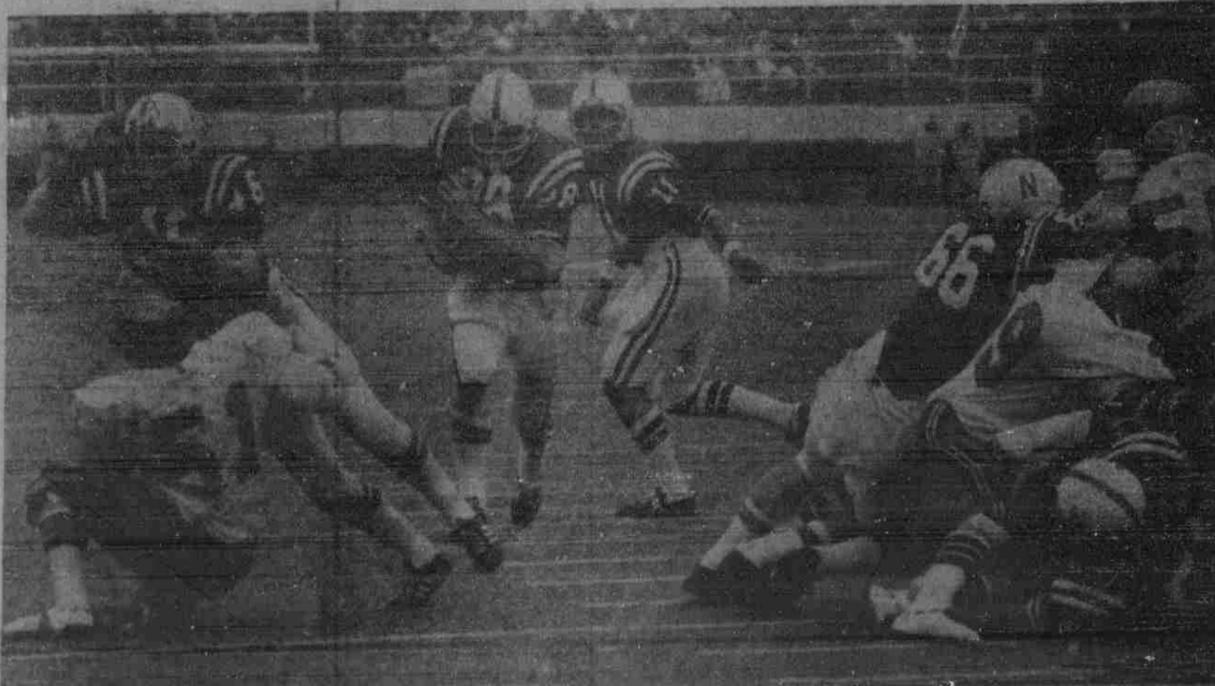


daily nebraskan sports



Gary Higgs and Nick Zanetich create a mammoth hole for Dave Gillespie during Nebraska's 54-0 thumping of Minnesota Saturday.

Gophers held to three first downs

Husker blackshirts record shutout

Analysis by Steve Taylor

When Minnesota's shapely cheerleaders were pressed for their predictions Saturday they were understandably hesitant, but finally agreed on a narrow Gopher win.

However, as the four wandered off to initiate another cheer, one of the sockless girls looked back and whispered, "Nebraska by three touchdowns."

As it turned out, even this sincere estimate of the Nebraska victory margin was not enough, as the Huskers blitzed her gophers, 54-0.

Nebraska's blackshirts recorded their first shutout of the season, rendering Minnesota immobile during their three-quarter stint. The Gophers finished with only three first downs.

Humm breaks record

The Huskers grabbed the opening kickoff (actually Westbrook and Bahe wrestled with it) and marched

85 yards to score. This time-consuming drive gobbled up 21 more yards than the Gophers could muster all day. Tony Davis got the TD on David Humm's record-breaking 33rd scoring pass.

Minnesota's defense then temporarily tightened and the Huskers were held to a 6-0 first quarter lead.

Soon afterward the dam that limited Ohio St. to 34 points burst and Nebraska rolled to three second quarter touchdowns.

At halftime the score was 26-0 and a disheartened Minnesota scribe sighed, "I wish I was home."

The touchdown that buried the Golden gophers came midway through the second quarter when freshman Monte Anthony eluded a string of tacklers and romped to a 48-yard score.

Anthony, who is making a serious bid for the starting I-back

job, rushed 86 yards in only 8 carries.

Second half exciting

The second half was equally as exciting (or appalling if you were wearing gold) as the first, with the Huskers racking up four more touchdowns.

One of them came on a 66-yard bomb from Earl Everett to Chuck (the mosquito) Malito.

"I was wondering if he was ever going to throw it," Malito later commented. "I've been thinking about this one for a long time."

Another long Husker score resulted when slippery Jim Burrow zipped 67 yards with a punt.

Nebraska's total offensive output for the day was 524 yards.

In the Minnesota lockerroom a few Gopher players forwarded their opponents a begrudging respect, while others hinted they would hope for nothing but the worst for Big Red.

Minnesota coach puts foot in mouth

Nobody can blame one specific factor when your football team gets beat 54-0.

Likewise, Minnesota coach Cai Stoll didn't give any one factor as being the cause of his team's 54-0 loss to UNL Saturday.

However, a couple of the things the Gopher coach said gives one the irresistible urge to send him a pacifier so Stoll has something to put in his mouth other than his foot the next time his team gets beat.

For example, Stoll said, "We didn't have the right kind of shoes," and added, "Nebraska's turf doesn't seem to hold as well as the longer and thicker turf back home."

Stoll then added, "But that's the advantage of playing at home."

Wet field

Granted, the field was wet. It's obvious the slippery field caused Gopher running backs to fall down a few times during the game.

However, through most of the game, Stoll's troops didn't get much of a chance to maneuver as Husker defensive linemen were as much a part of their backfield as the quarterback.

Next, Stoll threw out this gem,

"We had a freshman team playing a five-year team and we just couldn't handle them. Look how old they are. They belong in the NFL."

Larry Stunkel on record

The statement, while an obvious jab at Nebraska's red-shirting practice, was a dangerous generalization. Granted, Nebraska's offensive line is largely fifth-year seniors. However, Stoll's line only had one athlete that wasn't either a junior or senior, plus the fact that the quarterback was the only freshman on his "freshman team."

Age difference no excuse

Going further, Nebraska had two sophomores on their defensive team, as did Minnesota. While there was an age difference, it was a poor excuse. In fact, Nebraska's younger second and third teams continued to move downfield on offense and contain Minnesota on

defense.

Stoll was also disgruntled about Jim Burrow's 67-yard punt return in the third quarter. His complaint was that his punter Frank Mason was roughed on the play by Husker end Dave Redding.

While his gripe may have been legitimate, Stoll should have mourned his overall punt coverage which, on the basis of two other returns that Burrow almost broke, was poor.

Blackshirts 'fired up'

Husker fans can take comfort that one of Stoll's statements did get him in trouble.

Earlier in the week, Stoll said Nebraska's defense is a shade worse than last year's. That comment went up on a bulletin board in the Husker's locker room and, according to defensive coordinator Monte Kiffin, helped fire up the blackshirts.

Overall, Stoll didn't seem to want to admit he was beaten by a better ball club. People could talk forever on how things might have been different if this or that would have been a certain way.

But when you get beat 54-0, you've been beaten, period.

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