

Sports

First-team offense lacks aggressiveness

By Stu Pospisil
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For a while Saturday, Nebraska's scoring explosion merely was an offensive self-destruction.

The Husker offense crossed mid-field once during the first 13 possessions of Nebraska's first full-scale scrimmage of fall practice. That possession ended when defensive end Scott Tucker recovered a fumble by I-back Doug DuBose in the end zone.

If offensive ineptitude wasn't enough to worry Nebraska coach Tom Osborne, Nebraska's No. 2 ranking in the wire services' pre-season polls was.

"That seems awfully high for us to be ranked," Osborne said. "I thought we would be ranked in the top ten, but that really surprises me."

"Having sustained the losses we have, I hope they are right. Last year they were right ... at least we were up there for a long time. Bug we've got a lot more things to iron out this year, especially our offense," he said.

The scorecard for those 13 possessions:

51 plays, 107 yards, five first downs, two fumbles, one interception.

Nebraska's first-string offense managed one first down and 32 yards in its first four cracks at the No. 2 defense.

"We were getting knocked off the ball," Osborne said. "We just got flat-whipped a couple of times on one-on-one base blocks."

"The defense was aggressive, and the offense was trying to finesse instead of knocking down. It takes time to work out the offense, but I was disappointed with their lack of aggressiveness

early. That shouldn't take time," he said.

Jerry Mlinar, a fourth-string quarterback, scored the scrimmage's first touchdown — a one-yard plunge — when the No. 3 units squared away.

Mlinar didn't wait long to work more magic. He caught the defense and other observers off guard when he completed a 65-yard pass to split end Rod Smith for a touchdown on the next play. Smith eluded a defender in the middle of the Husker's new turf field and caught the ball at the defense's 25-yard line.

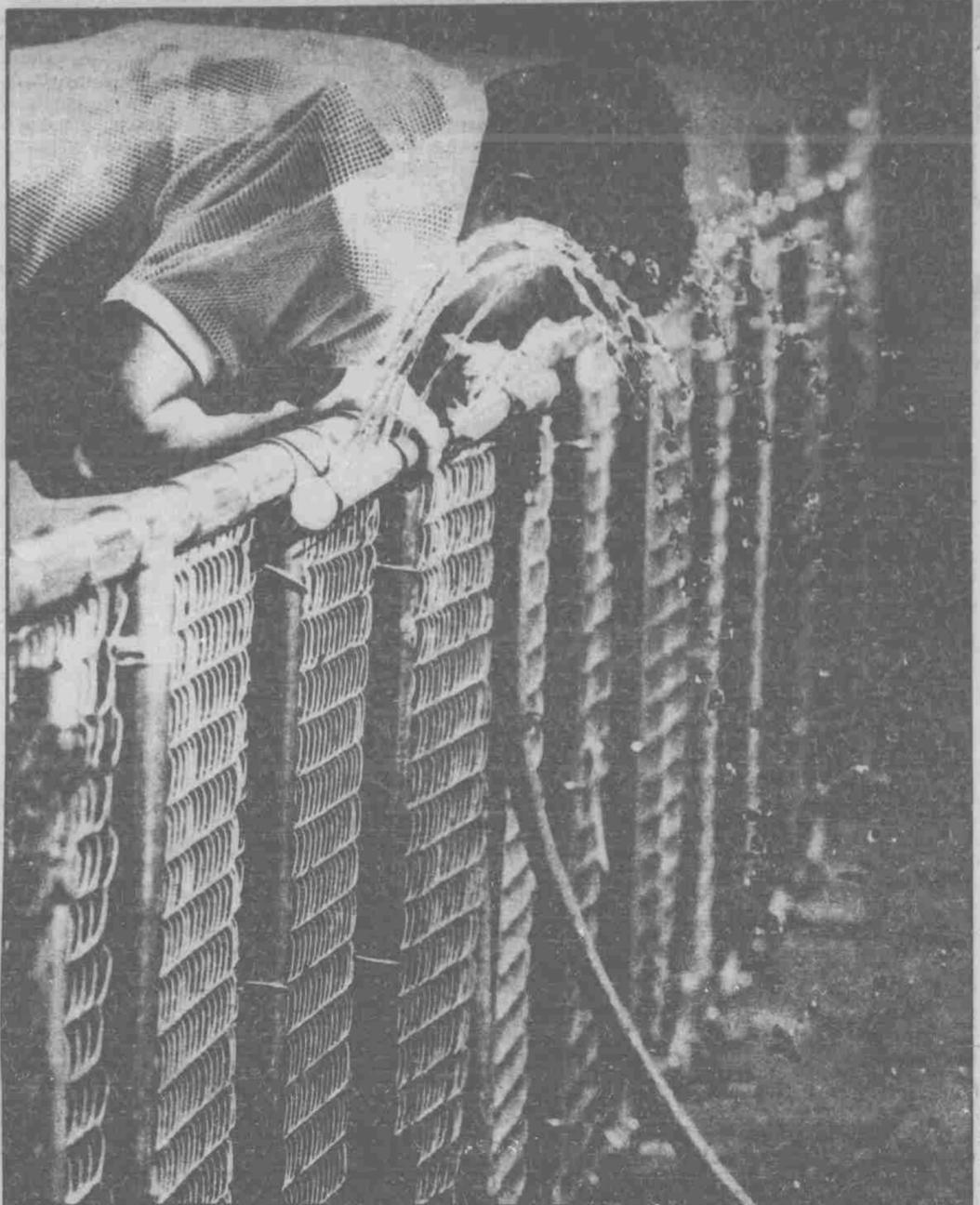
The first-team offense scored on its eighth possession. Quarterback Craig Sundberg completed all three of his passes during the drive, including a nine-yard touchdown to Jason Gamble. Sundberg finished the scrimmage with seven completions in 11 attempts for 56 yards.

That touchdown was scored on the Blackshirt defenders, one of the few mistakes the No. 1 unit made all day.

Cornerback Dennis Watkins made quarterbacking miserable for sophomore McCathorn Clayton, recovering a fumble on the Blackshirts' first play, then intercepting Clayton on its second series.

Don Douglas took over at quarterback, and his two series resulted in a net loss of 10 yards.

Osborne said he was pleased with the kicking game. Scott Livingston hit a 38-yard field goal, and Dale Klein added a 39-yarder. "I don't know if our offense is bad or our defense is good," Osborne said. "We've had some years when the offense had trouble moving on the defense, and yet ended up with a good offense. It just took a while to smooth the offense out."



Nebraska safety Bret Clark takes a break from the Husker's full scrimmage Saturday at Memorial Stadium. David Creamer/Daily Nebraskan

Losers deserve a little attention, too

Last year, the Bottom Ten predicted Rice would win the national football title. The national title, that is, for the worst team in football.

Now in its 16th season, Steve Harvey's Bottom Ten makes football — both professional and collegiate — fun. Throughout the football season, the Daily Nebraskan will run Harvey's weekly poundings of losers and half-wits.

Bottom Ten

THE COLLEGES

The tuba player did it. The crazed musician who threw the last-minute block that enabled Cal to score a touchdown to defeat Stanford in that historic season finale of 1982 destroyed the Cardinal football program.

Last year, Stanford, still shaken, sank to 1-10 status, nabbing the Bottom Ten crown by losing to such low-lives as Oregon State (2-8-1) and USC (4-6-1).

Remember the bitter quote of graduating Stanford quarterback John Elway after the Cal/band fiasco: "They (the referees) ruined my last college football game." Well, now it's Jack Elway's turn to suffer.

John's father is the new coach, replacing Paul Wiggin, who never could get his players' attention because they were always staring at his crewcut. Look for a Stanford repeat this year, although the loser of the Minnesota (1-10)-Rice (1-10) opener Sept. 8 will have a lot of backward momentum, too.

Biggest question of the early season: If the Beach Boys, who've been signed to perform following Temple's Sept. 22 game against Pitt, play poorly, will they blame the two football teams for ruining the field beforehand?

THE RANKINGS

School, 1983 Record	Worst '83 Rout	Opening '84 Loss
1) Stanford (1-10)	7-30 USC	Oklahoma
2) Minnesota (1-10)	13-84 Nebraska	Rice
3) Rice (1-10)	0-35 Arkansas	Minnesota
4) UTEP (2-10)	0-35 New Mexico	Texas A & M
5) USC (4-6-1)	0-24 Washington	Utah State
6) Yale (1-9)	7-41 Cornell	Brown
7) Georgia Tech (3-8)	3-37 Tennessee	Alabama
8) Northwestern (2-9)	0-49 Wisconsin	Illinois
9) Duke (3-8)	3-38 Maryland	Indiana
10) San Diego St. (2-9-1)	7-38 Air Force	Air Force

11) Columbia (1-7-2); 12) LSU (4-7); 13) NCAA television policy (0-1); 14) TCU (1-8-2); 15) tie between Oregon State (2-8-1) and Oregon (4-6-1)*; 17) Pentagon (Army, Navy, Air Force, Virginia Military Institute) 16-28*; 18) Houston (4-7); 19) Oklahoma (8-4); 20) Mississippi State (3-8).

Others not receiving votes: Cal State-Disneyland (7-4).
*The two schools have been ordered to play off last year's season-ending 0-0 tie until someone scores.

OPENING ROUT (Sept. 1): Air Force (9-2) vs. San Diego State (2-9-1).

OPENING CRUMMY GAME OF THE WEEK (Sept. 1): Texas of El Intercepted Paso (2-10) vs. Texas A & M (5-5-1).

SPECIAL CITATION: A story on Michigan State and coach George Perles in The sporting News Football Yearbook is headlined: "Spartans Are Gaining, By George." The magazine then picks them to finish sixth in the Big Ten.

QUOTE BOOK: Cal State-Hayward publicist Dennis Lavery, on why the school is considering changing its nickname from the Pioneers to the Vampires: "We tried to think up something native to Hayward, but all we could think of was Zucchini."

THE PROS

The Dolts have sneaked into Indianapolis, the Raiders are still in Los Angeles (writer Frank Deford suggests

that the dispute over their status could be settled by permanently locating them in Athens), and Tampa Bay Coach John McKay is threatening to desert the Bucs if they don't win a division title (or at least finish fourth).

Welcome to the NFL, when on any given Sunday any team has the potential to sink out of its hometown and start a new franchise elsewhere.

Tampa Bay (2-14), which reacted to McKay's threat by getting beaten up 0-48 by Seattle in its exhibition opener, is the odds-off favorite to capture its second straight Bottom Ten title. The Dolts (7-9) are a threat, though they proved they can move on the ground with their exciting 691-mile, middle-of-the-night drive from Baltimore to Indianapolis earlier this year.

By the way, did you all enjoy the two-week layoff between the USFL title game and the Bucs-Seahawks NFL exhibition opener? Why couldn't the USFL have staged a pro bowl on one of the idle weekends?

THE RANKINGS

Team, 1983 Record	Worst '83 Loss	Opening '84 Loss
1) Tampa Bay (2-14)	0-27 Chicago	Chicago
2) Houston (2-14)	10-38 Cincinnati	Raiders
3) Indianapolis (0-0)	Idle	N. Y. Jets
4) Baltimore (7-9)	0-37 Miami	Idle
5) San Diego (6-10)	10-42 Raiders	Minnesota

6) N. J. Giants (3-12-1); 7) Philadelphia (5-11); 8) tie between Washington (USFL) (3-15) and Pittsburgh (USFL) (3-15); 10) Chicago (either NFL or USFL).

CRUMMY GAME OF THE WEEK: Tampa Bay (2-14) vs. Chicago (8-8).

QUOTE BOOK: ABC's Howard Cosell to New Orleans coach Bum Phillips: "Coach, did you ever consider that perhaps you'd gone into the wrong profession?" Phillips: "No, Howard, it would be too big a coincidence for both of us to have made the same mistake."