

# NU-OU rivalry has gone too far

Friday's performance was a disgrace. Not the performance of the football team, mind you. The Cornhuskers played brilliantly en route to their 28-24 win against Oklahoma. I'm talking about the performance of the fans, or at least a small minority of them.

Big Eight championships aren't easy to come by, and when the Huskers win one, it certainly is cause

received in the brawl. All of this in the name of school spirit, and all in front of a national television audience.

The celebrating didn't end on the field either. The Oklahoma team and staff members were the target of numerous insults as they entered their north stadium locker room, and later in the evening, a car bearing Oklahoma license plates was reportedly damaged by fans throwing oranges at it.

The Sooner players, coaches and fans showed class throughout the game Friday. They didn't deserve that kind of treatment.

The excuse of "they do it to us" won't work here, either. I was fortunate enough to be in Norman, Okla., last year when the Huskers defeated OU, and I, along with other members of the press, stood outside the NU locker room as the team filed in following the game. I don't recall hearing one negative remark directed toward the Huskers.

Nebraskans have made far too much of this rivalry. It's one thing to have a friendly rivalry with a school such as Oklahoma. It's quite another to hold such bitter feelings that they turn to destruction and anger following the game. Listen closely to the pre- and post-game remarks by both teams and you'll find they have a lot of respect for each other. The fans should too.

The Huskers suffered through several years of frustration watching the Sooners come from behind for last-second wins. But the Oklahoma jinx is dead, and it's time to put that frustration behind.

I hope beating the Sooners becomes habit. But I also hope there never is another scene in Memorial Stadium like the one the whole nation saw Friday.

Tom Osborne's teams are respected across the country for the class they show on football Saturdays. It's time the fans raise themselves to that level.

## Larry Sparks

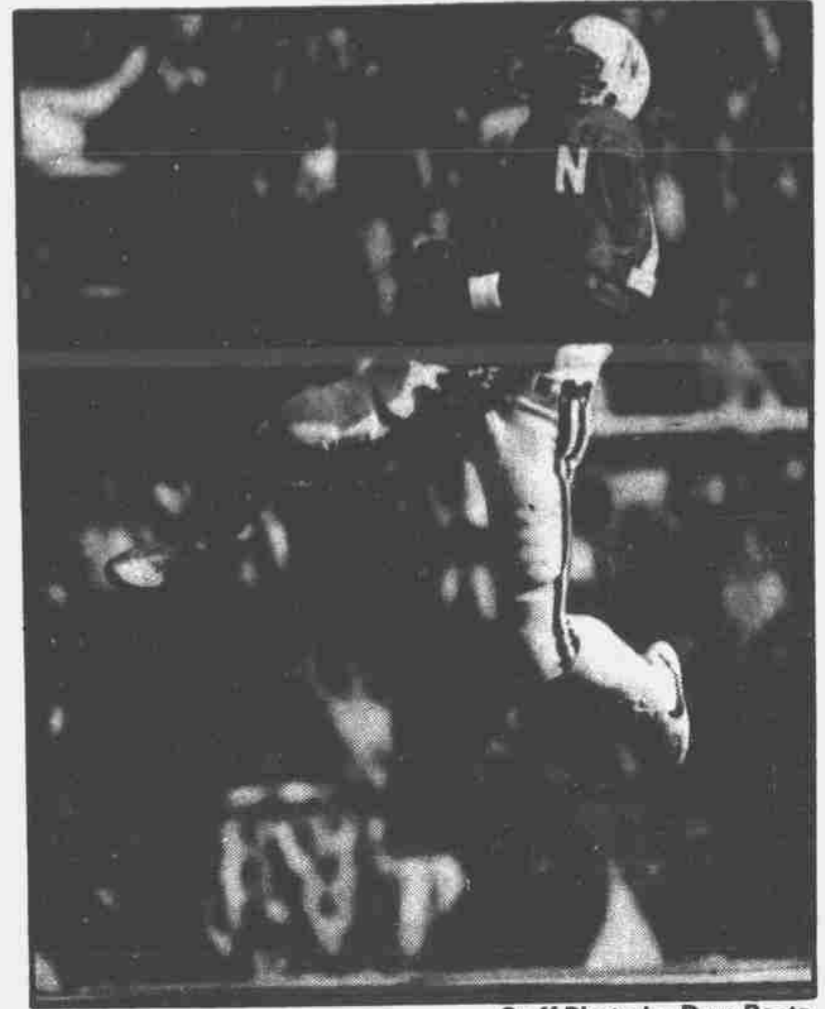
for a celebration, but the celebration that took place Friday was ridiculous.

Once again, fans pelted the field with oranges following each score. Although dangerous and idiotic, it's a tradition many Nebraskans have learned to live with, especially when Oklahoma is in town.

But orange throwing was one of the mild things that occurred Friday. Following an interception that sealed the Huskers' victory with 26 seconds left, fans stormed the field and headed for the goal posts, causing Nebraska to be assessed a 15-yard penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct.

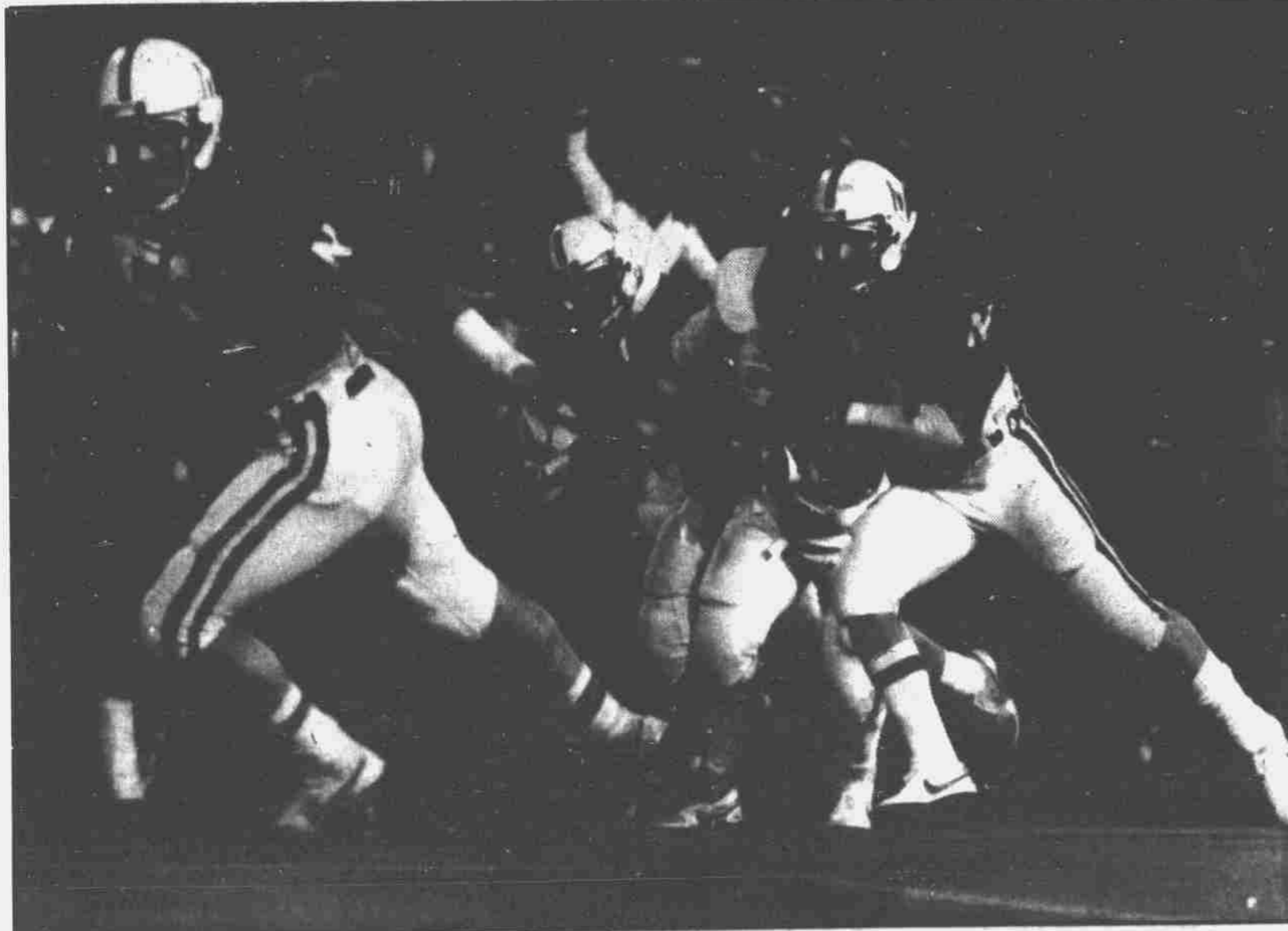
The field was cleared, the game was resumed, but as the final 26 seconds ticked off the clock, chaos broke loose. The goal posts, as expected, were downed in a matter of minutes.

OU Coach Barry Switzer and other athletic officials were knocked down, the Memorial Stadium AstroTurf was damaged by a flare thrown by an overexcited fan, and four people were treated at the hospital for injuries



Staff Photo by Dave Bentz

Nebraska quarterback Turner Gill leaps in the air to celebrate his 14-yard first-quarter touchdown run that put Nebraska on top 7-0. Gill was Nebraska's second leading rusher against the Sooners with 65 yards in 15 carries.



Staff Photo by Craig Andresen

Nebraska defensive end Scott Strasburger (90) heads toward the goal line after picking off an Oklahoma pass late in the fourth quarter Friday. Strasburger never made it into the end zone, but the interception ended Sooner hopes of an upset and gave Nebraska its second straight victory against OU.

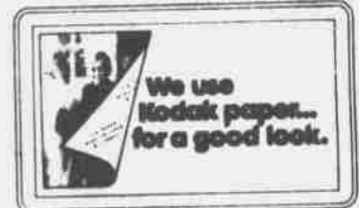
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