

Sports

Pre-season questions answered as Huskers defeat Hawkeyes 42-7

By Tad Stryker

One repercussion of Nebraska's 42-7 win against Iowa Saturday in Memorial Stadium is that Hawkeye football fans are already much quieter and more orderly than they were last year.

Revenge, however, was not the Huskers' major motivation going into the game, according to UNL's Jamie Williams and Roger Craig, both Iowa natives.

"The only thing we were worried about was beating them fair and square, and not leaving any doubt, so they wouldn't have any reason to brag about anything," Williams said.

Craig said the most important part of beating the Hawkeyes was just "starting the season off right."

"I don't have anything against Iowa," he said. "They're just another team on our schedule that we have to beat to be number one."

As the Huskers put their first victory into the books, they provided some answers to pre-season questions involving the secondary and the Roger Craig-Mike Rozier offensive backfield experiment.

UNL's young defensive backfield was not exploited. Iowa was held to minus six yards passing in the first half. By that time, the Huskers had a 28-0 lead. Hawkeye quarterbacks ended up completing 10 of 21 passes for 93 yards.

"I think our secondary did a pretty good job," Husker Coach Tom Osborne said.

Defensive end Tony Felici said that before the game, Husker coaches were looking to the line to help the secondary a little.

"We wanted to get a good pass rush to take a little pressure off," Felici said, "but I wasn't worried about them."

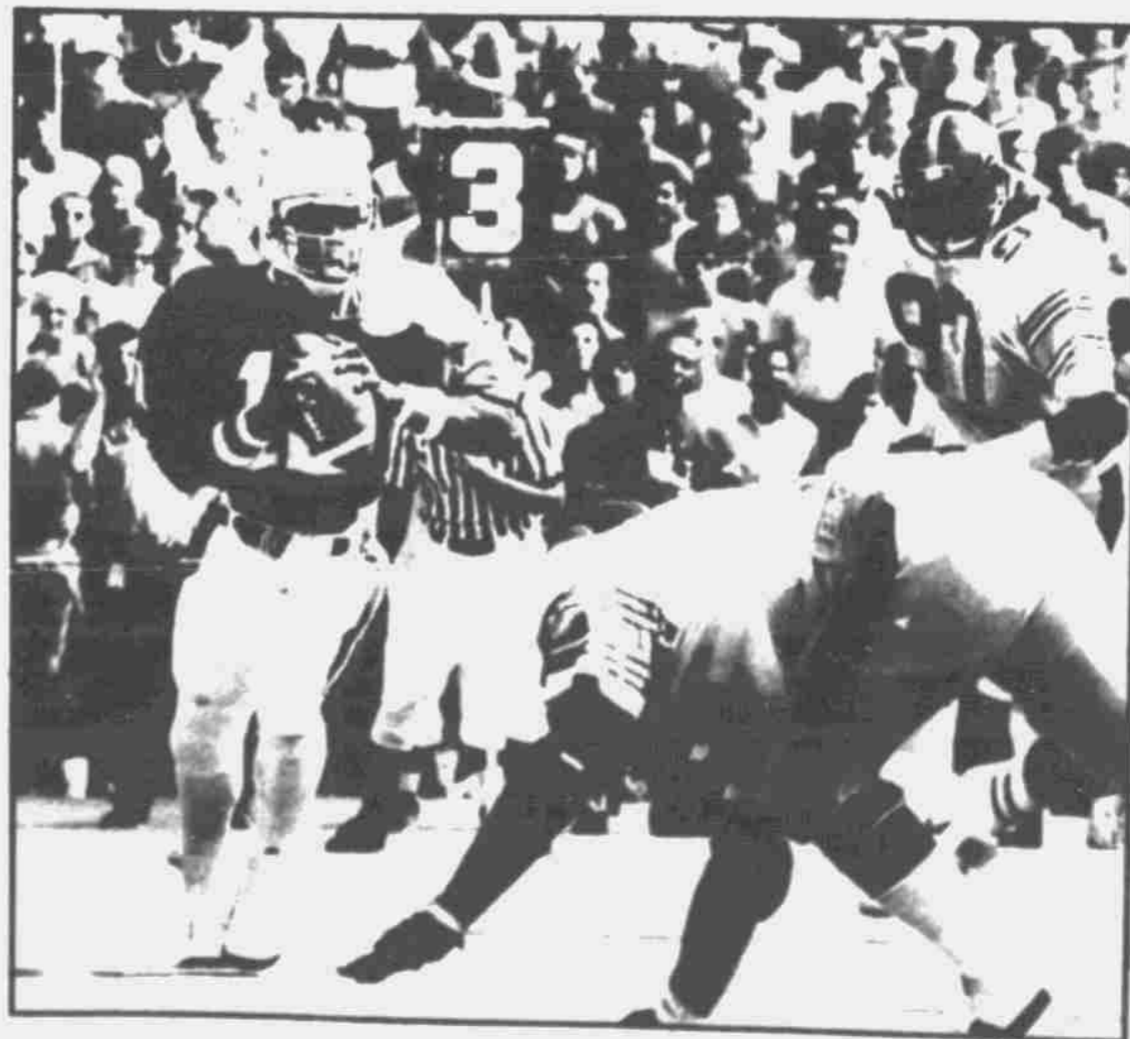
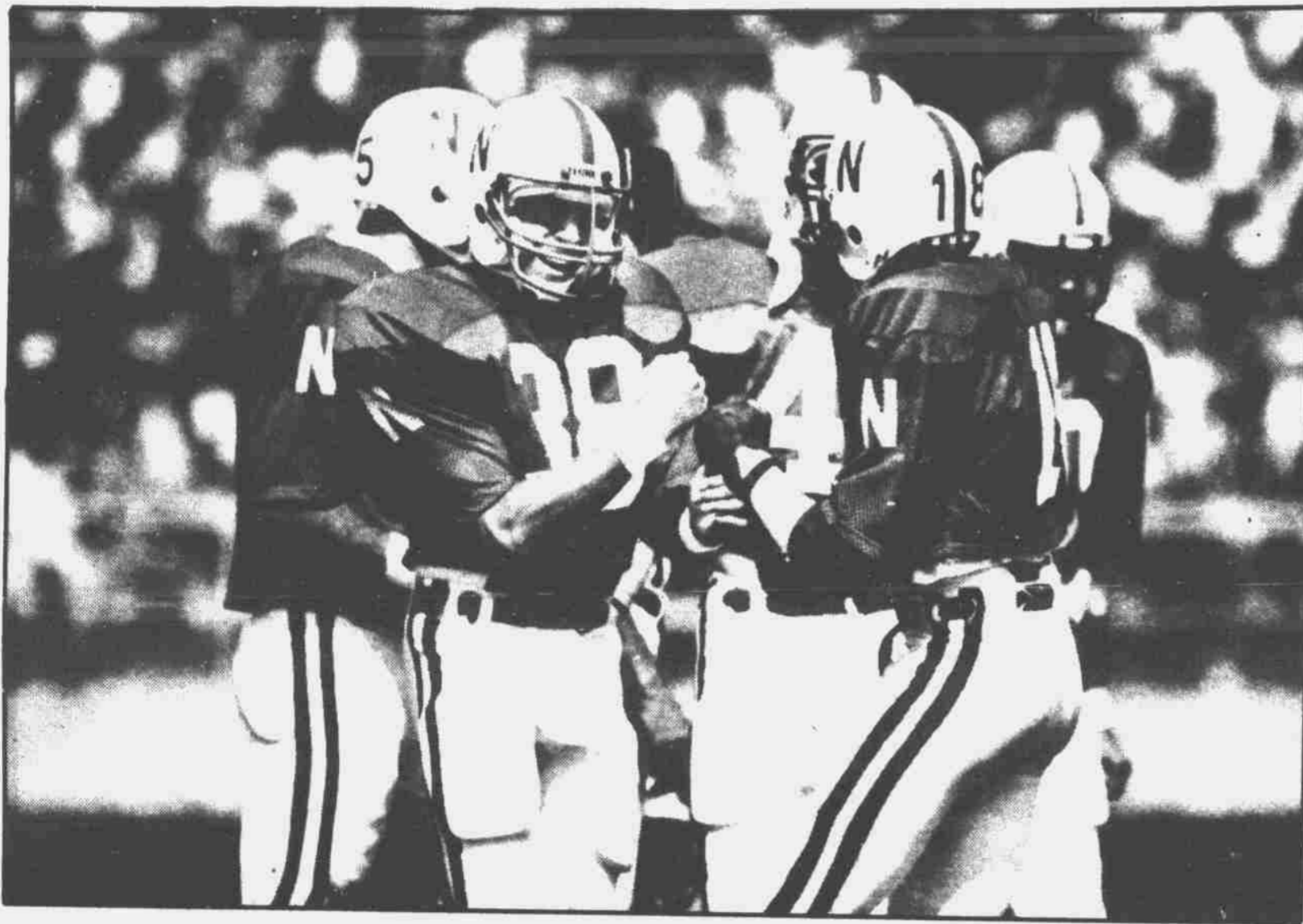
The Husker offense, which unveiled its "weak set" Saturday, now gives future opponents a new dimension to worry about. The formation keeps the fullback directly behind the quarterback, but shifts the I-back to a spot either left or right of the fullback.

Most of Nebraska's 370 rushing yards came from the I, but Craig said the new set can be effective.

"It opens up the passing game more," he said. "It's harder to key on."

Turner Gill provided yet another positive answer to those who still had lingering doubts about how well his leg had healed. Gill was 9-for-16, throwing for 144 yards and two touchdowns.

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Clockwise, starting at top left: Monster Kris Van Norman (38) and left cornerback Allen Lyday (18) confirm each others feelings after a defensive play in Saturday's 42-7 romp against Iowa at Memorial Stadium; Cornhusker quarterback Turner Gill (12) drops back and looks for an open receiver in Saturday's game; Defensive end Tony Felici (46) tries to block a Reggie Roby (7) punt; Van Norman (38) puts a pass rush on Iowa quarterback Chuck Long (16); I-back Jeff Smith (28) heads for the goal line in an 80-yard touchdown run during the fourth quarter. It was the first collegiate touchdown in Smith's career.

Photos by Craig Andresen
and Dave Bentz