



Photo by Ted Kirk

OU's 'big plays' not enough to stop Husker defense

By Kevin Schnepf

Oklahoma fullback Kenny King sat, squatted and even ran sometimes Saturday afternoon in Memorial Stadium. Coping with the boisterous noise offered by the 76,000 red-clad fans, King once squatted down casually near the 40-yard line as the officials were stepping off a penalty. Another time, while his defensive teammates were battling the Nebraska offensive line, King sat on the bench, isolated from everyone else.

But when the Sooners were lined up on their one yard line and behind 17-14 late in the fourth quarter, King's calm, cool and collected squat seemed out of place. The Sooners needed 23 yards for a first down on their next third-down play. King got up, joined the huddle and seconds later sliced through the Nebraska defense for 47 yards. A typical clutch play performed by the Sooners—especially against Big Eight rival Nebraska.

Too short to repeat

But the Sooner's last drive fell short of history repeating itself by three yards. Heisman candidate halfback Billy Sims ran 17 yards when he was hit by Jeff Hansen, fumbled, and lost the ball to Jim Pillen. The Huskers were saved and for the first time in six years, both Husker players and fans realized the game, the Big Eight Championship and the Orange Bowl trip was theirs.

Oklahoma, a team used to beating Nebraska on last ditch efforts and errorless performances, fumbled nine times, losing six of them. Meanwhile, Nebraska, noted for folding to Oklahoma in the fourth

quarter, contained OU's offense enough for the offense to effectively use their "up-the-middle" strategy.

'Fumbles beat us'

"We lost two possessions in the fourth quarter that were sure field goals. Fumbles took them away," OU head coach Barry Switzer said. "The fumbles beat us. Nebraska is a great team but you don't fumble nine times against them and expect to win."

"Nebraska's defense won them the game and they know it," Switzer added.

Although the total offensive statistics were close, (361 yards for Nebraska and 339 for OU), Nebraska's defense prevented OU from controlling the game. The Huskers held the ball 33 minutes 56 seconds while the Sooners had it for 26 minutes 4 seconds.

Running right at the Oklahoma defense was Nebraska's strategy and, according to OU linebacker, George Cumby, it worked. Cumby said the most potent weapon Nebraska had to offer was fullback Andra Franklin, running pop plays up the middle.

Pop plays hard to stop

"We worked on what they did but their pop plays were hard to stop and we didn't adjust right," Cumby said. "The I-formation is the best way to run those pops and it's hard for a linebacker to ready because the back sees the hole and makes the first move."

Franklin, who wound up with 68 yards rushing, said that running up the middle against a team like OU would open things up.

"We planned to run up the middle," he said. "Oklahoma is fast in pursuit so we

planned to run up the middle and soften up their defense. The offensive line controlled their defense and the game."

When Oklahoma was making its final drive, which was reminiscent of the 1976 20-17 win in Lincoln, the OU offense appeared in control until Sims fumbled. But Bill Barnett and Rod Horn, NU defensive linemen were confident they would hold OU.

Breakaway team

"They're (OU) just that type of team," Barnett said. "They're a breakaway team and able to move down the field quickly. But, we were still confident that we could hold them."

"Like any other game, we kept calm and didn't panic," Horn said. "Like the Colorado game, we were down but we knew what we had to do and we did it."

For Nebraska head coach Tom Osborne, Saturday's nationally televised game marked his first victory over Oklahoma as a head coach.

"I'm elated but also relieved," Osborne said. "Late in the game things just weren't going too well for us. It almost seemed like it (a victory) wasn't meant to be."

Victory made better

Osborne said the player's ability to overcome two turnovers and two disputed rulings by the officials made the victory even better.

ABC television named running back Richard Berns the offensive player of the game with 113 yards rushing and named Jim Pillen the defensive player of the game. Pillen had eight tackles and two fumble recoveries.

Although it is almost assured that Ne-

braska will represent the Big Eight in the Orange Bowl, the Orange Bowl selection committee will make its decision today.

"As far as I'm concerned, I'm going to be pretty mad if they wait another week to decide a formula," Osborne said.

sports short

The Sports Center tennis courts will be open for students and faculty members beginning Saturday, Nov. 18 and Sunday, Nov. 19.

The courts will be available from 1 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturday and from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Sunday. The fee will be \$2 for students and \$4 for faculty members per court for one hour.

Students and faculty members can sign for courts with Marge Neberman, Room 107G, at the Sports Center from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Locker room speeches: goin' to the beach

By Jim Kay
Sports editor

Senior cornerback Tim Fischer was weaving his way through the pandemonium that prevailed in the Nebraska locker room following the win over Oklahoma.

"We're goin' to the beach," he yelled above the din. "We're goin' to the beach."

A man in a peach-colored blazer with a patch declaring his Orange Bowl affiliation smiled at Fischer and said, "Y'all come down and see us, now."

It's not official, but if the Huskers receive an invitation as the Big Eight representative to the Orange Bowl, it will be the first time in six years that UNL players have "gone to the beach."

Never in Miami before

"I've never been to Miami before," said senior Jim Pillen. "But we're going there now and it feels great."

"It's beautiful," said Bill Barnett. "It feels so good to win. I just started crying on the sideline in the last few minutes."

Tackle Kelvin Clark called it "the greatest feeling I've had in my entire life."

The bedlam in the Nebraska locker room was in stark contrast to the atmosphere following last year's game in Norman—and not unlike the feeling in the Oklahoma locker room this year.

"It's hard to compare this year's game to last year's game," said Sooner quarterback Thomas Lott. "They were two such different games."

One Oklahoma player wept in the corner by the entrance to the locker room. OU head coach Barry Switzer, was obviously unfamiliar with discussing a loss.

'Fumbles beat us'

"The fumbles beat us," Switzer said finally. "Nebraska is a great team but you

don't fumble nine times and expect to win."

"They did exactly what we thought they would," Lott said. "We were well prepared for them, but you don't know what will cause those fumbles—a certain type of hit, lack of concentration, I don't know. It's just part of the game."

As the Huskers celebrated, Oklahoma lamented their ability to hang on to the football.

"We fumbled so much it was pitiful," Sooner linebacker George Cumby said. "We held Colorado, last week with a lot of fumbles but you can't do that and beat a good team like Nebraska."

"It still looks like the only way to beat us is when we beat ourselves."

Oklahoma's bowl game future is now in doubt, but Nebraska's players already may be feeling the sand between their toes.

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