

Sports

Huskers dodge Cowboys' bullets



I-Back Doug DuBose turns the corner on an unidentified Cowboy and corner back Mark Moore.

David Creamer/Daily Nebraskan

OSU players think positive

By Ward W. Triplet III
Daily Nebraskan Senior Editor

The Oklahoma State Cowboys will not wilt the rest of the season because of Saturday's 17-3 loss to Nebraska. That's at least what most of the Cowboys were saying while trying to explain Saturday why they had lost.

"There's no way this loss ruins our season," said cornerback Mark Moore, who picked off two Craig Sundberg passes. "We'll just re-group and come right back out the next game. We can't let this get us down."

As Moore and other positive thinkers such as Leslie O'Neal and Rusty Hilger spoke, other Cowboys moved slowly around the large pile of discarded uniforms with their heads down and looking like anything but the winners Hilger spoke of.

In the far corner, lineman Paul Blair straddled a wooden chair and stared straight ahead, motionless and lost in thought. Next to him, still in full uniform, 263-pound offensive tackle Chuck Shanklin tried to fight back tears without success.

It wasn't like the Cowboys had been clobbered like the last time they came to Lincoln. In fact, split end Malcolm Lewis said they should have won the game, and knowing that made it hurt that much more.

"We were the better team out there today, but we just couldn't pull it off," Lewis said. Lewis scored on a screen pass in the first quarter, but the play was called back because of a clipping penalty.

The Cowboys stopped themselves on several drives with crucial penalties. Cowboy coach Pat Jones attributed Shane Swanson's game-breaking punt return to simple missed tackles. In short, bad plays and dumb mistakes lost the game for them, he said.

"I felt we could have won the game 3-0," the first-year coach said. "I thought the kicking game would decide it, I just didn't know which one. I am surprised they broke it open on a punt return."

Hilger, who drew some national fancy with the positive thinking tapes he uses before ballgames, added to Jones' assessment that dumb plays, however few, made the difference.

"I hope we don't reflect on this loss," the fifth-year senior said. "There's still a lot of Big Eight season to go. I don't know what we have to do to get rid of the dumb plays. Maybe we should get out some whips and chains in practice, but we've got to get it together fast."

The Cowboys, now 4-1, will take a week off before playing Kansas Oct. 20. The two other games of immediate danger are much later, with Missouri Nov. 10 and Oklahoma the week after the Huskers play the Sooners.

Pat Jones, who promised an Orange Bowl official that "we'll talk again" just before beginning his post-game interview, said the Cowboys will not yet concede the Big Eight race to anyone.

"Nobody's going to make it through this season without a loss," he said. "We need to win the rest of our games, and have somebody knock off Nebraska for us."

Swarming Blackshirts conquer Cowboys

By Jim Rasmussen
Daily Nebraskan Senior Reporter

Nebraska found a new way to win Saturday, much to the dismay of a tough Oklahoma State team.

The Cornhuskers, who usually win games with an overpowering offense, used a swarming defense to stuff OSU in the second half. Time and again, the defense held up, and the Huskers finally put some points on the board to take a 17-3 win in Memorial Stadium.

"The defense was fantastic today," said Nebraska offensive tackle Mark Behning. "They saved our lunch."

Oklahoma State held a 3-0 lead through three quarters on the strength of Larry Roach's 40-yard field goal four minutes into the game.

The Cowboys were never able to increase that lead as the Huskers shut down the OSU attack in the second half.

Nebraska finally tied the game on Dale Klein's first college field goal, a 36-yarder with 13:05 left. And after Nebraska's defense stopped OSU cold on its next two possessions, the Huskers took the lead for good. Wingback Shane Swanson returned a Cowboy punt 49 yards for the go-ahead touchdown, leaving punter Cary Cooper sprawling as he raced the final 15 yards to the end zone. Swanson's touchdown came with 8:15 left.

That was all the points the Huskers would need, although they added another score on a

64-yard pass from Travis Turner to freshman Jason Gamble. The Huskers had dodged the Cowboy's bullets.

Nebraska's defenders were justifiably happy with their performance.

"We knew we might have to make the difference in the game,"

defensive end Scott Strasburger said. "We showed the defense could actually win it."

Oklahoma State managed only five first downs in the second half. At one point the Cowboys had to punt five straight times without getting a first down. OSU finally got a last-ditch drive going,

reaching the Nebraska 25 with about five minutes left. The game was far from over, with Nebraska clinging to its 10-3 lead. But Cowboy quarterback Rusty Hilger threw three straight incompletions. NU cornerback Dave Burke broke up the third try, tipping the ball just before it reached OSU receiver Malcolm Lewis.

Burke played one of his best games. His leaping interception killed a Cowboy drive in the final minute of the first half. He broke up two passes, made seven tackles and recovered a fumble.

"I'm about as happy as I've ever been in my life," Burke said later. "We came together and stuck together when things didn't go right. We kept playing hard."

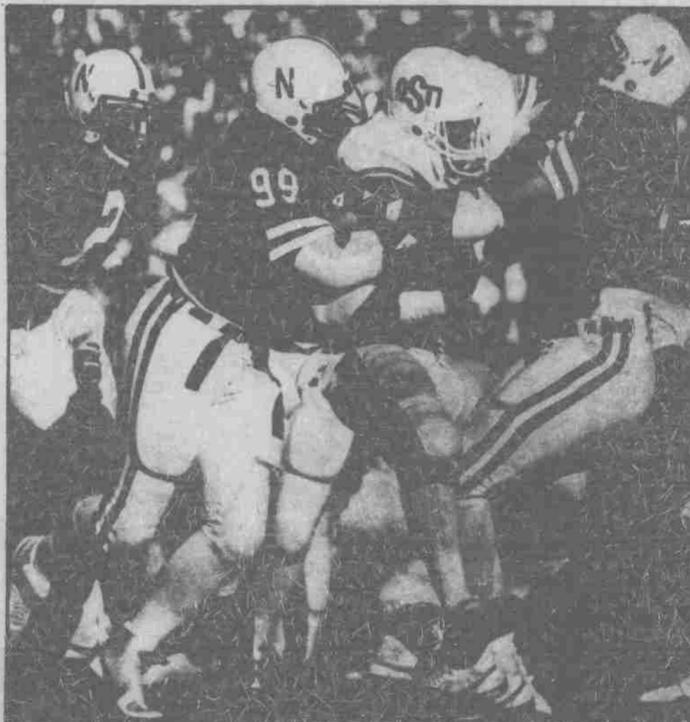
One of the reporters asked Burke if he thought he played his best game as a Husker.

"It certainly seems that way," Burke said. "I was around the ball a lot, and when you're around the ball, good things happen."

Nebraska's defense and big plays offset a determined effort by the Cowboys, who scared the Huskers for the second straight year.

The OSU defense yielded 352 yards, but made the big plays when it had to. Cornerback Mark Moore intercepted two Craig Sundberg passes. He picked off his first on Nebraska's second offensive play, returning the ball to the NU 29. The Cowboys took their 3-0 lead three plays later.

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Kenny Shead (99) and Mark Daum (51) wrap up Oklahoma State's Thurmon Thomas on a short first-half gain.

David Creamer/Daily Nebraskan

Husker volleyball team suffers first season loss

Nebraska's volleyball team suffered its first loss of the season Friday night in the opening round of the Tennessee Invitational in Knoxville.

Nebraska's 16-14, 15-13, 15-13 loss to Texas was the first regular season loss for the Huskers since a five-set loss to Purdue last October and the first straight set loss since 1982. Texas went into

the match ranked ninth in the country.

The Huskers rebounded Saturday for two wins to raise its season record to 14-1. Nebraska stopped Pittsburgh 12-15, 15-9, 15-10, 15-4 and Tennessee 5-15, 15-9, 15-5, 15-8.

Nebraska's cross country team finished third in the men's race at the Colorado Invitational

in Boulder Saturday. Big Eight champion Iowa State took first, with Colorado second. The women's team finished second behind Iowa State. Both Cyclone teams are considered legitimate contenders for the national title.

Nebraska claimed the championship of yet another softball tournament Saturday with a 1-0 victory over Texas A & M in the

finals of the PCO Invitational in Oklahoma City.

Denise Eckert had the winning hit in the decisive game, raising Nebraska's record to 19-3 in the fall season. Freshman Lori Sippel threw two shutouts in the tournament, including the final game.

The Huskers also defeated Oklahoma City 4-0, and Louisiana Tech 7-0 and lost to Oklahoma 2-0.