleased with the offense," Osborne said. "We did OK. But don't say the offense isn't good. They (the Spartans) have a good defense. For a first game, the offense always takes time to smooth out."

Offense Stumbles

Last year, then, must have been an exception. The Huskers had 64 points and 671 total yards at Oklahoma State, then followed up with 50 points and 666 total yards against Michigan State. The fact is, this offense stumbled out of the gate. It will improve. Mainly, because it isn't ready to take a back seat or become a burden to the defense.

"We had some technique problems today that will be worked out," said center Aaron Taylor. "Our philosophy is still the best defense is a good offense. We feel we have to go out and control the ball and take control of the game. We've got to step it up."

To do that, they'll need an early Frost. The boyish-looking blond is the difference in this year's offense to last year's. Almost all of the main players are back. Frost is the foreign presence in the mix. He doesn't have to be Frazier. But at some point he will have to make plays and, first downs. On Saturday, he mastered the hardest part when he simply ran out onto the field for the first time in Nebraska red and white.

Osborne Pleased

"I just wanted to stay calm," Frost said. First things first. "The thing I look for is if there is any excitement," Osborne said. "He wasn't (overly) excited. He understood perfectly what we wanted to do. Scott played very well for a first game. I couldn't be more pleased. I..."



TOUCHDOWN PASS: Senior split end Brendan Holbein, No. 5, tries to protect the ball from Michigan State's Amp Campbell after catching a 35-yard scoring pass from Scott Frost with 1:32 left in the third quarter. The touchdown gave NU a 41-7 lead.

2 Interceptions for TDs, Special Teams Key Win

BY LEE BARFKNECHT
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Lincoln — Before the season, the Nebraska defense set a goal to score a touchdown a game.

"But we like to overachieve," strong-side linebacker Jamel Williams said Saturday.

Which is exactly what the Blackshirts did, scoring two touchdowns on interception returns by roverback Mike Minter and rush end Grant Wistrom and setting up a third with another pickoff in a 55-14 romp over Michigan State before 75,590 fans at Memorial Stadium.

Top-ranked Nebraska's kicking game was almost as effective.

Cornerback Mike Fullman, who three weeks ago wondered if an injury might end his career, showed Johnny Rodgers-type moves in returning a punt 62 yards for a touchdown in a 20-point second quarter. And Fullman did it with Nebraska having only 10 men on the field.

Free safety Eric Warfield's blocked punt and another Fullman punt return of 17 yards set up two more third-quarter touchdowns and helped the two-time defending national champions cruise in their season opener and stretch their school-record winning streak to 26.

"I can't remember a game," Nebraska Coach Tom Osborne said, "where we scored so many times on defense and in the kicking game."

That's because there hasn't been a three-touchdown game in those categories in Osborne's 24 years as head coach. To find one, you have to go back to 1970 against Oklahoma State when the Huskers got a 57-yard interception return from John Adkins, a 66-yard punt return from Rodgers and a 73-yard interception return from John Decker in a 65-31 win.

The explosiveness of Nebraska's defense and special teams helped make up for a sputtering offense.

In transfer quarterback Scott Frost's first game, the Huskers gained 298 total yards — the lowest since Kansas State held NU to 262 in 1994. Nebraska gained 666 yards on Michigan State last year in a 50-10 win.

NU's 184 yards on the ground was the lowest since gaining 136 against Oklahoma in 1994. The longest run from scrimmage by the defending national rushing champions was 19 yards.

How The AP Top

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1. Nebraska (1-0) beat Michigan State 55-14.
2. Tennessee (2-0) beat UCLA 35-20.
3. Florida State (1-0) beat Duke 44-7.
4. Florida (2-0) beat Georgia Southern 62-14.
5. Colorado (2-0) beat Colorado St. 48-34.
6. Notre Dame (1-0) beat Vanderbilt 14-7.
7. Penn State (2-0) beat Louisville 24-7.
8. Texas (2-0) beat New Mexico State 41-7.
9. Syracuse (0-1) lost to N. Carolina 27-10.
10. Ohio State (1-0) beat Rice 70-7.
11. Miami (2-0) beat Citadel 52-6.
12. Michigan (1-0) did not play.
13. Northwestern (0-1) lost to W. Forest 28-27.
14. Alabama (2-0) beat S. Mississippi 20-10.
15. Virginia Tech (1-0) beat Akron 21-18.
16. Brigham Young (2-0) did not play.
17. LSU (1-0) beat Houston 35-34.
18. Auburn (2-0) beat Fresno St. 62-0.
19. Southern Cal (1-1) beat Illinois 55-3.
20. Arizona St. (0-0) vs. Washington.
21. Kansas St. (2-0) beat Indiana St. 59-3.
22. Iowa (1-0) beat Arizona 21-20.
23. Virginia (1-0) beat C. Michigan 55-21.
24. North Carolina (2-0) beat Syracuse 27-10.
25. Texas A&M (0-1) did not play.

"I wasn't totally pleased with the offense today," said Osborne, the offensive coordinator. "I thought we did OK."

"Don't just say our offense wasn't good. Michigan State played good defense. They don't just give you a whole lot."

Frost rushed 10 times for 58 yards and one touchdown and completed 5 of 12 passes for 74 yards and one touchdown.

"Scott played very well," Osborne said. "For a first game, I couldn't be more pleased."

"The thing I always like to get a feel for is if he's excitable. He wasn't excited."

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Turnovers Feed Iowa 21-20

BY ELIZABETH MERRILL
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Iowa City, Iowa — After being bullied around by Arizona's defense for most of the day, Iowa finally pushed back on Saturday in a 21-20 win in the Hawkeyes' season opener.

The No. 22 Hawkeyes, who mustered up only 204 yards in total offense for the day and clung to a one-point lead for most of the fourth quarter, held off the Wildcats with a 68-yard drive that ate most of the final 7 minutes off the clock.

It wasn't the type of game a Kinnick Stadium crowd of 68,267 expected to see in the Hawkeyes' home opener. Iowa returned all of its key weapons from an offense that averaged 417.6 yards a game last year.

When Iowa quarterback Matt Sherman was leveled with his sixth sack of the day in the fourth quarter, most of the crowd booed.

But the mood changed with 7:39 left, when Iowa took over on its own 23 and leaned on its fairly inexperienced offensive line. The Hawkeyes punched the ball up the middle for six first downs in their final possession, giving the ball back to Arizona on the Wildcats' 9-yard line with 18 seconds remaining.

"It was gut-check time," said senior left tackle Ross Verba, one of only two returning starters playing on the Hawkeyes' line. "There was this air of confidence. We knew what had to be done. I..."

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HAWKEYE'S STRIKE DELAYED: Arizona defenders Daniel Gréer, No. 48, and Steve Tafua, No. 93, chase Iowa quarterback Matt Sherman in the first quarter Saturday.

McCarney Proud of Cyclones in OT Loss

BY COREY ROSS
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Ames, Iowa — Iowa State's players did the only thing worse than kissing their sisters Saturday night.

They puckered up to a 41-38 overtime loss. The taste was especially bitter since Iowa State at one time held a 35-17 lead. A frantic Wyoming rally and a 41-yard field goal by Cory Wedel gave the Cowboys the dramatic victory before a sellout crowd at Cyclone Stadium.

Wedel's kick came from the same spot where Iowa State kicker Jamie Kohl bounced his attempt off of the left

upright in overtime. "I'm sorry at the end my kids weren't able to make the plays, but I'm proud of them," Iowa State Coach Dan McCarney said. "We played with a lot of courage on both sides of the ball."

The teams combined for 958 yards of total offense, with Wyoming outgaining Iowa State by just 10 yards — 484-474. The newly employed overtime rule was used. In the past, the tie would have stood.

Iowa State won the coin toss in overtime and chose to drive to the south end of the field. It could also have elected to play offense or defense first. McCar-

ney said he made the choice because he wanted to drive in the area where his team had the most crowd support.

"We wanted the crowd behind us," McCarney said. "Offense or defense didn't matter because we hadn't exactly stopped them all night."

The Cyclones got the ball when Wyoming chose to play defense. After two penalties, a sack and a 5-yard run by Troy Davis, Kohl made his attempt.

McCarney said it wasn't the series he'd hoped for. "The penalties really hurt us," McCarney said.

After a similarly poor series by Wyo-

ning, Wedel converted for the victory. A career performance by Iowa State senior quarterback Todd Doxzon went to waste.

Doxzon, a Millard North graduate, completed 13 straight passes at one point en route to a 17-of-22 passing performance in regulation. He threw for 225 yards and one touchdown. He also rushed for 82 yards and one touchdown.

It was Doxzon's best passing performance since he completed 14 passes against Oklahoma as a junior. Doxzon's proficiency kept Wyoming's defense from loading up to stop All-American

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Mavericks Set Rush Record, Blast Hastings

BY RICH KAIPUST
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

It was a late start but not a slow one Saturday night for the University of Nebraska at Omaha football team.

UNO scored on two of its first four possessions, rushed for a school-record 483 yards and held Hastings without a first down for more than 25 minutes, rolling to a 48-0 victory at Caniglia Field. It was the Mavericks' first shutout in five years, dating to a 28-0 win over Wayne State to open the 1991 season.

The start of the game was delayed by an hour and 15 minutes because of heavy rain and lightning that let loose 45 minutes before the scheduled kickoff. It didn't end until 10:55 p.m.

And it did with UNO being a winner in its season opener for the first time since 1992.

"It just makes the whole atmosphere better," said senior cornerback Pat Davis. "Just everything in itself changes, even with just this one game. The fans were more into it, the coaches, the players... the program as a whole."

"People want to be behind this team so bad. They just want this team to give them a little back, which we have not done in the past four or five years. That's what we're here to do this year."

UNO piled up its 483 ground yards on 71 carries Saturday night and six different players ran for scores. The Mavericks' previous high was 400 yards in a 28-20 win over Fort Hays State in 1969.

"Undoubtedly we showed some signs of having a decent running game," UNO Coach Pat Behrens said. "I think we were a little too sloppy at times, especially with penalties, and we laid the ball on the turf four or five times. You just can't do that against anybody."

When the game finally started Saturday night, the Mavericks wasted little time in establishing the upper hand. They forced Hastings to punt and followed with a seven-play, 74-yard scoring drive before a crowd of 2,300.

UNO completed the drive in an impressive fashion after moving out to its own 30-yard line. Sophomore quarterback Ed Thompson scrambled for 12 yards, passed to MarFay Jenkins for 11 and then ran for 17 more as the Mavericks found their way to the Hastings 30.

After a 16-yard run by McH...

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