



Photo by Steve Boerner

Husker coaches Monte Kiffin (right) and Bill Myles discuss defensive strategy during Saturday's Indiana game.

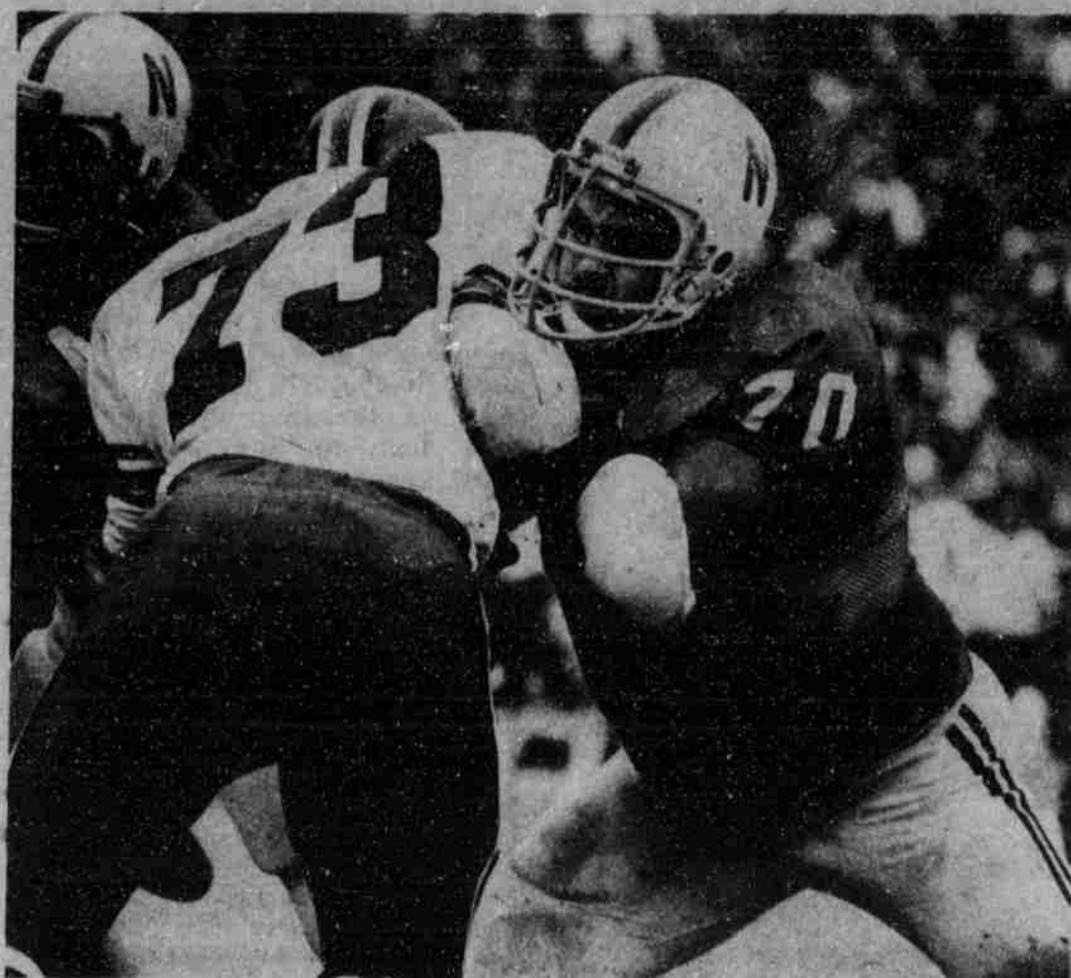


Photo by Kevin Higley

Bob Lingenfelter (70) squares off with Hoosier Clifton Payne (73) during a game after which Husker coach Tom Osborne praised the offensive line's improvement.

Osborne; NU aerial game improved

By Bob Barney

The UNL football team takes the field today against a number one team in the nation. But unlike the top ten in which the Huskers are rated fourth, Texas Christian University (TCU) is the top ranked team in the nation's bottom ten, a syndicated feature by Steve Harvey.

Even though TCU (0-2), holds this dubious distinction, they are capable of beating people as Nebraska head coach Tom Osborne noted last Monday. "If we leave the ball on the ground against a passing team who might get a hot hand we could be in for a long afternoon," he said.

The Horned Frogs threw the ball 46 times against Arizona State last week.

Nebraska might be encouraged to throw more also. Starting quarterback Terry Luck, who after a sporadic performance against Louisiana State, came back and performed well last Saturday against Indiana. The senior hit on seven of 12 passes for 138 yards against the Hoosiers.

Osborne encouraged

Osborne also is encouraged with the return of transfer quarterback Vince Ferragamo. After sitting out a first game suspension, Ferragamo came off the bench against Indiana in the third quarter and led the Huskers to a touchdown in his first action in more than a year.

"I think we have two Big 8 caliber quarterbacks," Osborne said. "In fact, the Indiana game gave us confidence in our back up people."

Confidence abounds at the fullback position where sophomore Dodle Donnell and junior Gary Higgs backed-up starter Tony Davis admirably. Donnell picked up 21 yards against the Hoosiers, while Higgs gained 38 yards compared with Davis's 63 yards.

John O'Leary heads the I-back corps after a fine showing against Indiana last Saturday. The senior picked up 88 yards on 17 carries.

Sophomore Monte Anthony moves up to second string for today's game after a 50 yard showing last Saturday.

Thomas leads receivers

Split end Bobby Thomas leads the receivers for the Huskers. The junior caught two passes last week, including a sensational catch with just 20 seconds left in the opening half for the Huskers' third touchdown. In two games so far the Bridgeport Pa. native has caught six passes, and scored two touchdowns.

Thomas also has sparkled on punt returns. He leads the Big 8 in punt returns, averaging more than 12 yards on nine returns.

Osborne has been pleased with his special teams' performances. "Punt plays involve 40 to 60 yards, while the average scrimmage play is only three or four. The kicking game has a great effect on field position."

Good field position

Nebraska has received good field position on punts, having 167 return yards, while holding opponents to zero.

"While most people talk only of our offense or defense, we feel there are three equal phases to football," Osborne said.

Osborne, however, has been less than satisfied with the Huskers kick-off coverage. The kick-off team has surrendered 140 yards on seven kicks. He indicated changes will be made to get more speed in the game.

Defensively, the Huskers will put some impressive credentials on the line against TCU.

The blackshirts have given up an average

of 147 total yards per game (94 on the ground and 53 through the air).

Fultz leader

Mike Fultz, junior defensive tackle, leads the Huskers in tackles for losses with five. He was praised along with middle guard John Lee and defensive end Bob Martin by Osborne for their performances against Indiana.

Lee leads the team in tackles with 17, while Martin has thrown opponents three times for losses totaling a team leading 24

yards.

The linebackers, junior Cletus Pillen and sophomore Jim Wightman are still making mistakes, according to Osborne but, he said, "They're making up for their mistakes with aggressiveness."

The Huskers' secondary will probably be in for a busy afternoon if the Frog's game plan follows that of their first two games. The defensive backs held the Big 10's leading passer, Terry Jones, to just 23 yards passing and the Hoosiers to 28 total.



Photo by Kevin Higley

Husker I-back Monte Anthony (49) skirts around Indiana's Dan Zarlingo en route to his second of two touchdowns Saturday.