

# Huskers rope Cowboys for win

By Jeff Apel  
Senior Editor

Stillwater, Okla. - The 1983 Nebraska football team earned the nickname "The Scoring Explosion" after quarterback Turner Gill, running back Mike Rozier and wingback Irving Fryar led the Cornhuskers to a 12-1 record.

Saturday at Lewis Field, Oklahoma State coach Pat Jones unveiled his version of "The Scoring Explosion" in quarterback Mike Gundy, running back Thurman Thomas and split end Hart Lee Dykes.

But much like the '83 Nebraska team that finished No. 2 after dropping a 31-30 decision to Miami in the 1984 Orange Bowl, the Cowboy's scoring explosion fizzled as running backs Keith Jones and Ken Clark scored two touchdowns each to lead the Huskers to a 35-0 victory over Oklahoma State. Nebraska coach Tom Osborne said the Huskers were able to contain Gundy, Thomas and Dykes because their offensive and defensive lines dominated Oklahoma State.

Thomas, who entered the game as the country's leading rusher with 700 yards on 120 carries, finished with seven yards in nine rushing attempts while Gundy and Dykes were kept out of the end zone despite combining for 334 yards of total offense.

"The defense played a super ball game," Osborne said. "I think it was one of the better games that Nebraska has played in a long time."

Nebraska defensive tackle Neil Smith said the Huskers approached the game with a fired-up attitude because it was televised nationally by CBS. He said it was only appropriate that Nebraska posted its first shutout of the season against the Cowboys.

"We like to show we're better than our opponent, which we did," Smith said. "We played good football all the way around."

Nebraska fullback Micah Heibel agreed.

"This was the first time all year that we played a good game from start to finish," Heibel said. "We showed today that we've got a good football team."

Nebraska took a 7-0 lead in the first quarter when Husker quarterback Steve Taylor threw a 29-yard touchdown pass to split end Rod Smith. The play was set up when Taylor threw 22- and 26-yard passes to tight end Tom Banderas and wingback Dana Brinson.

The Huskers increased their lead to 14-0 in the second quarter when Clark scored on a 28-yard run, and then built their lead to 21-0 when Jones scored on a 5-yard run.

Osborne said he was impressed with Clark and Jones.

"We thought our running backs held up well," Osborne said. "We're pleased with them."

Osborne said the success of Clark and Jones could be traced to the Nebraska offensive line. He said the Husker line dominated the Oklahoma

State defensive front from "tackle to tackle."

Nebraska offensive lineman John McCormick said although Oklahoma State's defense was quick, they lacked the physical strength to match the Huskers.

"We controlled the line pretty good," McCormick said. "We had a few breakdowns, otherwise we could have scored 17 more points."

Nebraska extended its lead to 28-0 in the third quarter when Jones capped a 10-play, 74-yard drive with a 17-yard touchdown run. The play was set up when Heibel rambled 17 yards to the Oklahoma State 37-yard line and Taylor dashed 10 yards on a quarterback draw.

Nebraska scored its final points of the game when Clark scored on a 1-yard run with 11:43 remaining in the fourth quarter.

Osborne said he was pleased with the victory because he entered the game weary of Oklahoma State. He said he thought the Cowboys had an excellent chance of defeating Nebraska.

But Osborne said the Husker's victory doesn't mean he's ready to make any bold predictions about the rest of the season.

"We'll have a chance to do well in the Big Eight and nationally," Osborne said. "But I don't want to get excited."

Smith said the victory represents another step in Nebraska's quest for the 1987 Big Eight title and an automatic Orange Bowl berth. He said the

Huskers are hungry after being denied an Orange Bowl berth the last three seasons.

"We're just going week by week," Smith said. "One of our goals is to win the Big Eight, and to do that we have to take one week at a time."

Heibel said it's also important for Nebraska to keep the win in perspective. He said the fact that Nebraska defeated Oklahoma State by 35 points shows that the Huskers are improving.

"I think this was the first time all year that we played a good game from start to finish," Heibel said. "We feel we've got a good football team — and we showed it."

Heibel said the Huskers will spend the remaining five weeks of their season thinking about Oklahoma and Colorado. Nebraska will face the Sooners Nov. 21 in Lincoln, and will travel to Boulder, Colo., on Nov. 28 to play the Buffaloes.

Nebraska cornerback Charles Fryar agreed with Heibel, but also said he would have no trouble getting motivated for the games against Kansas State, Missouri and Iowa State. Kansas State will invade Memorial Stadium on Oct. 24, while Nebraska faces Missouri on Oct. 31 and Iowa State on Nov. 7.

"Those games are important," Fryar said, "because I need some stats."

Fryar said he doesn't know what to expect from Nebraska's game against Oklahoma because the two teams haven't met yet.



Clockwise from left: Nebraska's Ken Clark dives into the end zone for a fourth-quarter touchdown. Nebraska's defensive line moves in to stop OSU's Thurman Thomas. NU defensive end Broderick Thomas dives over Husker Tim Rother to catch OSU's Thomas in mid-air. Clark tumbles on the OSU 31 yard line during second quarter action. Dana Brinson runs to get away from Oklahoma State's Curtis Luper.

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## Cowboys' Thomas gets close-up of artificial turf

By Mike Reilley  
Editor

Stillwater, Okla. — Oklahoma State quarterback Mike Gundy and tailback Thurman Thomas got a close-up look at the new artificial turf at Lewis Stadium on Saturday.

Thomas, who entered the game as the nation's leading rusher with a 140-yard per game average, was held to seven yards rushing on nine carries in Nebraska's 35-0 victory.

Gundy didn't find the turf any softer. He completed 20 of 43 pass attempts for 221 yards, but was sacked four times for 25 yards in losses.

"Gundy saw the turf a lot," said Nebraska defensive end Broderick Thomas, who had two sacks. "We heard they got new turf put in down here, so we took the wood to him."

Oklahoma State coach Pat Jones said the Cowboys' offensive line couldn't stop Nebraska's pass rush, forcing Gundy to scramble most of the game.

"Mike was basically running for his life all afternoon," Jones said. "And he was running against people who can run faster than he can."

"We knew we couldn't run the football consistently, so the only way to do it was to fire away."

That philosophy cost the Cowboys a touchdown in the second quarter. Trailing 14-0, Oklahoma State drove 72 yards to the Nebraska 2-yard line.

Gundy then dropped back to pass and lobbed the ball to a flanker Ronnie Williams, who was standing in the corner of the end zone.

Williams and Nebraska cornerback Charles Fryar jumped for the ball, and Fryar pulled down it down for an interception.

"Gundy's just kind of threw the ball up," said Fryar, who stands six inches shorter than Williams. "I turned my back to the receiver and he pushed me in the back. I think he pushed me right into the ball."

Jones blamed himself for letting Gundy throw instead of calling a running play.

"I let Mike throw the ball when I shouldn't have," Jones said, "but I didn't think we could run in that situation."

The Cowboys found it hard to move the ball under any circumstances. Nebraska held them to 264 yards total offense, including a season-low 43 yards rushing. Oklahoma State entered the game ranked fifth in the nation in scoring with 37.4 points a game and averaging 446 yards total offense.

"I knew going in it was going to be tough," Thurman Thomas said, "but I didn't think it would be this tough. They weren't going for any of the fakes or anything like that. Overall, they just stopped our rush completely."

Nebraska's defense also frustrated Oklahoma State split end Hart Lee Dykes. Dykes caught five passes for 113 yards.

"Nebraska has a great defense," Dykes said. "We couldn't run on them. We tried to throw, but we just couldn't pull off the big play."

Broderick Thomas said Nebraska's defense was determined to stop Oklahoma State's big play threat after Thurman Thomas issued a challenge to the team on Friday night.

A group of Nebraska players bumped into Thurman Thomas and some of his Cowboy teammates at a Stillwater movie theater. According to Broderick Thomas, Thurman Thomas told the Nebraska players that "let one of you can stop me. It will take all 11 of you."

"We decided to put an 11-man show on him," Broderick Thomas said. "I don't know what got into that young man. He went off like the Teutoman Devil had jumped in his heart. I almost fell on the ground laughing."

But on Saturday, Thurman Thomas was the one who brought most of the time on the ground. Broderick Thomas and Nebraska's tight end Tom Banderas tackled Thomas before he could get a first down trophy.

"I said before the game that I was going to say a prayer for Thurman Thomas," Broderick Thomas said. "The prayer was for him to win the Heisman. It doesn't look like he'll win the Heisman after what happened (Saturday)."

