

EXTRA WORKOUT
 The New York Knicks held practice on New Year's Day, a violation of the NBA's collective bargaining agreement. Even though the players were in accord with the decision, the team may face a fine. Page 26.

BLUEJAYS AT HOME
 Creighton, which ended 1991 with four straight losses, opens 1992 tonight with a 7:35 game against Eastern Illinois at City Auditorium. Coach Rick Johnson says the Bluejays need improvement in three areas. Page 27.

NU BASKETBALL
 The Nebraska basketball team carries a five-game winning streak into tonight's game at Toledo. The Huskers haven't lost since Dec. 4 when Michigan State beat them. The Rockets, 3-4, are coming off a 60-52 win over Idaho. Page 27.

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS
 Coach Marty Schottenheimer and the Kansas City Chiefs know their blue-collar running game had better be clicking on Sunday in Buffalo. The Chiefs are 10-point underdogs in the game, which has an 11:30 a.m. CST kickoff. Page 29.

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Sports Opinion
 By Bruce Jenkins
 The San Francisco Chronicle

Bowl System Needs Fixing

First off, let's point out that the country will survive without a playoff system for college football. One of the sport's great traditions is the annual Jan. 2 debate over who's No. 1, and here we are, right on schedule.

It's not such a bad situation. As Michigan Coach Gary Moeller said this week, "I like the idea of guys sitting around arguing about who's the best team, and you have so many winners in the current bowl system. The idea of debating the No. 1, whether it be Miami or Washington or whoever, I think that's a healthy situation."

Healthy, yes, but not very satisfying. Put it this way: Exactly who would be hurt by a championship tournament — outside of the guys in red polyester suits and orange belts who run the bowls? What's not to like about a championship game?

A majority of fans and media would undoubtedly approve, and the players would love it. They asked Washington quarterback Billy Joe Hobert about it this week, and he got downright belligerent.

"If I could, I'd find some way to kill the Rose Bowl obligation," he said. "I'd go find Florida State or Miami and play for the national championship. I wouldn't care if we went on probation for it."

System Lacking

The fact is, the current system is sadly lacking. The season ends in late November, leaving a handful of teams to sit around for a month — in some cases, losing any momentum they might have had. Just when the pros start dominating the headlines... wait, the college season is back on! They were just kidding! Not only that, it's six straight bowl games between 6-4 teams without any drawing power! Whoa, doctor!

Then comes New Year's Day, the big finale, when you wind up being more confused than an immigrant at the New York Stock Exchange.

See if this proposed system makes any sense:

The first order of business would be appointing a special committee to select eight teams for the tournament. This could turn into a political circus, but just to make sure, the top four teams from the both the AP and CNN/USA Today polls would be automatics. The teams would then be seeded 1 through 8, making sure the top two are in different brackets, creating a chance for them to meet in the title game.

Just for the sake of argument, say this year's field (in order) would consist of Washington, Miami, Florida, Michigan, Florida State, Penn State, Nebraska and Cal (plenty of local bias there, but after Wednesday, who's arguing?).

How It Works

This is how the tournament could have gone:

■ Dec. 13-14, Friday and Saturday: Two first-round games each day, cutting the field to four. The games would be played at traditional bowl sites — say, the Fiesta, Sugar, Gator and Blockbuster — with others, such as the Peach and Holiday, getting their shot in future years. There would be untold controversy, backstabbing and corruption in deciding which bowls got the best deal — but what the heck, it's like that now. The Friday-night scheduling comes in favor of Sunday, to avoid a conflict with the NFL.

■ Dec. 21, Saturday: The semifinals. From this point on, the most prestigious of the bowls — Rose, Cotton and Orange — would be used, with the championship alternating among the three each year. This year, let's say, Washington plays Florida at the Orange Bowl while Florida State plays Miami at the Rose (whoops, a few thousand traditionalists just bailed out — but stay with us). The definition of "prestigious" would, again, come down to money. So far, though, the old standbys have held up against severe corporate competition.

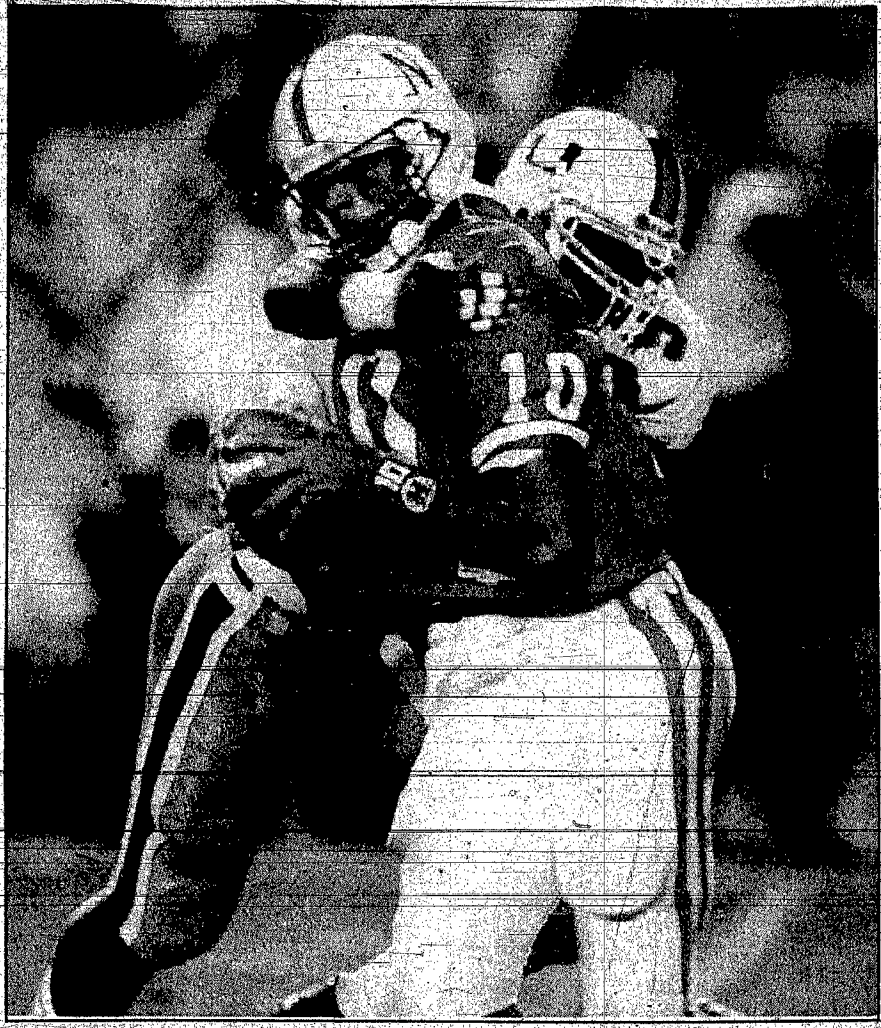
Off For Christmas

■ Christmas week: off. The NBA likes to play on Christmas day, and it's just an awful idea, isn't it?

■ Jan. 1: The national championship game at the Rose Bowl. Miami and Washington have remained undefeated through the tournament, and here they are, playing the game everyone wants to see. It would be strange, certainly, to see a Rose Bowl without the Big Ten — but believe me, you'd get over it. Some might find it disappointing to see just one game on New Year's day instead of, what is it, 12? To fill the void, play a 1 p.m. (Central) All-Star game featuring the nation's best players of all classes, not just the seniors. That would be a beauty. Follow that with a 4 p.m. national title game.

■ Sound good? Didn't think so. Back to the labyrinth.

Miami's Defense Smothers NU



Nebraska quarterback Keith McCant is sacked by Miami's Anthony Hamlet for a 7-yard loss in the first quarter... The Hurricanes sacked McCant five times for 30 yards in losses.

Huskers Dealt Shutout First Time in 18 Years

By Lee Barfknecht
 World-Herald Staff Writer

Miami — In Wednesday night's 58th annual Orange Bowl, top-ranked Miami's defense left 10th- and 11th-ranked Nebraska with zero hopes for an upset.

The Hurricanes handed the Huskers their first shutout in 221 games over 19 seasons — 22-0 — to lay claim to a fourth national championship in nine years.

Nebraska hadn't been blanked since a 27-0 loss at Oklahoma on Nov. 23, 1973.

Orange

the year Tom Osborne became head coach.

Miami, 12-0, was ranked first in The Associated Press poll of sportswriters and broadcasters entering the game and was tied for first with Washington in the CNN/USA Today coaches' poll.

Washington also moved to 12-0 with a 34-14 drubbing of No. 4 Michigan in the Rose Bowl.

One of two common opponents for the two undefeated teams was 9-2-1 Nebraska, which lost 36-21 to the Huskies on Sept. 21.

So who will Osborne vote No. 1? He won't say.

"They are both really good," he said. "I don't think a whole lot was done today to change how they were ranked earlier."

"They both played awfully well, so I couldn't say."

Nebraska came into the Orange Bowl first nationally in rushing, third in total offense and third in scoring.

But the Huskers never got inside the Miami 20-yard line, ran for only 82 yards and gained 171 yards overall in suffering a fifth straight bowl loss.

The last time Nebraska's offensive statistics were that feeble was the last time it played Miami. In the Orange Bowl after the 1988 season, the Hurricanes won 23-3 and held the Huskers to 80 yards rushing and 135 total yards — both lows in the 30-year Osborne-Bob Devaney era.

"I don't know if I've ever been

Bowl Results

PEACH	
East Carolina 37	NC State 34
HALL OF FAME	
Syracuse 24	Ohio State 17
CITRUS	
California 37	Clemson 13
COTTON	
Florida State 10	Texas A&M 2
FIESTA	
Penn State 42	Tennessee 17
ROSE	
Washington 34	Michigan 14
ORANGE	
Miami 22	Nebraska 0
SUGAR	
Notre Dame 39	Florida 28

Final Polls

The final Top 25 college football poll, crowning the Associated Press national champion, will be released this morning. The CNN/USA Today poll also is planned.

around a defensive performance like this one," Miami Coach Dennis Erickson said in talking about the first Orange Bowl shutout since Alabama's 17-0 blanking of Oklahoma in 1960.

Osborne didn't disagree after a first-hand look at the nation's top preventing defense, averaging 8.3 a game.

"They were awfully quick, and they were stronger up front than we thought," he said. "The key is that they did a good job penetrating our offensive line and stopping our running game."

Nebraska netted 4 yards on its first six possessions, not getting a first down against Miami's gap-shooting 4-3 alignment until there was 6:11 left in the second quarter.

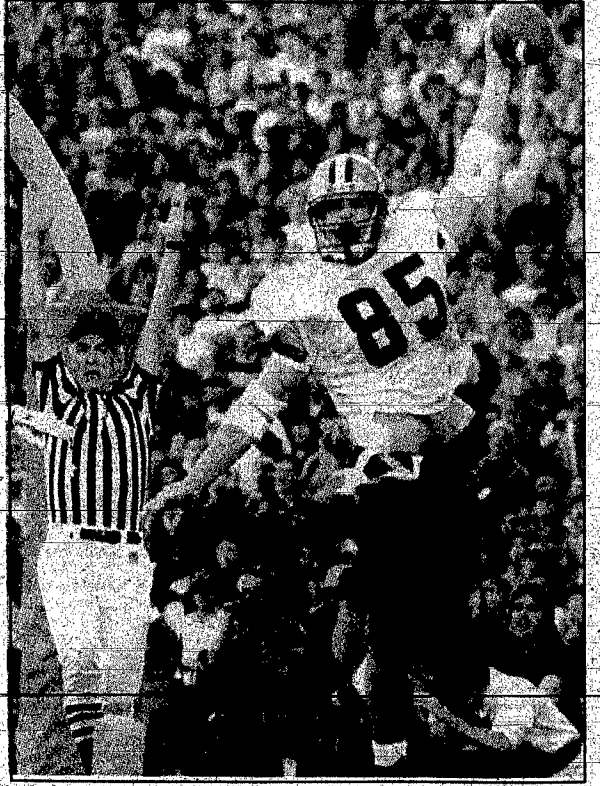
Overall, 24 of NU's 57 offensive plays resulted in no gain or minus yardage.

The Huskers entered Miami territory only three times in 14 possessions. One of those was because they started there after an interception.

"Coming in, we thought we could

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Washington's Emtman: Huskies Are No. 1



Washington's Mark Bruener jumps for joy after catching a 5-yard touchdown pass against Michigan... The third-quarter score put the Huskies ahead 21-7.

By Tom Timmermann
 Los Angeles Daily News

Pasadena, Calif. — It wasn't official yet — hey, it may not even happen at all — but after Washington defeated Michigan, 34-14, in the Rose Bowl on Wednesday, the Huskies were celebrating as if there was no question who's No. 1.

"I don't care about Miami, I'm sick of Miami," said Washington defensive tackle Steve Emtman, a Nebraska baseball cap on his head as he roamed the field amid the lengthy postgame celebration. "It doesn't matter about Miami. Look at the scoreboard. We're No. 1. We're too legit. I think we deserve to be national champions."

They may deserve it, but they may not get it. With second-ranked and undefeated Washington having done all it can on the field, its fate now comes down to a judgment call: Will voters be impressed more by Washington's domination of the fourth-ranked team in the

Rose

country or Miami's domination in the Orange Bowl of 11th-ranked Nebraska, which it beat 22-0.

The possibility exists that Miami and Washington, each 12-0, will both be national champions, just as Colorado and Georgia Tech were last year. Washington was only 14 points behind Miami in the last regular-season Associated Press poll and may not have swayed enough voters to slip ahead. In the USA Today/CNN poll (which has replaced the UPI rankings as the vehicle for the coaches' vote), the teams were even. But one coach with a vote, Washington's Don James, made his preference known after the game.

"I'm going to vote Washington No. 1," James said. "But if either one of us (Miami or Washington) doesn't get a

claim on the national title, it's going to be a disaster. You can't believe how disappointed either team would be. I can't believe there's anybody a whole lot better than us."

Michigan Coach Gary Moeller doesn't have a vote, but he was suitably impressed with a Washington team that limited the 10-2 Wolverines to season-lows in points and yardage.

"We lost to as good a team as I've ever seen," Moeller said. "I haven't played against Miami, but Washington was the best team we played."

"There's no question in my mind we're the No. 1 team in the country," said Emtman, who shared player of the game honors with quarterback Billy Joe Hobert. "We proved we can play with anybody."

The results of the polls won't be known until this morning, so it may well be a sleepless night for the Huskies. It

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Irish Take Fight From Gators

By Jack Saylor
 The Detroit Free Press

New Orleans — Notre Dame woke up the echoes of bowl glories past Wednesday night and upset third-ranked Florida 39-28 in the Sugar Bowl.

Jerome Bettis, the Irish sophomore fullback, scored three touchdowns in a two-minute, 44-second blitz late in the fourth quarter to win the most valuable player award, shock the Gators and stun a crowd of 76,447 in the Superdome.

The No. 19 Irish regained a measure of national respect and finished 10-3. Florida, the Southeastern Conference champion, had an eight-game winning streak broken and ended 10-2.

The offensive line also earned kudos

Sugar

for its second-half blocking of the tough Gator forwards.

"We weren't in the sync in the first half," Irish Coach Lou Holtz said. "Our defense was on the field too much. We made a decision to go to more power."

"Then they did some blitzing and some of our traps worked. This was one fine football team we beat — we beat the No. 3 team in the country."

It was the first meeting of the Irish and Gators and resulted in the highest-scoring Sugar Bowl in history.

Notre Dame had its fragile defense

riddled by Florida's Shane Matthews, who completed 28 of 57 passes for 370 yards — all Sugar Bowl records.

But Matthews couldn't be consoled about his performance.

"If you want someone to blame, just look at me," Matthews said. "My job is to get it into the end zone, and I didn't. It's going to be tough to live with this game."

Holtz steadfastly stuck to a defense of no rush on the passer, just cover the receivers, and the Irish made it tough when Florida got near the goal line.

The Gators grabbed a 13-0 lead and threatened to turn the game into a laughter, but between Matthews' early

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JUNIOR HOCKEY

Lancers' Goalie Honored

Omaha Lancers' goalie Kurt Brown has been named the United States Hockey League player of the week for stopping 39 of 40 shots in a 2-1 overtime victory over the Thunder Bay Flyers.

Brown, acquired in December trade with the Wisconsin Capitals, had a save percentage for the game of .975.

Brown has won both games in which he has appeared. He also relieved Chris Marvel in the third period with Omaha trailing St. Paul 5-3. The Lancers went on to win 6-5 in overtime.

Lancers' earlier named player of the week were Eddie MacDonald, who had three goals and two assists in an 8-6 loss at Wisconsin, and goalie Jon Bracco, who blanked Rochester 5-0.

MAJOR-LEAGUE BASEBALL

World Series Fame Brings Lemke, Namesake Headaches

Atlanta (AP) — Atlanta infielder Mark Lemke's star performance in the World Series has brought him a post-season of fame, fortune and headaches.

"I haven't had an hour all month. I'm not used to the attention," Lemke said.

But at least Lemke has earned about \$100,000 for all the post-season attention. Mickie Lemke hasn't earned a dime from it.

Mark Lemke is not listed in the Atlanta telephone book, but Ms. Lemke, a 65-year-old Medicare recipient, is, as M.E. Lemke. She said she's received between 500 and 600 calls during the past year, for the second baseman known as "The Lemmer."

"One day — and this isn't funny — I got 67 calls for him," said Ms. Lemke, who is unrelated to the Braves player. "I got a call at midnight, and I could hear the giggling girls in the background."

Lemke, who lives alone in an apartment in suburban Smyrna, said he's unimpressed by the trappings of stardom. "Autograph appearances, for example, some women have passed him their phone numbers.

PRO HOCKEY

Power Play Powers Caps

Landover, Md. (AP) — Nick Kypreos had two goals for the first time in his career and Washington's top-ranked power play went 4 for 4 as the Capitals beat the New York Islanders 8-5 Wednesday in the National Hockey League.

Derek King had his second hat trick of the season for the Islanders, who scored three times in a span of 2:49 to cut a four-goal deficit to 6-5 with 15:56 left. But Mike Ridley scored just 46 seconds later and added the clincher with 3:34 left.

The victory moved the Capitals two points ahead of the second-place New York Rangers in the Patrick Division. Pierre Turgeon had two goals and two assists for the Islanders.