

Huskers' 54-0 win over Kansas gives team, fans a shot in the arm

By Shelley Smith

LAWRENCE, Kan.—For the Nebraska football team and its fans, Saturday's 54-0 romp over Kansas was a shot in the arm, a new beginning and a new start—one that breathed a little Husker sweetness into the brisk Kansas air.

"I had a beautiful time today," Nebraska quarterback Jeff Quinn said outside of the visitor's locker room. Quinn, who led the Husker offensive attack, completing 10 of 14 passes for 124 yards, said he knew how important it was for Nebraska to bounce back after its 18-14 loss to Florida State one week ago.

"Those last four games don't mean anything to us now," he said. "What's important are these next six (games)—we've got to keep doing what we did today." Nebraska, who played 51 of the 55 players the Big Eight allows to travel, racked up 520 total offensive yards and had to punt only twice.

Nebraska's first score came four plays after wingback Ricky Simmons ran the opening kickoff 77 yards to the Kansas 23-yard line. Leading rusher, I-back Craig Johnson, who finished with 109 yards on 17 carries, ran 10 yards on the left side to score.

After the game, Quinn and splitend John Noonan agreed that Simmons' run and the early score put immediate confidence back into the Cornhusker game plan.

Fired up the team

"We had really good practices last week, and I didn't have much doubt," Noonan said. "But when Simmons ran that kickoff, wow, it really fired the team up."

The Jayhawks responded to Nebraska's early flash by making one of their two serious scoring threats of the game, driving 63 yards to the Nebraska 13-yard line. However, on a fourth down and one-yard situation, highly-touted Kansas tailback Kerwin Bell was stopped at the line and Nebraska took over the ball.

"I really don't know what it was," Nebraska defensive end Derrie Nelson said about that particular Kansas drive. "We had some little mistakes that they (Kansas) capitalized on," he explained.

Cornhusker linebacker Kim Baker said he thought Nebraska was "sitting back a little" when Kansas got the ball.

But, the blackshirts, not to be intimidated, left the Jayhawks with a fourth down and 33-yard situation on Kansas' next possession.

"We really wanted to go three and punt with them," safety Russell Gary said. "Once we started rolling, except for about two drives, we did it," he added.

Mental mistakes

Sophomore I-back Roger Craig, who relieved Johnson early in the third-quarter, scored three touchdowns—his Husker career best—and rushed for 85 yards on 20 carries.

"I made a lot of mental mistakes, and I have a lot to learn," Craig said. "But, I feel all right about today. You have to give the offensive line credit—I had great blocking."

Quinn said he had the utmost respect for Johnson and Craig, who combined to fill in for the injured Jarvis Redwine.

KU wins doubleheader; Husker record at 10-11

Kansas swept a doubleheader from Nebraska 4-1 and 5-2 Saturday, dropping the Huskers' record to 10-11.

UNL evened a 1-0 KU advantage in the fourth inning of the first game when Nancy Wicks singled, bringing home Linda McCrea. But, KU came back with a double and two singles in the sixth inning to put the game out of reach for the Huskers.

In the nightcap, Kansas took a fourth-inning four-run lead before UNL's Shelley Scott hit a fifth-inning single to put the Huskers on the board. UNL's final tally came to the sixth inning when Kelly Erisman scored on a fielder's choice.

"I can't say enough about those guys. All I can say is that it takes a lot of class when you don't play that much behind a guy, and then you come in and play like they did today. Those two (Johnson and Craig) could be starting at any other university. I just can't say enough."

Nebraska Coach Tom Osborne, however, didn't seem as pleased as most Husker players after the game.

With :40 left in the first half, Nebraska had just scored another touchdown to make the score 33-0. Osborne, at the last minute, opted to go for a two-point conversion, much to the displeasure of the Kansas team and fans.

"We were trying to win the football game," Osborne explained. "The greatest disrespect you can show an opponent is to assure the game is over before the half. We felt they had a good football team," he added.

Didn't shake hands

"It really tees me off when people act like you're trying to run up the score. With the 55-man travel limit, we played everyone we had. It really upsets me when they (KU coaches) won't even shake hands after the game," he said.

Defensively, the Husker blackshirts accounted for nine sacks for a loss of 52 yards. Husker right tackle Henry Waechter, who shaved his head for the opening of Nebraska's Big Eight season, finished with seven tackles, six unassisted. Sophomore linebacker Steve Damkroger had 10 unassisted tackles, one assisted to finish with a game high 11 tackles.

Sophomore Mark Moravec rushed for 38 yards on three carries, including a 28-yard run to set up another Husker touchdown, and Noonan caught both of his passes for touchdowns, one for 31 yards. Tight end sophomore Todd Brown caught five passes for 42 yards, and Tim McCrady caught one pass for 29 yards.

In Kansas' only turnover of the day, sophomore Kris Van Norman intercepted a Frank Seurer pass and ran it 30 yards to set up the Huskers' final touchdown.

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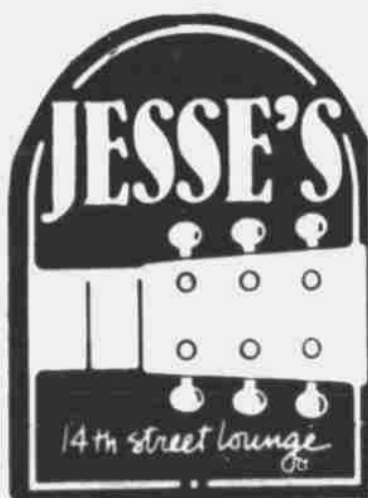
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