

Kiss Miami goodbye — again, OU beats UNL 38-7

Norman, Okla.—Tom Osborne may be to college football what Sisyphus is to Greek legend.

According to legend, Sisyphus was condemned forever to roll a huge stone up a hill only to have it roll down again when nearing the top. Like Sisyphus, head coach Osborne rolled his team near the top of the Big 8 Conference and the Orange Bowl Classic, this year as in past years, only to be flattened in the last game by the University of Oklahoma (OU). The legend lives on.

OU rolled to a 38-7 victory Friday in handing Osborne the greatest loss of his five-year coaching career at UNL. Costly mistakes and poor field position plagued UNL early and forced the team from the game plan, according to Osborne.

"They whipped us in every phase of the game," Osborne said after the loss. "When you get down 14-0 it's hard to stay with the basics. We had to throw more and then we didn't have the ball that much. If you're driven out of your basic approach, it's tough to come back."

The Sooners, third in the nation in rushing offense, ran for 417 yards against UNL. The Huskers had been fourth in the nation going into the game but could manage only 190 yards on the ground against OU.

Offense control

"Their offensive line really blew us off the ball," Osborne said. "They were making four and five yards a play. Their offense physically controlled the line of scrimmage so they controlled the ball."

OU quarterback Thomas Lott led the Sooner attack with 143 yards rushing and one touchdown. Halfback Elvis Peacock added 123 yards and two scores for OU.

Nebraska I-back I.M. Hipp, who had been averaging 126 yards per game rushing, could get only 33 yards against the stiff Sooner defense. Backup Rick Berns ran for 36 yards.

"A lot of the loss was due to personnel," Osborne said. "Lott made some big plays and they have some fine linebackers. And Zac Henderson (OU defensive back) is a fine player."

Henderson intercepted two UNL passes. Lott was named offensive player-of-the-game by ABC-TV and the defensive honor went to OU noseguard Reggie Kinlaw.

Osborne said he felt UNL would have to score "four or five times to win. We couldn't afford to play with mistakes. They didn't have any though, and we did."

UNL lost two fumbles and had three interceptions against OU. But Osborne credited the Sooners for their dominance of the game.

Good team

"They're an awfully good team," he said. "They're as good as any team I've seen at Oklahoma. They have great quickness on defense and in the latter part of the season their offense has played real well. They have great people. They just outplayed us."

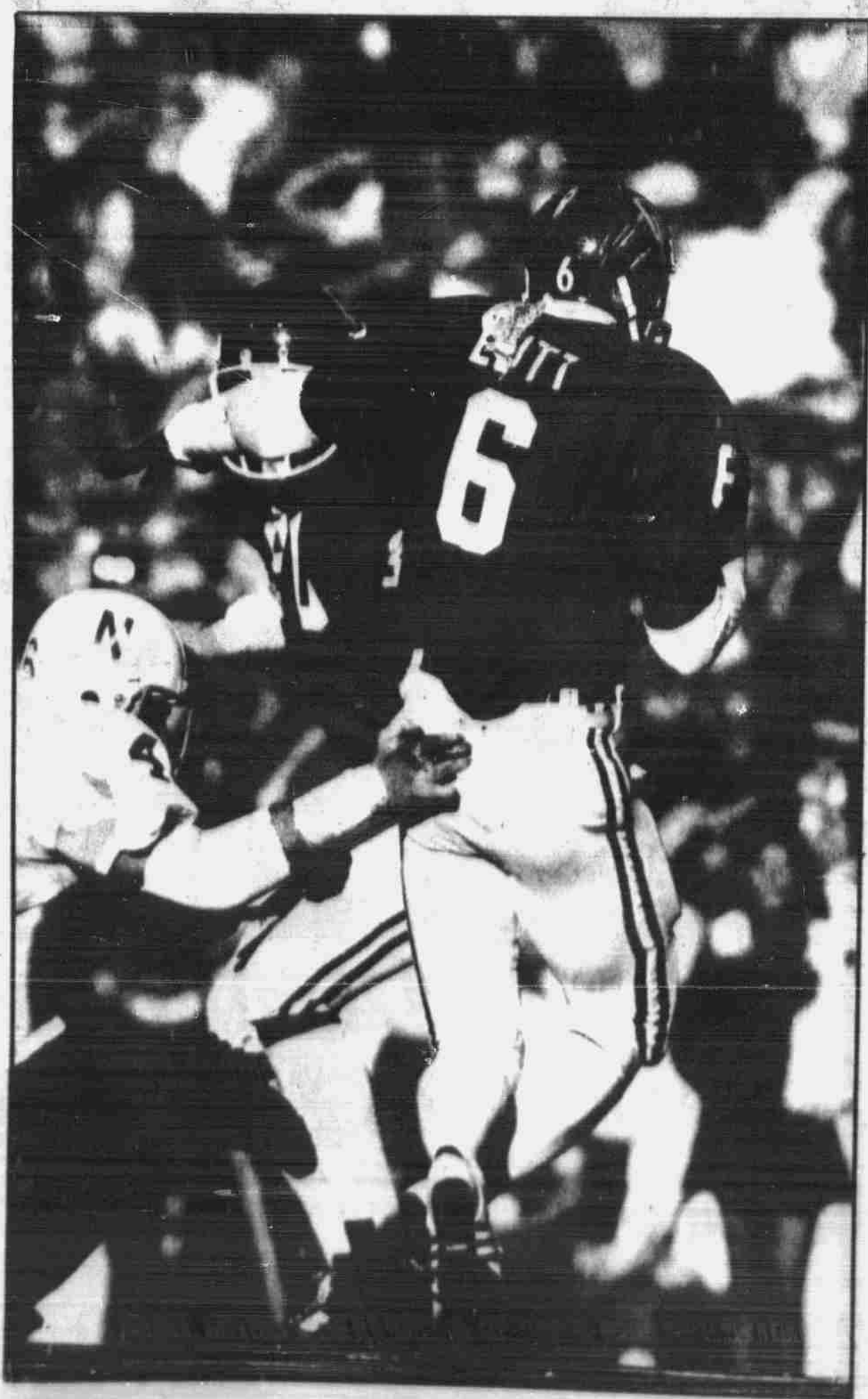
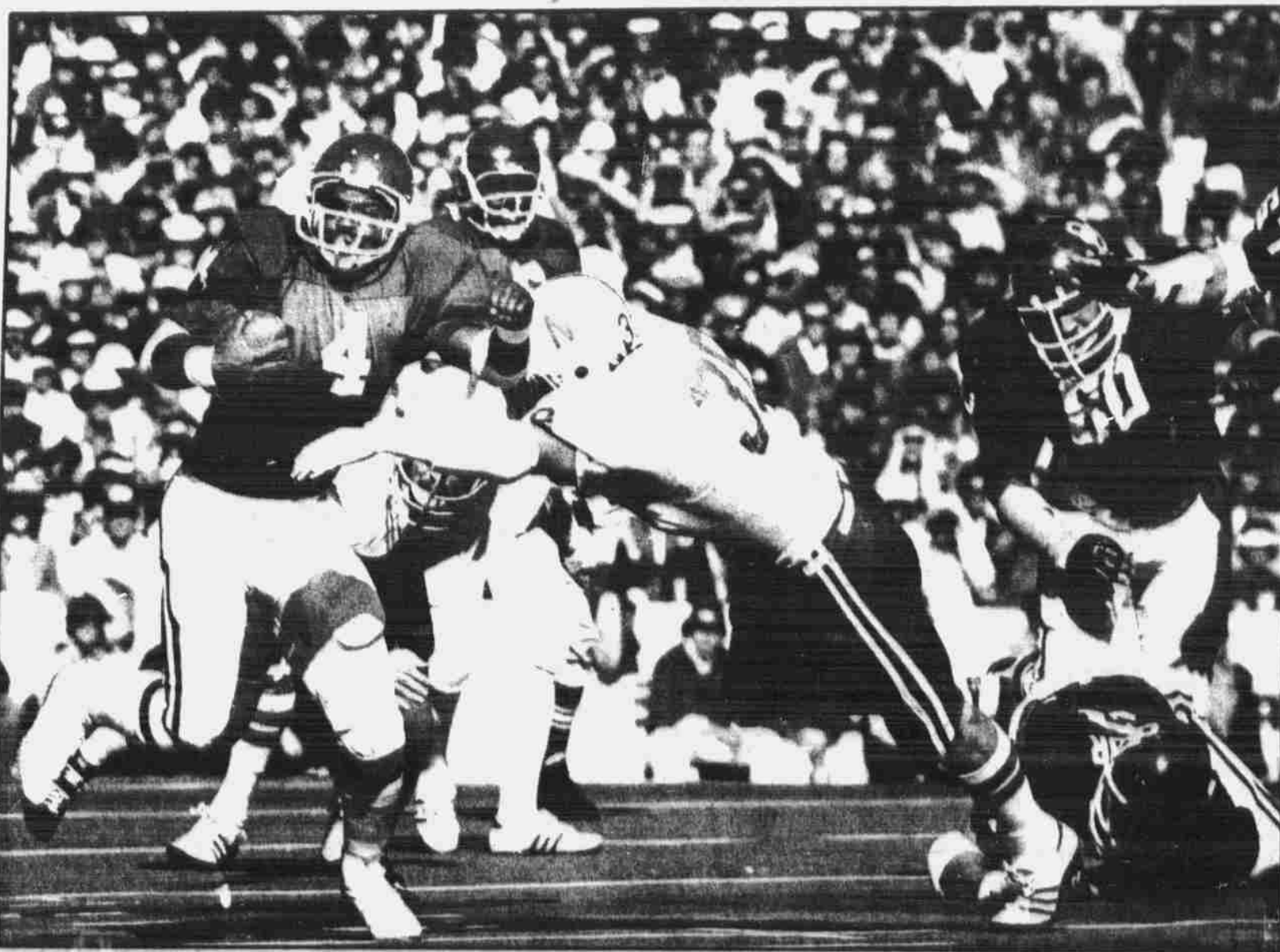
The loss will send the Huskers to Memphis Dec. 19 to play the University of North Carolina in the Liberty

Bowl. The Sooners will play the University of Arkansas in the Orange Bowl Jan. 2.

Osborne said it was a tough way to end the season for the Huskers but added he expected his team to bounce back in the Liberty Bowl.

"This is not going to help much," he said, "but we've come back before. I think we'll play real well down there."

North Carolina finished on top of the Atlantic Coast Conference this season with a 5-0-1 league record and 8-2-1 overall.



Story by Jim Kay
Photos by Ted Kirk