

Sports

Huskers escape 'surprise' OSU blitzkrieg

By Jim Rasmussen

The Nebraska Cornhuskers' hard-fought, nail-biting 14-10 victory against the Oklahoma State Cowboys Saturday proved that the Huskers are, indeed, beatable.

It also proved that Sports Illustrated writer Douglas Looney may have been premature in calling the Huskers "the greatest college football team of all time."

But, according to Coach Tom Osborne and the Nebraska players, it also proved that Oklahoma State has a very fine football team.

"I give Oklahoma State a lot of credit," Osborne said. "They played very well and awfully hard. I was impressed with their athletes, especially on defense where their defensive front, linebackers and secondary played very well. It's no surprise that they were 4-0. We were lucky to get out with our skins."

"Those guys were tough," said Irving Fryar, whose 63-yard touchdown catch provided Nebraska's only first-half points. They beat on us pretty good. We've got to get better than this next week."

The Cowboy defense was indeed tough, as they limited the nation's top-ranked offense to only 42 yards rushing and 135 total yards in the first half. The Cowboys came out blitzing, and the strategy worked, as they sacked quarterback Turner Gill four times. Gill hadn't been sacked once this season before the game.

"They surprised us with their blitzes," Gill said. "They hadn't blitzed much all year, so we really weren't ready for it."

Although the Huskers were outgained 227-135 in the first half, they turned the tables in the second half, finishing with 227 total yards, to OSU's 313. Osborne praised his defense for shutting down the Cowboy offense in the second half.

"I thought our defense did a tremendous job," he said. This points up the fact that there are no one-dimensional teams. No offense can't be stopped, and no defense can play without an offense."

Weakside linebacker Mike Knox, who grabbed his fourth interception of the season to stop a first quarter OSU drive, said he thought the defense proved its worth.

"We definitely pointed out to people that we can play with anybody, and I think it will give us a lot of confidence," he said.

Osborne said he thought the punting game was also a positive factor for Nebraska. Scott Livingston, who averaged 40.5 yards on six punts, helped keep Oklahoma State's offense on its end of the field, as two of his punts were downed inside the OSU 10-yard-line.

The mood in the Nebraska locker room was one of relief. Several players said they thought the experience of being in a close game would help the team.

"Everyone's been saying we were unbeatable, and we wanted a close game like this," Osborne said.

"We knew it would be a tough game, and we really hung together as a team" tight end Todd Frain said.

Frain scored the winning points on a 32-yard pass from Gill early in the third quarter. It was the second touchdown of the year for the second-team sophomore. He also caught a touchdown pass against Penn State.

"I'm not surprised," he said. "Teams



A Thousand Words

These photos pretty much tell the story of Nebraska's 1983 sojourn to Stillwater, Okla. Top, Turner Gill loses one of five Husker fumbles for the day. Left, Dave Ridder nails Oklahoma State quarterback Rusty Hilger as the defense rose to save the day.

Staff photos by John Zoz

are always keyin' on Turner, Mike and Irving, and that leaves me wide open."

A disappointed bunch of Oklahoma State Cowboys said they weren't intimidated by Nebraska.

"We knew we could take them coming into the game," said defensive tackle Leslie O'Neal. "We feel proud, but it really takes something out of you when you come that close to a victory."

"They are definitely beatable," quarterback Ike Jackson said. "They have a good physical ball club, but I don't think they are as good as everyone made them up to be."

OSU coach Jimmy Johnson praised his team.

"I'm proud of our team," he said. "They fought hard. We wanted to win and we felt like we had it won. Nebraska has a big, strong, physical, talented team, and they wore us down, but our guys kept fighting."

Nebraska dominated the line of scrimmage in the second half, and had several excellent chances to score, but fumbles and interceptions kept the Huskers out of the end zone.

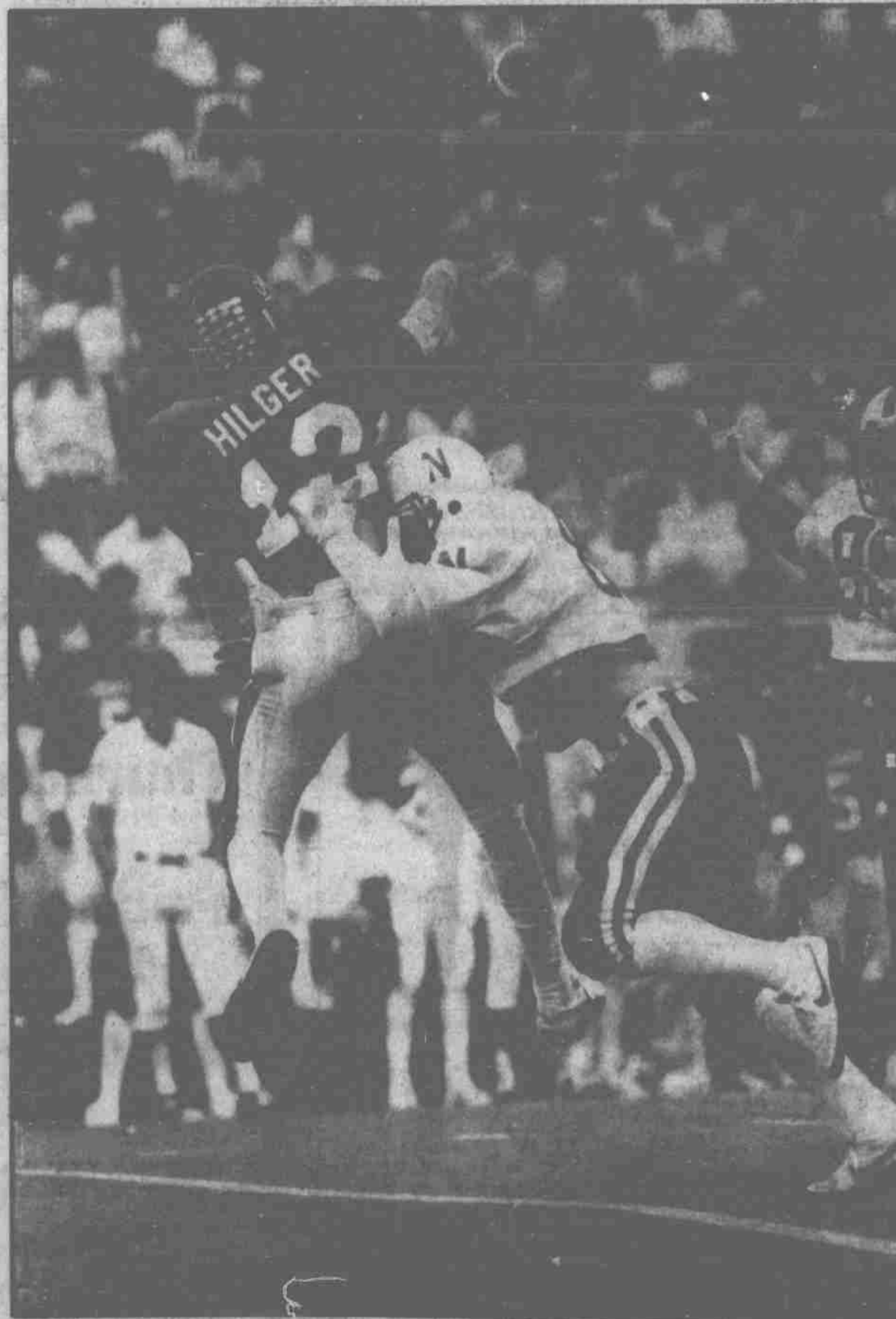
At times, Oklahoma State played better, but I thought we played better in the second half," Osborne said. "We just kept dropping the ball."

Heisman trophy candidate Mike Rozier, who fumbled near the goal line late in the third quarter, showed Heisman talent as he banged his way for 146 yards on 25 carries, but he said the offensive turnovers bothered him.

"We made a lot of mistakes, and it almost cost us the ball game," Rozier said.

Rozier, who suffered leg cramps during the game, and Fryar, who suffered a strained knee, both said they were sore, but would be all right for the Missouri game this Saturday in Columbia.

Saturday's game marked the first time the Huskers had failed to score a rushing touchdown since the fourth game of the 1980 season, an 18-14 loss to Florida State.



Low sportsmanship marks team from finals

Sunday's scheduled UNL Co-Rec flag football championship game between the Free Agents and Harvey Smithers was never played. The Free Agents were declared champions when Harvey Smithers was disqualified Friday afternoon.

Harvey Smithers were disqualified because the 2.4 sportsmanship mark they received for their Thursday night 35-20 semifinal victory against Tau Kappa

Epsilon and its little sisters, did not meet the minimum score (2.5) necessary to continue playing in the playoffs.

The sportsmanship mark is a rating given to each team for its behavior during a game that has UNL recreation department officials.

Each team receives a zero to five mark from each official, a recreation department supervisor, and

the opposing team's captain. These scores are then averaged.

Kenda Schelle, coordinator of intramurals, said although other teams have been disqualified for sportsmanship marks, this marked the first time in the two-year history of the rating system that a team has been disqualified from playing in a final.

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