

Husker offense played poorly during crackdown on Rebels, Osborne says

By Jeff Apel
Senior Reporter

There wasn't a legalized gambling line on Saturday's matchup between Nebraska and the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, but Cornhusker coach Tom Osborne still considered the game a great risk.

Osborne said he's glad to get by UNLV because Nebraska got caught up in media talk during its 48-6 victory against the Rebels at Memorial Stadium. He said the Huskers let the media's pre-season prediction that UNLV would finish last in the Big West Conference affect them.

"This is so hard. No matter how conscious you are as a player you absorb some of those things," Osborne said. "That happens in football."

Osborne said UNLV didn't get the respect it deserved entering the contest. Nevada law prohibits legalized gambling lines from being set on games in which schools from within the state are participating, while local oddsmakers declined to set a line.

"I would like to congratulate UNLV," Osborne said. "I think UNLV had a few players that really came to play."

Osborne said the hype and penalties allowed the Rebels to battle Nebraska to a 7-0 deficit at the end of the 1st quarter. The Huskers were called for eight penalties for 60 yards.

"We had so many penalties that it made it really hard to score," Osborne

said. "Still, we need to play better on offense. I thought our defense played reasonably well. I didn't think offensively we played very well."

Nebraska running back Ken Clark said the Huskers were disappointed by their offensive output. He said Nebraska, which has been outscored 48-30 in the 1st quarter this season, needs to sustain early drives.

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Clark said the Huskers are confident they can turn the 1st-quarter woes around. He said the team's problems can be attributed to a lack of concentration.

"I think it's just a matter of everybody getting ready to go," he said. "We've got to start getting something out of the 1st quarter."

Nebraska fullback Tyreese Knox said the Huskers need to set the tone of the game early if they are going to turn around their early scoring problems.

"I think sometimes guys are standing around lackadaisical," he said. "We have to make the game go our

way."

Nebraska took a 7-0 lead with 2:06 remaining in the 1st quarter when Clark capped off a five-play, 44-yard drive with a 2-yard scoring plunge. The drive was set up when quarterback Steve Taylor gained 20 yards on a draw play and Clark drove to the 2-yard line on an 11-yard run.

The Huskers increased their lead to 14-0 early in the 2nd quarter when cornerback Cartier Walker scooped up a punt blocked by outside linebacker Mike Croel and rambled 34 yards for a touchdown.

Croel said it "felt good" to block the punt by UNLV's Tony Rhynes even though there is danger in performing such a task.

"You have to be careful," Croel said. "The ball can go too low and hurt you."

Walker said he got lucky during the blocked punt because the ball bounced right into his hands. He then outran five defenders to the end zone.

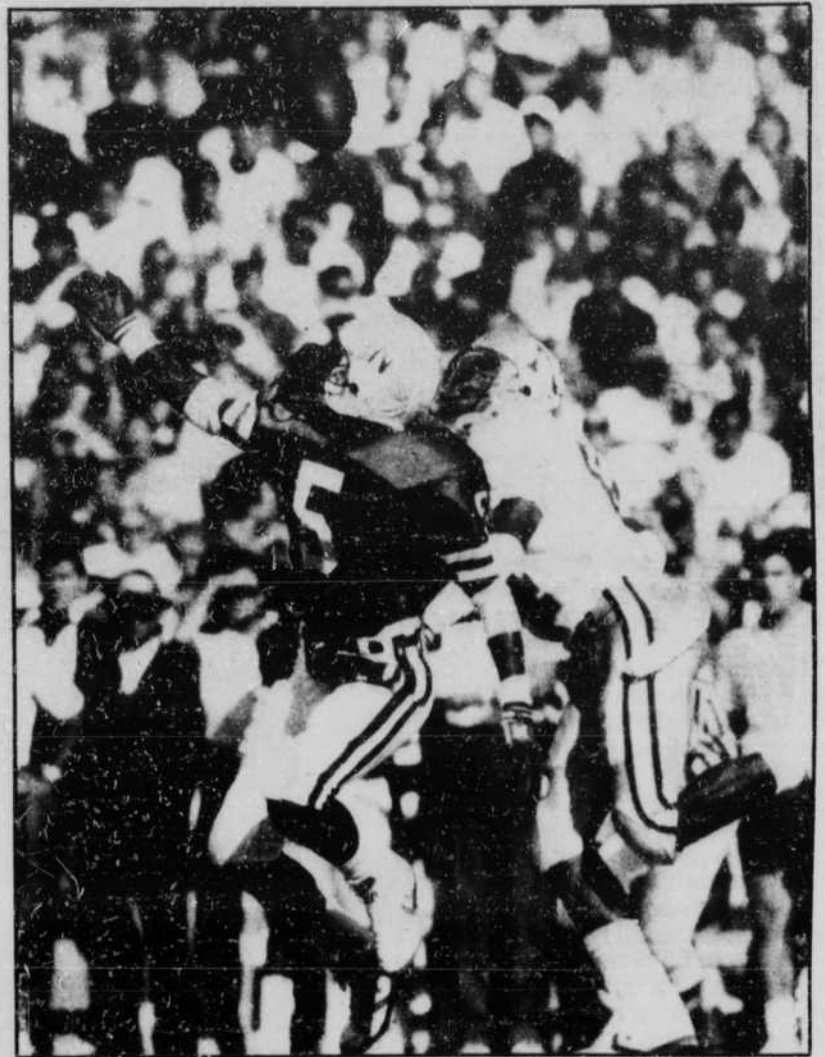
Walker said the touchdown left him with a special feeling.

"I felt like a kid in a candy store," he said.

Nebraska increased its lead to 20-0 midway through the 2nd quarter when running back Terry Rodgers took a pitch from Taylor and raced 20 yards for the end zone. The extra point by Husker kicker Gregg Barrios was blocked.

The Huskers then used a pair of

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Butch Ireland/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska defensive back Tahaun Lewis battles UNLV wide receiver Keenan McCardell for a pass in the second half of the Cornhuskers' 48-6 win against the Rebels Saturday at Memorial Stadium. McCardell caught the pass, but offsetting penalties nullified the catch.

Osborne displeased with 42-point victory

By Nick Hodge
Staff Reporter

A 48-6 victory against the University of Nevada-Las Vegas didn't please Cornhusker coach Tom Osborne.

Osborne said Sunday he was not happy with the overall performance of the Nebraska offense in the Huskers 42-point victory against the Rebels Saturday at Memorial Stadium. He said the offense did not perform well even though it played better in the second half than it did early in the game.

"I was certainly not pleased with the first half and probably not pleased overall offensively," Osborne said.

Osborne said many offensive troubles were the results of inadequate blocking.

"I think we blocked more poorly in

this game than we have all year," he said.

Nebraska rolled up 201 yards of total offense while taking a 20-0 lead at halftime. Of those, 119 yards came from returns, including a 34-yard touchdown return by cornerback Cartier Walker on a blocked punt.

Osborne said the high number of return yards tends to have a negative impact on the offense's total yards.

"Usually, when there's quite a lot of return yards, it cuts down your total offense," he said. "The blocked punt for a touchdown meant the offense had one less possession. So in some ways, the return yardage may have reflected in a little bit lower total offense."

Osborne said UNLV's defense also caused some of Nebraska's offensive problems. He said the Rebels' defense played well and had better

athletic ability than what it had shown in previous games.

Osborne said Nebraska's defense didn't play its best game of the season even though it did play reasonably well.

The Husker defense limited the Rebels to 51 yards of total offense in the second half and benefitted from a fumble recovery by defensive tackle Willie Griffin at the Rebel 6-yard line. Husker I-back Ken Clark scored three plays later to give Nebraska a 28-0 lead.

Osborne said he was disappointed because neither the offense nor the defense appeared ready to play. He said part of the problem was the image the public and media gave the players regarding the competition level of UNLV. The Rebels were picked to finish last in the Big West Conference this season.

"In fairness to the players, it's very hard to be real intense when you've been inundated all week with the idea that it won't be any kind of a game at all," Osborne said.

Osborne said he was pleased Ne-

Osborne said the UNLV coaching staff should feel good about the Rebels' effort.

"When you lose you still feel bad, but at least you can be proud of the way you played," he said.

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braska won the game despite the offense's poor and inconsistent execution, but said he is concerned about the remainder of the season.

"The good part was that we were a good enough team to win handily, but I don't feel real comfortable about the future," Osborne said.

Osborne said some UNLV players indicated to him after the game that they played well against the Huskers.

"I think they felt like they had given a good effort and done all they could," he said. "They have some good athletes."

Sweep displeases Coach Wolforth

By Mike Kluck
Staff Reporter

Nebraska's double-header softball sweep of the University of Nebraska at Omaha was a team effort, Cornhusker coach Ron Wolforth said.

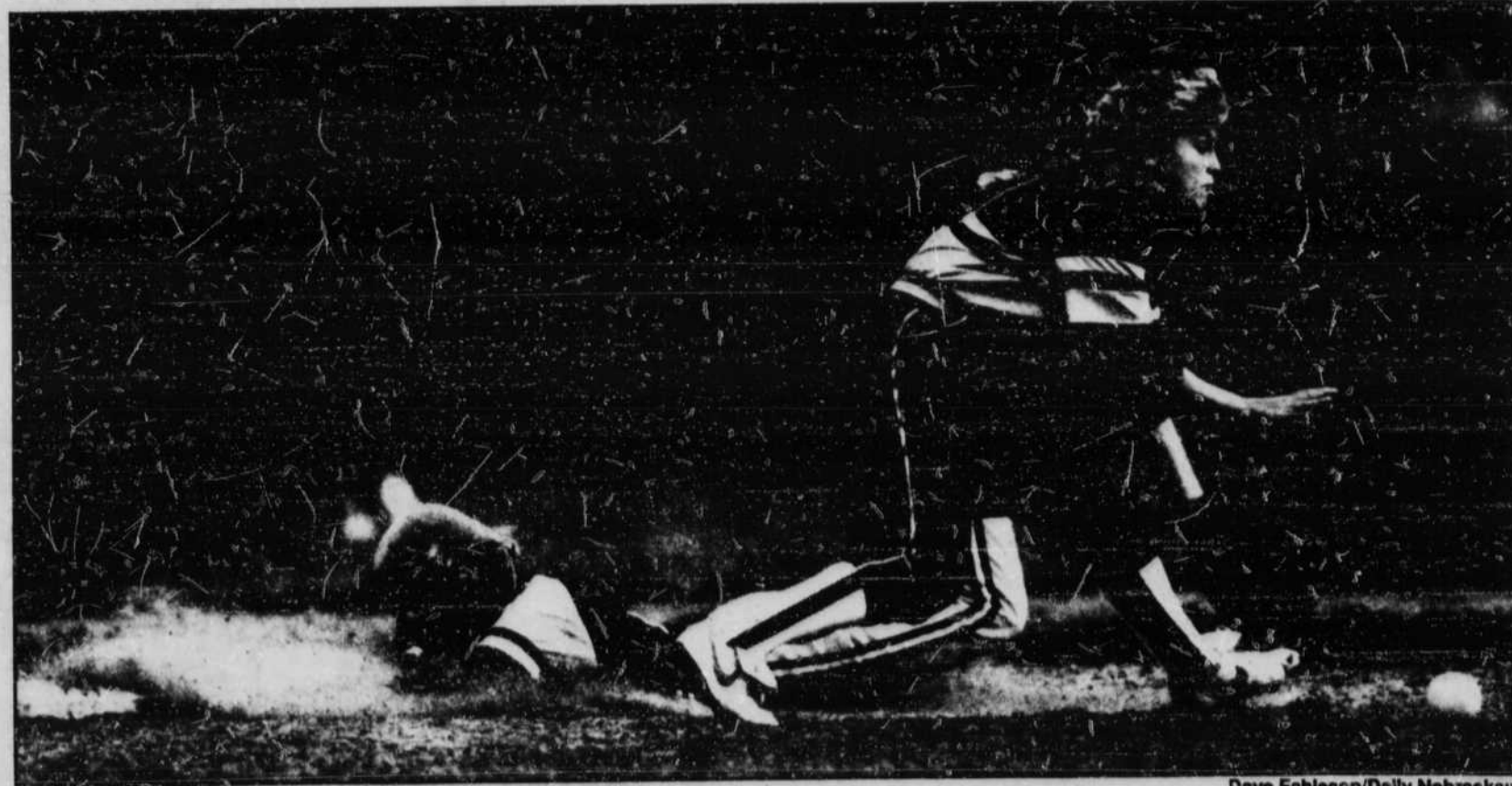
The Huskers, 7-1, defeated UNO 7-2 and 4-2 Friday night at the Nebraska Softball Complex, but the games went differently than Wolforth wanted.

"We stunk," Wolforth said. "If we would have played a Division I top 20 team we would have been embarrassed."

"I don't think that I did a good enough job of preparing them. I think that is the key. I don't think I was tough enough and firm enough on our preparation and I won't make that mistake again."

Wolforth's statement was echoed by senior left fielder Janelle Frese. Frese had four hits and five runs batted in during the two games, but wasn't happy.

"I myself was definitely not satisfied with a 4-2 win and a 7-2 win over UNO," Frese said. "Sure we did some



Dave Fahleson/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska's Jill Rishel successfully steals second base as UNO's Lynn Zealand fields the throw Friday at the Nebraska Softball Complex. The Cornhuskers swept a double-header against the Mavericks 7-2 and 4-2.

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