

Sports

Rathman scores for hometown fans

By Mike Reilly
Senior Reporter

Nebraska fullback Tom Rathman just wanted to do something to please the home folks who traveled 90 miles down Interstate 80 to watch him play in the Cornhuskers' 17-7 win over the Colorado Buffaloes.

Not only was it Homecoming Saturday at Memorial Stadium, but it was also Tom Rathman Day. Rathman, a senior from Grand Island, said several people from his hometown traveled to Lincoln to watch him play. A banner honoring him hung in the southeast corner of the stadium.

"A lot of people had come down and I thought I had to do something exciting for them," Rathman said.

Rathman delivered that promise with 23 seconds remaining in the third quarter. The Huskers and the Buffaloes were deadlocked at 7-7 when Rathman took a handoff from quarterback Travis Turner and sprinted 84 yards for a touchdown.

But Rathman, who runs the 40-yard

dash in 4.7 seconds, said it wasn't exactly a sprint.

"I don't know if I outran them, but I got to the end zone before they got me," he said. "Lady Luck was on my side."

Actually, it was linemen Brian Blankenship and Tim Roth who were on his side. They cleared the way at the line of scrimmage and let Rathman into the Buff's secondary, where he jumped over a pile of players. From there, blocks from tight end Tom Banderas and split end Robb Schnitzler helped spring him loose down the right sideline.

"I thought there would be more people back there when I jumped over the pile," Rathman said. "Everybody went for the option fake. You've got to give the quarterback and the I-back credit there."

Rathman had only one more worry on his trek to the end zone. He was hit by Colorado cornerback Lyle Pickens inside the 5-yard line, but he cut back and stumbled into the end zone.

"I would never have made it if I had run straight," he said.

"You don't make an 80-yard run and get tackled at the 2-yard line. You make

that extra effort to get into the end zone," he said.

That extra effort, combined with Dale Klein's extra point, gave the Huskers a 14-7 lead. It also gave Nebraska some much-needed momentum, I-back Doug DuBose said.

"Rathman's run took the air out of Colorado," he said. "That run really propelled us. We knew things were starting to go our way."

Blankenship said the touchdown run epitomized the Huskers' tenacity.

"We knew sooner or later we would pop one," he said. "We just kept pounding away at them and we knew we would break one."

DuBose, who drew the fake on the touchdown run, finished with a game-high 125 yards on 26 carries. He also scored Nebraska's first touchdown from 1 yard out with 5:39 remaining in the first half.

Colorado took a 7-0 advantage with 4:11 left in the first quarter when quarterback Craig Keenan scored from 2 yards out. Keenan replaced starter Rick Wheeler on Colorado's second ser-

ies. Wheeler left the game with an injured knee and won't play for the rest of the season.

Neither team scored again until DuBose ran around the left side to cap an 80-yard drive and tie the game at 7-7.

After Rathman's run gave the Huskers a 14-7 advantage at the end of the third quarter, Colorado had a chance to tie the score again.

That opportunity came when DuBose fumbled after he gained 13 yards around the left side. Colorado free safety Rodney Rogers recovered the ball at Nebraska's 34-yard line.

But the Buffs muffed the scoring opportunity two plays later. Keenan fumbled an exchange with fullback Anthony Weatherspoon and the ball bounced around in the CU backfield before Husker linebacker Marc Munford fell on it at the Nebraska 36-yard line.

"The ball just bounced around," Munford said of his recovery. "(Husker linebacker Mike) Knox said he had it in his hands for a while and then another guy batted it into my hands. I

just laid on it and said 'No one is getting it.'"

Munford, who missed last week's game against Missouri with a knee injury, said the fumble was a key play.

"Getting the ball back helped us out," he said. "Especially when we got it out of our end."

Nebraska marched the ball down to the Colorado 13-yard line before its drive stalled. Klein, who missed two field goal attempts earlier in the game, came in on fourth down to boot a 32-yarder that put Nebraska ahead 17-7 with 9:34 left in the game.

In the South Stadium lounge after the game, Rathman sat in a chair and discussed his touchdown run with reporters. He said he was "very tired."

"It was the longest run I've ever had in my life," he said.

Turner said if Rathman "knew it was 84 yards he would've never made it."

But Rathman said he would muster enough energy to make an appearance at a post-game reception for him at the Villager Motel.

"It's probably going to be a late night for me," he said.

Coach proud of 'grown up' Buffs

Reserve quarterback fails to spark offense

By Jeff Apel
Staff Reporter

Colorado coach Bill McCartney was the victim of the familiar circumstance with a different outcome in the Buffaloes' 17-7 loss to Nebraska Saturday at Memorial Stadium.

Last week, McCartney watched as starting quarterback Mark Hatcher was forced to the sidelines with a sprained ankle in Colorado's 40-6 win against Iowa State.

Against the Cornhuskers, backup quarterback Rick Wheeler was sent to the sidelines early in the first quarter after suffering a season-ending knee injury.

Unlike the Iowa State game, in which Wheeler was able to replace Hatcher successfully and guide the Buffaloes to victory, third-string quarterback Craig Kennan never really got Colorado's dangerous wishbone attack rolling.

"I'm not trying to take anything away from Nebraska," McCartney said, "but we just didn't have the continuity we needed on offense to be successful. When Wheeler was in there, we were doing just what we wanted to do, but when he left with the injury we just couldn't execute."

Wheeler, who said McCartney told him last Wednesday that he would start against Nebraska, engineered Color-

ado's only scoring drive of the game. He teamed with Keenan to give the Buffaloes an early 7-0 lead.

After a missed 46-yard field goal attempt by Nebraska's Dale Klein, Colorado took possession of the ball on its own 30-yard line.

Two quarterback option runs by Wheeler, a short run by halfback Ron Brown and a 12-yard Wheeler pass to Loy Alexander gave the Buffaloes a first down at their own 44-yard line.

Wheeler then tore through the Nebraska defense for a 7-yard gain on another quarterback option, which put the Buffaloes into Nebraska territory at the 49.

But the play turned out to be a costly

one, as Colorado lost Wheeler to a severe knee injury after he was hit by Husker cornerback Brian Davis.

"I'm not really sure how it (the injury) happened," Wheeler said. "It wasn't because of the hit I took and it wasn't because I rolled on the knee. It's all a mystery to me."

Keenan, who turned down an offer from the Canadian Football League's Ottawa Rough Riders so he could play his senior season at Colorado, then replaced Wheeler and promptly marched Colorado the final 49 yards for the touchdown.

"That early score gave us the momentum early but we weren't able to take advantage of it," McCartney said.

"We just didn't execute."

The rest of the game turned out to be a nightmare for the Buffaloes. Colorado's newly installed wishbone attack was held to only 218 yards total offense.

The only bright spot for the Buffaloes was their kicking game. The Buffaloes showed why they are ranked first in the nation in punt coverage when they allowed Nebraska only 27 yards in punt returns. Punter Barry Helton averaged 50½ yards a kick.

"I told our players that I have never been prouder of them because today is a step in the right direction even though we didn't win," McCartney said. "Our Buffs are grown up now. I'm really proud of them."

Junior Varsity 'Knox' William Jewell 48-0

By Jeff Apel
Staff Reporter

As a member of the scout team, Nebraska junior varsity running back Tyrese Knox has spent much of the season imitating Florida State's Sammy Smith, Oregon's Tony Cherry and Colorado's Anthony Weatherspoon.

But Friday at Memorial Stadium, Knox was "imitating" a different running back: Cornhusker varsity I-back Doug DuBose.

Knox, who, like DuBose, wears No. 22, rushed for 176 yards and one touchdown on 11 carries to lead the Nebraska junior varsity to a 48-0 win over the William Jewell junior varsity.

"Tyrese (Knox) was talent-wise so much better than those guys today, but he still has some areas where he needs to improve," said freshman

coach Dan Young. "It would help him if he got more repetitions (with the junior varsity) even though he is a valuable part of the scout team."

Knox, who spent last season as a redshirt while recovering from a stress fracture in his left leg, broke loose on a 70-yard touchdown run midway through the second quarter to boost Nebraska's lead to 27-0.

Earlier, running back Ken Clark had scored the Husker's first touchdown of the game when he scored on an 11-yard run.

Quarterback Steve Taylor, who needs only one more touchdown to tie the freshman scoring record, then increased Nebraska's lead to 13-0 when he scampered 6 yards for a touchdown.

The extra point attempt failed when holder Mike Preston couldn't handle a high snap and

his pass for the two-point conversion fell incomplete to kicker Chris Johnson.

After a William Jewell possession, fullback Sam Schmidt capped off a four-play, 74-yard drive with a 6-yard touchdown run to give the Huskers a 19-0 lead.

But the extra point attempt failed when holder once again couldn't handle a high snap from center.

Knox, the junior varsity's leading rusher with 397 yards, then raced 70 yards on Nebraska's first play from the scrimmage line to increase Nebraska's lead to 25-0.

"I'd like to credit all the success I had to my father, who was here from California," Knox said. "It seems like every time he is here, I do well."

Preston closed out the scoring for the half when he hit reserve fullback Russ Luben with a

two-point conversion pass to give Nebraska a 27-0 lead.

"We pretty much did what we wanted to do in the first half," Young said. "The big thing that I was really happy to see was our offense getting started faster than it normally does."

Nebraska continued to dominate William Jewell in the second half as Taylor hit wide receiver Richard Bell with a 73-yard touchdown pass just 46 seconds into the third quarter.

Cornerback Charles Fryar, who returned a kickoff 100 yards for a touchdown earlier this season, returned a punt on the Husker's next possession 73 yards to give Nebraska a 41-0 lead.

"Overall, I was really pleased with the effort we got today," Young said. "Our offense was a little more consistent and all of our players responded well."

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