

ISU humbles Huskers, 23-23

by Jim Johnston

AMES, Iowa—Nebraska's football team did not need reminding of the closing minute against Iowa State Saturday when the Cyclones marched 74 yards in 35 seconds to earn a 23-23 tie with the No. 2-rated Cornhuskers.

Head coach Bob Devaney had just told the players how he felt. "I've never been so disgusted with a Nebraska team in a long time," Devaney said. "There's no way you should get beat on a long pass when you're in a prevent defense. They looked like a bunch of farmers out on a picnic waiting for somebody to serve lunch."

The Huskers could not avoid reminders of that closing minute when Cyclone quarterback George Amundson lofted a 24-yard touchdown pass to flanker Willie Jones who had gained a step on cornerback Randy Borg in the corner of the endzone.

Even when the players had finished talking with the press, they still couldn't escape that final minute. The radio in the Huskers' chartered yellow school bus provided a play-by-play of the closing minute as the Nebraska team started its trip to the Des Moines airport.

"Hey, bus driver, can't you find a station with some music?" said Johnny Rodgers. "We're a little sick of listening to football scores."

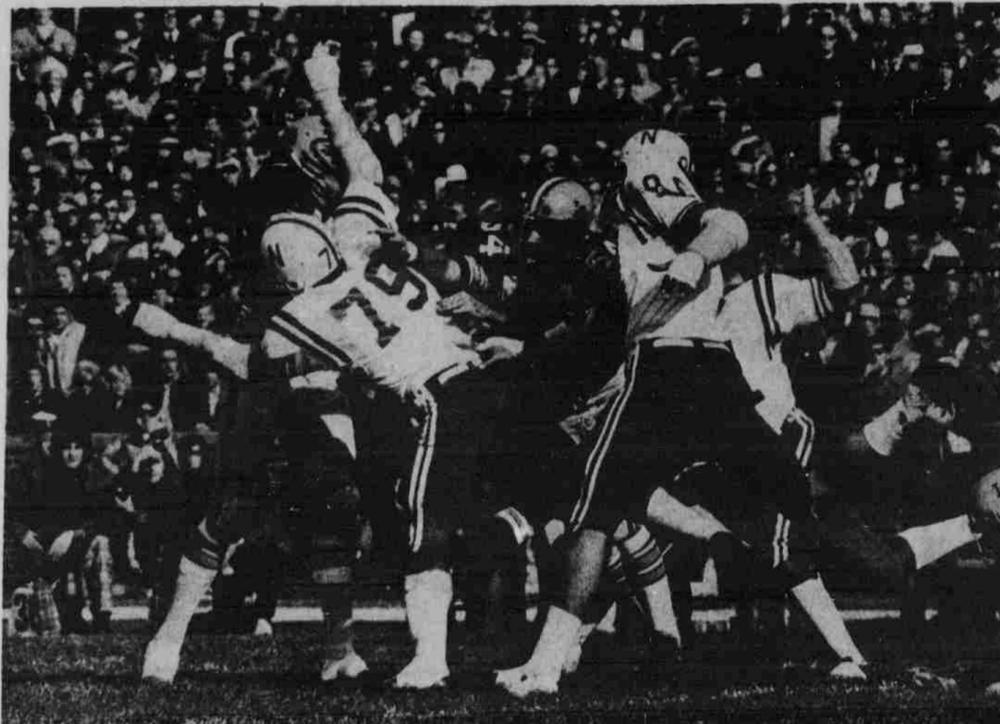
The driver switched stations. But his selection was poor. The football team listened to the tune "It's Over."

And, according to most Nebraska football players, that hope for a third straight national championship is over.

"Winning a third straight national championship was a far-fetched dream after losing to UCLA," Husker Co-captain Doug Dumler said, "but after we came back so strong we felt we had a real chance to do it. Now we really blew it."

Devaney couldn't account for the Huskers' eight turnovers... six fumbles and two interceptions. And the fact that Iowa State kicker Tom Goedjen missed the extra point to give the Huskers a tie provided Devaney with little consolation.

"I guess it's better than losing," Devaney said, "but it still doesn't make me feel much better. I don't know what the hell you can say about the way we played. I just can't condone those damn fool mistakes."



Amundson . . . completes pass despite pressure from Rich Glover (79) and John Dutton.

Although Nebraska had played its poorest game of the season, it appeared late in the contest that the Huskers had pulled it out.

Quarterback David Humm hit Rodgers on a 35-yard scoring pass with 8:08 remaining to give Nebraska a 20-17 lead. Iowa State fumbled on its next offensive series and Nebraska had the ball on the Iowa State 35 with 3:49 left.

After a fourth-down play on which Gary Dixon picked up a first down at the five-yard-line, the Huskers were called for illegal motion. Nebraska

settled for a 36-yard field goal by Rich Sanger and a 23-17 lead with 1:03 remaining.

But the nation's No. 1 defense failed to hold the Cyclones. Amundson completed passes of 12, 18 and 20 yards to setup the scoring toss to Jones.

One play during that final drive—where Huskers were called for illegal procedure when they jumped across the line—was questioned by Devaney.

"I don't see how we could be offside the way their right guard moved," Devaney said. "I've always been told if the offensive lineman moves you can hit him." Devaney registered his complaints of the officiating and the condition of the field to the Big Eight Commissioner Charles Neinas when they met in the Nebraska dressing room.

"There's no reason that there wasn't a tarp placed on that field," Devaney said. "It's bad for both teams. There's no excuse for that."

Husker tight end Jerry List had a private complaint. He claimed that on the last play of the game when Humm tossed a desperation pass, one official had called an interference penalty on an Iowa State defender.

"He threw the flag and then I asked him if the penalty was on Iowa State," List said. "The official nodded his head. Then people started running on to the field and the official picked up his flag and left the field."

But those complaints will not improve Nebraska's record. The Cornhuskers stand 7-1-1 on the season. They are still the only undefeated team in Big Eight Conference action, but most think their chances for a third straight national championship would take an uncommonly bizarre string of upsets before it can be seriously considered.



Mike Strachan . . . moves through Black Shirts for 85 yards.

Big Red may still get orange invitation

by Jim Johnston

Nebraska's 23-23 tie with Iowa State hasn't lowered the Orange Bowl's opinion about the Cornhuskers, according to Jim Llewellyn of the Orange Bowl Committee who watched Saturday's game in Ames, Iowa.

"We feel that Nebraska just had an off day on a field which was in terrible shape," Llewellyn said in a telephone conversation from his Miami residence Sunday afternoon. "The fact that Nebraska managed a tie after having eight turnovers shows that they are a strong football team."

Bowl bids will be extended Saturday at 6 p.m. after Nebraska plays Kansas State. The Orange Bowl committee will meet this afternoon to map its strategy.

"I don't know how much will be decided at this meeting," Llewellyn said. "I'm sure we'll give a bid Saturday before the Nebraska-Oklahoma game. We are definitely interested in a Big Eight team and Nebraska's tie with Iowa State hasn't changed my opinion about Nebraska."

Alabama, which scored a 35-21 win over LSU Saturday, has apparently assured itself of a second straight Orange Bowl invitation. The Crimson Tide stands 9-0 on the season and meets Virginia Tech Saturday.

"I can't say that Alabama is going to get an invitation," Llewellyn said, "but we've definitely been impressed by that team."

Nebraska still appears to be the No. 1 choice to represent the Big Eight in the Orange Bowl. The Husker's tie with Iowa State did not discourage the Orange Bowl Committee and Oklahoma's 17-6 win over Missouri did little to enhance the Sooners' hopes for a winter vacation in Miami Beach.

There are only three undefeated major college football teams remaining—USC, Alabama and Michigan. USC and Michigan can play only in the Rose Bowl, leaving Alabama for the Orange Bowl invitation.

Nebraska, which was rated second before tying with Iowa State, will probably remain in the top five this week.