

Maybe coaches need a new study hall

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backs at Nebraska are good enough to merit scholarships and various other benefits, pass coverage should be a forte of theirs.

Florida State passed for 375 yards against Nebraska, the best passing effort against the Huskers in the 1980s.

Miami has the best secondary in America because it recruits players with that goal in mind. "Benny

The one time it was done against Florida State, to tight end Tom Banderas, it gained 48 yards. After years of watching Husker football, fans can sit at games and recite future plays. First down: pitch. Second down: trap or fullback dive. Third: a pass or option to the short side, depending on the situation. Yawwwn!

But without a doubt, the most evident problem Nebraska teams have faced in recent years is motivation. They don't have it, particularly on defense.

Item: Nebraska led Florida State 14-0 in the first quarter in the Sunkist-Fiesta Bowl. Husker strong safety Brian Washington intercepted a pass at the goal line to stop a Seminole threat. But the Huskers trailed 21-14 at halftime because the defense fell asleep — again.

Item: After Nebraska I-back Tyreece Knox fumbled at the Florida State 3-yard line late in the game, the Seminoles drove 97 yards for the winning score. Ninety-seven yards. On fourth-and-goal from the 15, Seminole quarterback Danny McManus dropped straight back and drilled a pass to flanker Ronald Lewis, who had his man beat by two steps. The Huskers had one play to stop, which they knew would be a pass, and they couldn't do it. One play. Gee, that's great!

If any coach in the Nebraska program needs to take a hike, it's Charlie McBride, the defensive coordinator. If the blame for the Huskers' perennial

"Benny and the Jets' . . . are deadly because they're better athletes than most receivers"

(Blades) and the Jets," as they've become affectionately known in South Florida, are deadly because they're better athletes than most receivers in the country. Nebraska needs players like that to stop the pass and the run. When Sooner running backs get to Nebraska's secondary, you can add six points to their score. It's over.

And please, no more players from Nebraska — Husker coaches need to abandon that mentality. In-state offensive linemen are fine, but this state just doesn't possess a plethora of skill players. Ever hear of Florida and Texas? They're full of defensive backs who run the 40 in 4.3 or 4.4 already. Imagine what five years in Boyd Epley's weight program could do for them, not to mention what they could do for Nebraska's win-loss record.

Some progress has been made in Texas and California recently, but a more serious effort needs to be made.

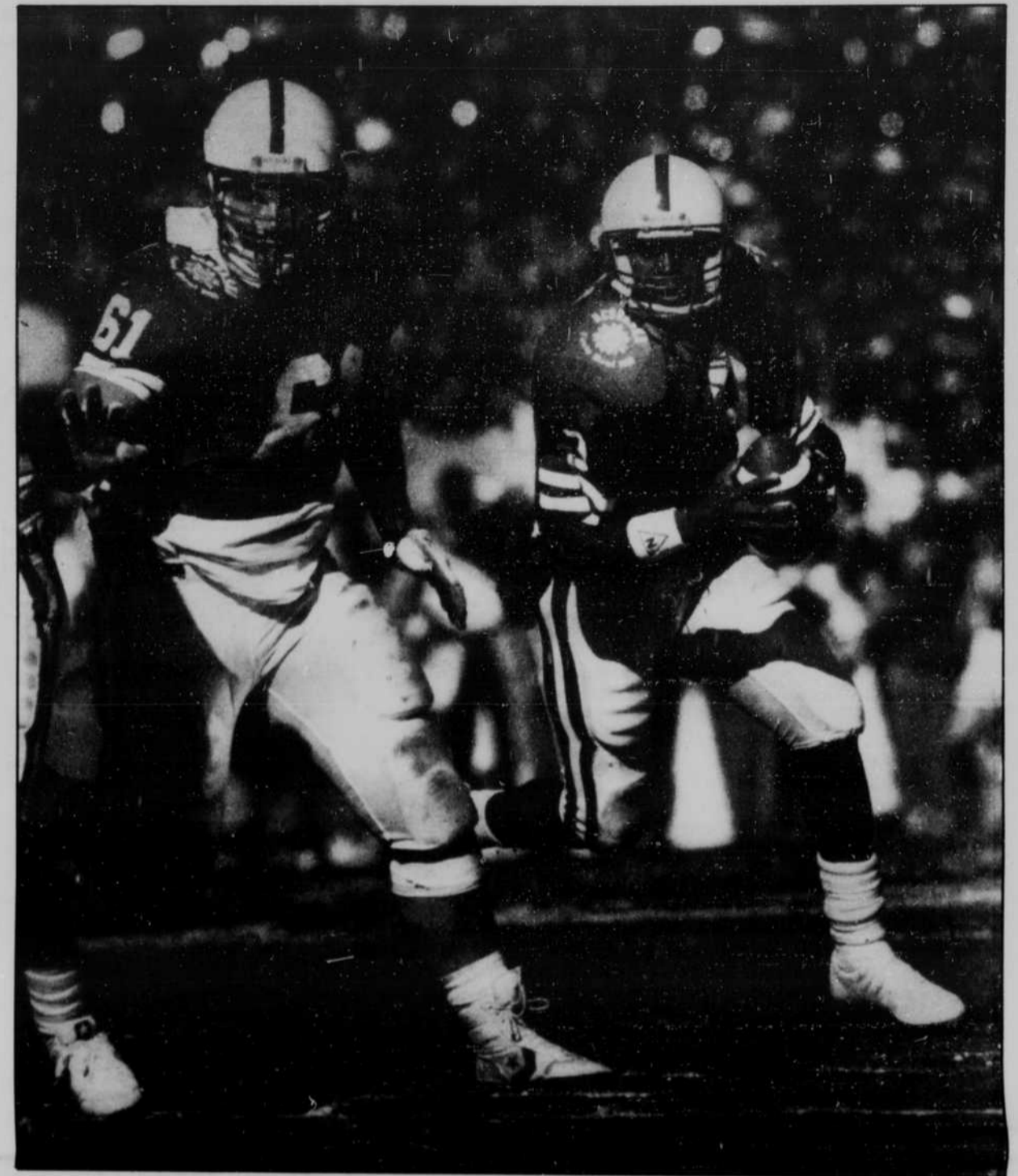
The same can be said of other positions, namely I-back. Again, players from Nebraska are good, but are rarely as talented as players from, say, Texas. Last winter, Nebraska signed Parade Magazine All-America selection Leodis Flowers from Omaha and snubbed Anthony Ray, a 6-foot-3, 220-pound star from Wharton, Texas. With due respect to the 5-foot-11, 190-pound Flowers, who is a great player, the Huskers need a Herschel Walker-type runner, not an outside speed back. Oklahoma thrives on stopping Nebraska runners at the corner.

Which brings out another head-shaker in Nebraska's program: the never-changing game plan. Yo, Tom, ever hear of throwing on first down?

second-place image can hang on one coach's head, it's his. Defense wins championships, be it conference or national. Barry Switzer knows it. Jimmy Johnson knows it. Why don't any coaches around here realize it?

When Oklahoma trails Nebraska in the final minutes of a game, all the Sooners need to do is run their triple option. The plays never change and neither does the result.

Somewhere, there's someone who can call Nebraska's defense better



Andrea Hoy/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska offensive guard John McCormick clears a path for quarterback Steve Taylor during the Cornhusker's 31-28 loss to Florida State in the 1988 Fiesta Bowl

than McBride.

It's been said that a team's style reflects that of its coach. Switzer is loose and relaxed, but aggressive, and so go the Sooners. Oklahoma's only losses in the last three years have come to Miami, another relaxed team, albeit loudmouthed and cocky. No, the Huskers shouldn't become another Miami. They tried it this season and humiliated themselves and, indeed, the state. But some changes need to be

made . . . maybe even in the coaching staff.

But don't get me wrong. While working at the Daily Nebraskan, I've interviewed and spoken informally with Osborne many times, and I'm the last one who would call for his resignation. I respect him as a coach and even more as a person. But even highly respected and intelligent people can learn from criticism. A 10-2 season, Husker fans say, is

a great accomplishment. True, it is. But so is a B-plus on a final exam. And like a B-plus, a 10-2 or 11-1 season gets old after a while. Especially after 16 years.

It's time to stop being satisfied with second-best. It's time the Nebraska football program changed its study habits and went for an A.

Green is a news-editorial and criminal justice major from Lincoln and is a Daily Nebraskan senior reporter.

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WALPURGISNACHT COMMITTEE
Important meeting Thursday at 3:00 pm in the City Union. Please be there. Party at Todd's that night!
See ya, Jill

TASSELS
Tuesday, 6:00 pm, elections.

INTRAMURAL DEADLINES
Co-rec Volleyball, as well as Men's and Women's basketball entries are due by 5:00 pm Thursday, Jan 14th at the Office of Campus Recreation, 1740 Vine Street, 472-3467.

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