

Sports

Huskers capitalize on Illini turnovers

Victory boosts Nebraska's confidence

By Mike Reilly
Senior Reporter

Two weeks ago, the Nebraska football team learned how turnovers and mental errors can stymie an offense when it lost to Florida State, 17-13.

Illinois got the same lesson Saturday when it lost the ball seven times and was defeated by the Cornhuskers 52-25 at Memorial Stadium.

The Fighting Illini coughed up four fumbles, three of which were lost. And quarterback Jack Trudeau threw four interceptions, three of which led to scores.

Nebraska, on the other hand, had only one interception and two fumbles. The Huskers amassed 566 yards total offense, with 456 yards on the ground.

"We played aggressively and ran the option well," Coach Tom Osborne said. "Our players played with a lot more poise this week. Against Florida State, they were more tentative, but today they came out and played with more confidence."

Two of the interceptions were returned for touchdowns and another set up a 35-yard field goal by Craig Schnitzler.

Nebraska took the opening kickoff and drove to the Illini 1-yard line, where 1-back Doug DuBose plunged over the middle untouched for his first three touchdowns during the day. DuBose, a junior from Uncasville, Conn., set a personal single-game rushing record by compiling 191 yards on 26 carries. That figure surpassed his old mark of

162 that he set against Missouri last year.

Illinois interceptions

The Illini took the ensuing kickoff and drove to midfield, where Trudeau tossed his first interception of the game. He fired a pass over the middle that was tipped by wide receiver David Williams and landed in the hands of Husker safety Chris Carr at the Nebraska 44-yard line.

Carr took off for the right sideline and outraced two Illini defenders to the end zone. Carr said he thought the "big, fat linemen" were going to catch him. He said his teammates gave him some ribbing on the sidelines about the return.

"They said about the 15-yard line it looked like a piano fell on my back," he said. "I'm not a sprinter by any means."

Schnitzler's extra point gave the Huskers a 14-0 lead.

Nebraska's second interception proved to be the most controversial play of the game. Trudeau had moved the Illini from their own 11-yard line to the Nebraska 44. He again threw to Williams, who was covered by defensive end Brad Smith.

Williams and Smith jumped simultaneously for the ball and Williams caught it. But when they crashed to the ground, Smith had possession of the ball.

Illinois coach Mike White and his assistants argued the call. They said Smith wrestled the ball away from Williams after they had hit the turf. They

argued it should have been ruled a completion, but officials ruled it an interception.

"I twisted it away from him on the way down," Smith said. "It was an interception."

Nebraska defense

Smith, who also recovered a Trudeau fumble in the third quarter, credited Nebraska's defensive line for pressuring Trudeau.

"We have some unbelievable pass rushers," he said. "I don't know if anyone can stop our front three. They really know how to rush the ball."

Middle guard Danny Noonan sacked Trudeau three times, which cost Illinois 22 yards. Right tackle Jim Skow also sacked Trudeau for a 5-yard loss.

Skow said the reason the Huskers could pressure Trudeau was that Illini rarely had any running backs in the backfield to help with pass protection.

"When they started to run those stunts with the backs there was no one there to block," he said. "That gave (Trudeau) the jitters."

Illinois scored for the first time when Chris White booted a field goal with 11:44 remaining in the half.

The Illini closed to 17-10 when Trudeau threw his first touchdown pass to tight end Casper "Cap" Boso with 1:25 left in the half.

The Huskers got more breathing room before intermission when they took the ensuing kickoff and drove 80 yards for a touchdown. On the first play

from scrimmage, quarterback McCathorn Clayton hit split end Robb Schnitzler on the right sideline for a 64-yard gain. Six plays later, DuBose dove over from 1 yard out to give the Huskers a 24-10 advantage heading into the lockerroom.

Confidence booster

DuBose picked up where he left off when he took a pitch from Clayton, broke two tackles, avoided another and scampered 49 yards for a touchdown on Nebraska's first offensive play of the second half.

"It was a 41-pitch play," DuBose said. "It was a well-blocked play. I jumped over my tight end's head and made a cut, then cut across the grain and scored."

Nebraska managed to keep the Illini pinned deep in their own territory for most of the third quarter. The Huskers' average field position was their own 42-yard line, while Illinois' was its own 16.

The Huskers capitalized on the field position by adding two more touchdowns late in the quarter to stretch their lead to 45-10. The first score was set up by Smith's recovery of Trudeau's fumble at the Illinois 18-yard line. Von Sheppard scored four plays later on a 12-yard reverse. Sheppard said he had little trouble getting into the end zone after taking the handoff from quarterback Travis Turner.

"When I went around the corner, all I saw was one defensive back, and he

was being blocked," Sheppard said. "It just worked beautifully."

The Huskers other touchdown came with 28 seconds left in the quarter, when Turner hit Robb Schnitzler with a 9-yard scoring strike.

Illinois fought back in the fourth quarter by scoring two quick touchdowns. Trudeau hit Boso from four yards out with 12:56 remaining in the game. He hit wide receiver Stephen Pierce on another 4-yard pass play to pull within 20, 45-25.

"You have to give Illinois credit," Osborne said. "They never gave up. We were down to the point where one more mistake or turnover could have made it a very interesting ball game."

But the Illini failed to score again. The Husker left tackle, Chris Spachman, sealed the win when he intercepted a Trudeau pass and raced 38 yards to score with 3:48 left to play.

Smith said the win gave the Huskers some much-needed confidence.

"We didn't play well in the first game," he said. "As a result, in the back of some of our minds, there may have been some doubt that we were going to be as powerful as usual."

"It was real important to get the feeling of winning back on our team. We know now that we are still a national contender. We needed to play well in this game to give us a start for the rest of the non-conference and get us into the Big Eight games."

Alumni: Huskers have 'come a long ways'

By Joseph Dejka
Staff Reporter

Nebraska's Orange Bowl traditions began when the Bowery Boys were starring at the State Theater, the Lincoln Star cost 5 cents and the nation licked the wounds of the Korean War.

Friday, 30 years after the 1955 Orange Bowl game, the former Cornhusker teammates, some with bulging waists and graying temples, gathered in Lincoln for a weekend of recalling memories, reviving friendships and, as one alumnus put it, "swapping lies."

The 65 former teammates met at South Stadium among the glass-encased trophies, plaques and retired jerseys of former players. Some alumni traveled from California, Arizona, Wyoming and Colorado.

They arrived slowly at first, looking reserved but greeting one another with loud greetings like "Long time no see" and "Whatever happened to...?"

The group toured the Nebraska

weightlifting room, and NU strength coach Boyd Epley told the former players about changes in conditioning philosophies. Their eyes opened wide at the extensive room stuffed with weight racks and bars.

"The players of our day played well for what they had," said Don Comstock, halfback for the 1955 Husker team. The equipment is "so much nicer" today, he said.

Max Kitzelman, former Husker tackle who is now a physical education teacher in Fremont, echoed the thoughts of his former teammate.

Nebraska football has "come a long way," Kitzelman said.

Don Kampe, guard for the 1955 Orange Bowl team, now lives in Omaha.

Kampe said that when he sits in the stands today, he gets "a different feeling inside." The east and west ends of Memorial Stadium had only bleachers then.

But the fans are still the same, he said. They have "always been good."



Dan Dulaney/Daily Nebraskan

Dean Lux of North Bend tests the weights in the Cornhusker weight room Friday evening during an alumni tour for about 25 members of the Cornhusker football teams of 1952 through 1956. Lux played in 1956. In the 1950s the weight room was a motor pool room.

Fighting Illini 'find a way to self-destruct'

By Jeff Apel
Staff Reporter

A season of bad breaks and costly mistakes may have climaxed for the Illinois football team in its 52-25 loss to Nebraska Saturday at Memorial Stadium.

Illini coach Mike White said his team, victimized by turnovers and poor execution through its first two games this season, "never really got things going." The loss dropped the Illini to 1-2.

"We dropped passes, we missed tackles. We just find a way to self-destruct," White said. "We failed about as convincingly as a team as you could. Nebraska just tore us apart."

Senior quarterback Jack Trudeau had four of his passes intercepted.

White, said he was at a loss as to the problems Trudeau has had so far this season.

"All last year, Jack (Trudeau) only threw 10 interceptions and today he threw four alone, which already puts him at 11 for the season," White said. "He's not sharp; he's rushing things."

Trudeau threw for 292 yards on 29 of 51 passing, including two touchdown passes. He blamed a staunch Nebraska pass rush for his performance.

"Every time I dropped back, it seemed like there was always someone there," said Trudeau, who was sacked four times for 19 yards. "Everything that can go bad is going bad. We just gotta

start executing."

Wide receiver David Williams, a 1984 All-American, credited the Husker secondary with sealing the fate of the hard-luck Fighting Illini.

"They did a lot of different things, which is what we wanted, but we just weren't scoring any points," Williams said. "They weren't doing anything special to try and stop me, but they did mix up their coverages pretty well."

Williams, who admitted to feeling embarrassed about Illinois' 1-2 record, said he personally isn't feeling down about Illinois' tough start.

"We didn't play ready today, we're sometimes playing terrible ball now," he said. "I don't feel personally down or responsible for our team's

performance, though, because I thought I played a good game."

For now, the Fighting Illini will take a three-day rest before beginning preparations Wednesday for the opening of their Big-Ten conference play on Oct. 5 against Ohio State.

Although White said he wishes he could forget about Illinois' first three games, he said it would definitely remain in his mind.

"We better start facing it, it hasn't been a nice preseason. I'm sure as hell not going to forget about it," he said. "We seem to be having a good time playing these teams. Losses don't seem to have an impact. I hope we can find an answer, soon."