

Cyclones suffocate Dropped passes frustrate ISU coach, quarterback

By Chuck Green
Staff Reporter

— I'm sure they did a good job. We just screwed up."

Iowa State coach Jim Criner found little to be pleased about in the Cyclones' 49-0 loss to Nebraska Saturday.

The Cyclones were called for holding four times in the game, but the Huskers declined two of the penalties.

"It was a very poorly played game on our part," Criner said. "We didn't give ourselves a chance."

Criner said he was impressed with Nebraska's offense.

The Cyclones were held to only 137 yards total offense, 95 of which came through the air. The Iowa State passing game was hindered, however, by receivers dropping passes.

"Nebraska did an excellent job on the option game today," he said. "Their quarterbacks made good things happen, and the tradition of great Nebraska tailbacks was evident today. Defensively, Nebraska was an outstanding football team."

"Alex (quarterback Espinoza) did a good job of getting the ball to the right people," Criner said, "but we just couldn't open the other end of it. They didn't hold onto the ball very well. We'll just have to go recruit some people who can."

Nebraska rolled up 573 yards of total offense, including 533 yards rushing.

Espinoza echoed his coach's thoughts.

Criner declined to predict the outcome of the Nebraska-Oklahoma game, but he did note the similarities between the two teams, having played both of them.

"Every time a receiver doesn't catch the ball," he said, "I have a tendency to get frustrated. I was pretty frustrated through the whole game."

"Their option games are similar," Criner said, "but I think Nebraska has better misdirection plays. Oklahoma has an extra threat on options, though, with their quarterback."

Espinoza completed only nine of 25 passes Saturday, and threw one interception.

Espinoza felt Oklahoma's defense is faster, "but Nebraska's defense has more power overall."

The cold weather — there was a 12 degree wind-chill factor at game time — had little to do with Iowa State's problems, Criner said.

"Their line gets so much penetration," he said. "It should be a hell of a game."

"It was cold on both sides," he said. "The cold wasn't the reason for those fumbles. You can't use it as an excuse."

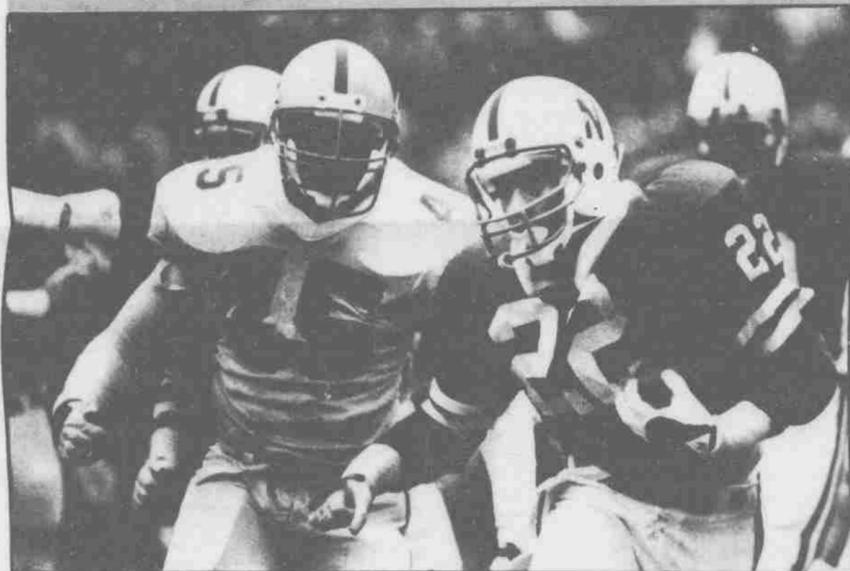
Oklahoma defeated Iowa State 59-14 earlier this season.

Iowa State also had penalty problems. The Cyclones were penalized seven times for 54 yards. Criner was particularly upset with Iowa State's holding penalties.

Espinoza said the Iowa State team's attitude is "frustration." Criner agreed with his quarterback.

"That's the most ridiculous thing in the world," he said. "The amount of time we spend working on that (in practice) and then to have that kind of crap. I'm not blaming the officials

"I'm really down right now," he said. "Not because we got beat by Nebraska, but because we looked so bad doing it. It's enough to drive you crazy."



Photos by
Mark Davis and
Dan Dulaney

Clockwise from top: Dennis Gibson (57) stops Von Shepard on a reverse attempt; Mary Mensl and her daughter Robin of Virginia, Neb., huddle for warmth in the stands; Neil Smith roughs-up Alex Espinoza after a pass attempt; Doug DuBose is pursued by Lester Williams.

