

Super sophomore sails in early grid battles

by JIM JOHNSTON
Nebraska's Johnny Rodgers — he's really something to watch.

And watching the Cornhusker super sophomore was a special treat in Nebraska's 28-0 romp over Army at Memorial Stadium Saturday. But why all the excitement? Weren't his credentials from Omaha Tech an indication of things to expect?

"You can't go on past performances," explained Rodgers who pranced 38 yards on a punt return to set up Nebraska's second touchdown. "Old newspaper articles are just clippings — people want to see what you can do now."

And Johnny Rodgers showed the 66,928 paying customers what he can now do in a Cornhusker uniform. The Nebraska flanker caught two touchdown strikes from Jerry Tagge and turned in a dazzling punt return.

But Saturday's game was not entirely a red-letter day for Rodgers — especially when it came to catching punts. He bobbled two punts, one which was recovered by Army, early in the game when the Huskers' offense had trouble getting untracked.

"I wasn't feeling well in the first half," said Rodgers in reference to a nervous stomach.

Rodgers admits that catching punts is a big reason for his nervousness. "I hate to call for a fair catch," explained Rodgers, "because everybody is just standing around watching you. I get nervous and I'm afraid I'll drop it."

But whatever Rodgers feels when catching punts, he surely must forget when catching passes. The Husker flanker totaled 101 yards in pass receiving which included 43 and 26-yard touchdown bombs from Tagge.

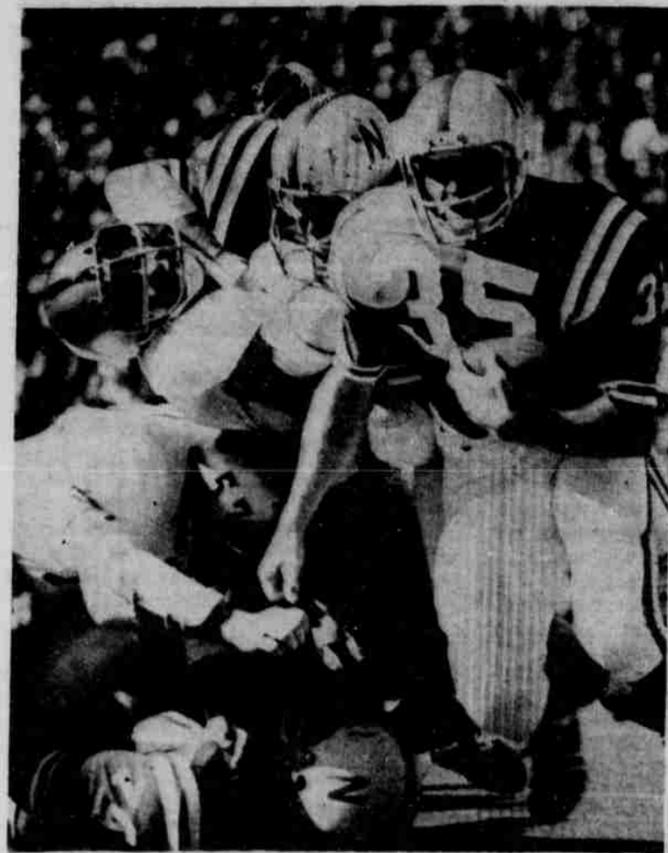
Johnny was visited in the Husker locker room by his 13-year-old brother, Ed. The younger Rodgers, who like his brother adds a smile with everything he says, isn't unfamiliar with football fame.

He was selected as defensive back of the week in his Boys' Club at Omaha this year. "I never returned a punt like Johnny did today," Ed noted, "but I intercepted a pass for a touchdown."

That same Boys' Club is where Johnny got his start. "I'm sort of like a Boys' Club alumnus," said the Husker sophomore, "I really get a lot of help from those people back there."

There's a sign hanging in the Omaha Boys' Club that reads, "John Rodgers says you can do it too — stay in school."

And John Rodgers has done it. He's taken only three games to prove his value to the Cornhuskers.



KINNEY FINDS ROOM — Nebraska I-back Jeff Kinney finds running room over right guard as Donnie McGhee (bottom of pile) opens a hole. Nebraska defeated Army 28-0 Saturday.

Knights still proud after Husker blitz

by ROGER RIFE
Associate Sports Editor

"Nebraska will have to play a lot harder if they are going to beat teams like Missouri."

That comment was made by Army's defensive end John Roth following Nebraska's 28-0 victory Saturday. "I wasn't hit hard at all" said the 6'2" 202 lb. Roth. "We went into the game looking for them to run, and they hit us with passes."

Roth was impressed with the running of Husker halfback Joe Orduna. "He's quick and runs good," admitted Roth.

He attributed the long third quarter punt return of Johnny Rodgers as being the play that gave Nebraska momentum.

While Roth was not impressed by the Huskers, teammate Bob Coonan was. "They were

definitely up for us," Coonan said, "and we were expecting them to run right over us."

Coonan, Army's defensive signal caller, also had praise for Husker halfback Joe Orduna. "Orduna is an all-around good player," he said. "He blocks good and runs well."

The Black Knights defensive halfback, Danton Steele felt Nebraska played like Army expected them to. "They ran pretty much what we thought they would run," said Steele.

According to Steele, Army didn't play Nebraska any differently than other teams that they have played. "We didn't double team anyone," he said, "we just went out to play some tough football."

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