

sports

Huskers nip KSU in comedy of errors

By Rick Huls

After the Kansas State and Nebraska football teams ran onto the field before Saturday's game in Manhattan, a third group of players took the field and headed for the Kansas State bench.

The group—some with casts and some with crutches—were the "walking wounded" of K-State's football team. The Wildcats have been plagued with injuries all year. Saturday, they played without eight original defensive starters against the Huskers.

But, the Wildcat defense was more inspired than ever, stalling the nation's leading rushing offense and scaring the Nebraska dominated crowd of 43,210 before succumbing, 21-12.

"I think we gotta give the Kansas State defense a lot of credit. They played as well as they could," Nebraska Coach Tom Osborne said. "Kansas State hit the tar out of us," he added.

For the second straight week, a team "hit the tar" out of the Huskers.

The result is Nebraska's very own group of "walking wounded"—also known as the offensive backfield.

OSBORNE SOUNDED more like a doctor of medicine than a Ph.D. in psychology after the game.

"We were worried this week because we had such a physical game last week at Missouri. Kotera (fullback Jim) was hurt before the game started. Hipp (I-back I.M.) reinjured his toe. I looked at it at halftime and decided he shouldn't play. Jarvis (I-back Redwine) didn't hurt his knee again, but sprained an ankle. We didn't want to play him (Redwine entered the game in the third quarter with Nebraska down 12-7). Johnson (I-back Craig) got hurt. He was banged around a few times, and Andra Franklin got hurt at the end. Quinn (quarterback Jeff) was limping from a charley horse," Osborne said.

The list of injuries seemed to take up half of the post-game interview. I-back Tim Wurth—the only NU back completely healthy before the game—appeared to be the only back healthy after it.

Wurth did his part Saturday, rushing eight times for 36 yards, including a three-yard touchdown burst that gave Nebraska the lead for good, 14-12, with 7:48 left in the third quarter.

ALTHOUGH FULLBACK Franklin added an insurance touchdown on a one-yard run with 7:29 left in the game, the Husker offense spent most of the afternoon exchanging the ball with Kansas State.

There were a total of 17 errors (not counting seven penalties) in the sloppy contest. There were actually 13 turnovers, since both teams recovered two of their own fumbles. Nebraska lost five fumbles, while Kansas State lost four fumbles and had four interceptions.

Even Johnson, who was the Huskers' leading rusher with 102 yards on 21 carries, fumbled three times and lost two.

"I never really thought about it (the fumbles) after the first one, but after the second one you start to think about it," Johnson said. "I just tried to go at it as another game."

Johnson said every team is playing the Huskers tough, because of their national rating.

Tim Hager and Jeff Quinn, who shared playing time at quarterback, also shared the same feelings about NU's offensive problems.

"I think we're in a little bit of a slump," Hager said. "We did some things that were a little frustrating (the turnovers), but we still have a lot of confidence."

Quinn agreed that the offense is in a slump.

"We should have had a lot more points today. We can't keep letting that happen," he said. "We're moving the ball, but stopping ourselves."

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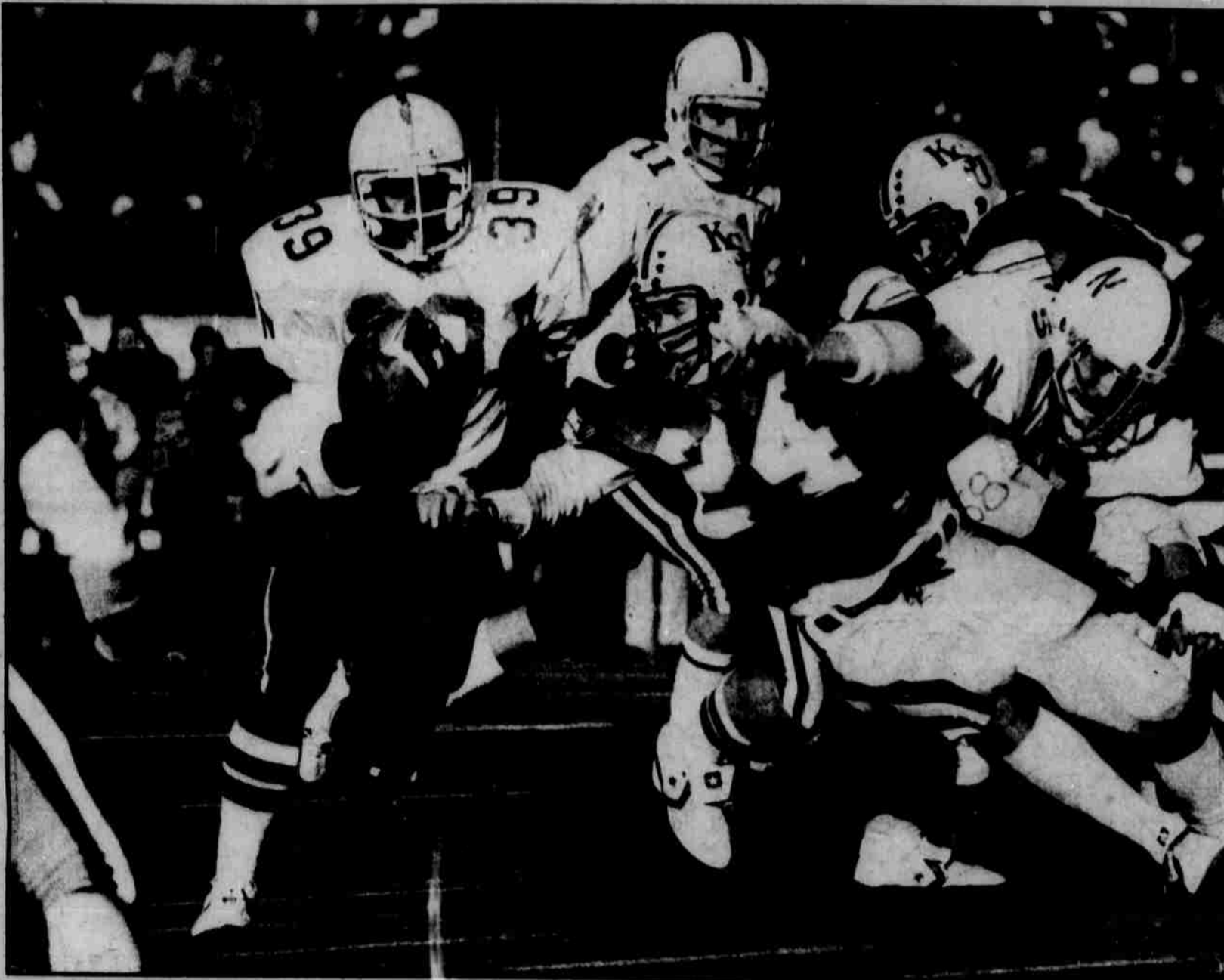


Photo by Mike Sweeney

A backhanded tackle attempted by Kansas State linebacker Vic Koenning (24) wasn't enough to stop Nebraska fullback Andra Franklin (39) on this run Saturday afternoon.

Gymnastics program devised when coaches were students

By Tom Prentiss

The road to success for the UNL men's gymnastics program has been paved with obstacles as well as good intentions.

But because the current Husker coaches began planning a quality program some 15 years ago, that long and winding road has led down a yellow brick path of accomplishments.

Head Coach Francis Allen and assistant coach Jim Howard said that last year's national championship was an idea the two had when they were Husker gymnasts in the 1960s.

Allen and Howard, were both former all-around performers for Nebraska. The idea of building a quality program at Nebraska came to them when they were students.

Both felt that if they were going into gymnastics as a profession, then they should try and do the best job possible, they said.

"I think a national championship is the dream of all young coaches, especially in gymnastics," Allen said.

But, before winning the NCAA championships in Baton Rouge, La. last year, the program faced many detours.

FOR INSTANCE, Allen and Howard began coaching at different schools.

After they graduated, Allen served as a UNL assistant coach for two years before taking the head coaching job at Nebraska in 1969. Howard became head coach for the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse gymnastics team in 1966.

In his 10 years at LaCrosse, he captured two National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics national championships.

But, though the two former teammates may have been apart, Howard said, they never lost contact and were continually thinking about ways to create a better program for Nebraska.

He explained that he and Allen kept frequent correspondence and participated in summer coaching clinics together.

"We never lost sight of what we had to do for the pro-

gram if it was going to be the best," Howard said.

In 1976, Howard, joined the UNL physical education department.

Although he had successful years at LaCrosse, he couldn't get a big time program started at a small school, he said.

Howard said he made the move because, although it meant a cut in salary, it would give him the opportunity to work with a better gymnastics program.

EVEN THAT was risky, Howard said, because when he was originally hired, there wasn't an opening for another coach.

But a change in the structure of the gymnastics program provided Howard the opportunity to become an assistant coach. He said 90 percent of his time now is spent on his physical education classes and 10 percent on athletics, such as gymnastics, and working with the Nebraska School for Gymnastics, a youth organization for budding gymnasts.

But Allen had started the ground work for the currently successful program earlier, by working to become an expert of every facet of the sport. Howard said he also did this so their coaching abilities would be on par with or above any in the nation.

But, two of the most important components in any program are financial support and the athletes recruited, Allen said.

Gymnastics was not well supported in the early years of the building process, he said.

Allen said once they proved that they (the coaches) were building a quality program, the athletic department said they'd support it.

"And they have," he added.

Howard praised Nebraska Athletic Director Bob Devaney for giving the program the confidence it needed in the struggling building process.

"HE GAVE US support in more ways than money," Howard said.

Allen emphasized the athletes recruited are also of extreme importance. He said no program could survive without talented athletes.

"We used to train these athletes to be national champions. Now we recruit national champions," Allen said.

For instance, he said that Nebraska has recruited the top prep gymnast in the nation each of the last two years in Jim Hartung and Phil Cahoy, both from Omaha South High.

The success of the program has been described as "rewarding" by Allen and "gratifying" by Howard.

They said they felt good because they helped build a championship program, and didn't just step into one.

Howard said another advantage the program has is the compatibility of the two coaching styles.

Howard said Allen is in charge of the program but that because of their past ties they teach "identical concepts" and strive for the same direction for the program.

WHICH DIRECTION is that?

Allen said that when they started building, he wanted the program to get better each year. Coming off a national championship year, Allen said the Huskers have probably "the best team any college has ever had."

Howard added that it would take hard work and healthy athletes for a repeat performance.

He said that when he won the first of his two national championships at LaCrosse, he found it was harder to retain the title than it was to attain it.

"I think the same thing will happen this year and many of the team members aren't aware of how tough it will be," Howard said.

When Howard looks at his national championship ring, he says he thinks of all the gymnasts at Nebraska who helped make the program what it is today.

"It wasn't just the guys on the floor at the NCAA's in April," he said. "It was all the people who worked hard before that to get the program started."

Howard said this year's team has the potential to be national champions again, but added that because of current injuries they are not in top form.

Will the Husker gymnasts and coaches add another ring to their collection?

Mark April 3-5 on your calendar. That is when Nebraska will host the 1980 NCAA championships at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.