



Dave Hansen/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska freshman outside linebacker David White chases Northern Illinois quarterback Stacey Robinson.

Third-quarter points lead Huskers to 48-17 win

By Chuck Green
Senior Reporter

Most of the 76,194 fans in Memorial Stadium Saturday knew it was going to happen. Nebraska's players and members of the media knew it was going to happen, too.

They just didn't know when. "It" was the Cornhuskers' offensive bombardment of Northern Illinois, which finally came in the form of a 21-point third quarter that led to a 48-17 season-opening win.

But with the game tied 17-17 at halftime, Nebraska coach Tom Osborne was "a little concerned."

"It was pretty scary," he said. "It could have turned into one of those deals we'd never have lived down. If we would have dropped (the ball) a few more times in the second half, it could have happened."

The Huskers scored the first time they got the ball, capping a five play, 69-yard drive with a 2-yard burst by I-back Ken Clark.

Clark rushed for 168 yards on 14 carries, but had to leave the game early in the second quarter with a bruised knee. He returned in the second half, but went back to the sideline a few plays later for the rest of the day.

Osborne said he didn't think Clark's injury was serious, but would wait until Monday to determine the severity.

On the ensuing series, Nebraska stopped Northern Illinois in three plays and forced a punt. Split end Morgan Gregory fielded the punt at the 45 and was hit by Huskie cornerback Jeff Geary. Gregory fumbled and Northern Illinois recovered at its own 47.

The Huskies scored nine plays later on a 2-yard run by fullback Adam Dach. The extra point by John Ivanic tied the score 7-7 with 6:08 left in the first quarter.

Three plays into Nebraska's next drive, Husker quarterback Gerry Gdowski completed a 3-yard pass to

Nate Turner, who fumbled at the Northern Illinois 22. Gdowski then threw an interception on the following drive, ending another Nebraska scoring opportunity at the Northern Illinois 24.

After a 28-yard field goal by Gregg Barrios and a 5-yard touchdown run by I-back Leodis Flowers, Nebraska led 17-7. But another fumbled punt return gave Northern Illinois the ball at Nebraska's 34.

Five plays later, Dach scored his second touchdown of the day and cut Nebraska's lead to three.

Another Nebraska fumble gave Northern Illinois the ball at the Nebraska 20 with 2:30 left in the first half. Ivanic booted a 36-yard field goal 15 seconds before halftime, tying the game and causing a few boos from the crowd.

Osborne remained calm at halftime, despite Nebraska's five first-half turnovers.

"Getting mad was the worst thing I could do," he said. "We were tied not because we weren't making an effort, or being lazy, but because we weren't hanging on to the ball."

"I just told them to hang on to the ball and play a little better."

As the third quarter began, it became apparent the Huskers had taken Osborne's advice.

Turner took the kickoff at the 3 and returned it to Nebraska's 47. Three plays and 53 yards later, Gdowski's 11-yard pass to tight end Monte Kratzenstein put the Huskers ahead for good.

Gdowski completed 6 of 8 passes for 83 yards and a touchdown, and rushed for 74 yards on 5 carries. Mickey Joseph also saw playing time for Nebraska, rushing for 22 yards on five carries and completing two passes for 14 yards and a touchdown -- his first as a Husker.

Osborne said Gdowski's and Joseph's performances solidified their places as the top two quarterbacks.

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NU safety Sanders reunited with high school coach

By Darran Fowler
Senior Reporter

A fatherly figure roamed the sidelines during Nebraska's 48-17 win against Northern Illinois Saturday.

Nebraska free safety Marvin Sanders said the game was special for him because of the presence of Northern Illinois receivers coach Robert Jackson. Jackson was Sanders' football coach at Thornwood High School in suburban Chicago.

To say Jackson and Sanders are close would be an understatement.

"Coach Jackson was really like a father to me," Sanders said. "He not only cared about me as a football player, but he cared about me as a person. He really took me as one of his own. We're real close to this day."

For Jackson, the feeling is mutual.

"He's just a super kid," Jackson said. "Anything that needed to be done, at any time, you could count on him. He's like my son."

Sanders, who played wide receiver and defensive back in high school, had four tackles -- three unassisted -- and an interception in the game.

He said that his knowing Jackson was not an advantage because high school and college football techniques are incomparable.

Sanders said he and Jackson had an implied agreement that during the game it was "strictly business."

"That's our competitive attitudes," he said.

Jackson said Sanders was a good high school football player.

"He was a very physical, extremely gifted athlete," he said. "He had great hands and he was always around the football."

Jackson was coach at Thornwood for three years after serving as an assistant for nine years. He went to Northern Illinois the year after Sanders graduated.

In his three years as coach, Jackson said he dedicated himself to making sure the players got adequate publicity at all universities and colleges.

During Sanders' junior season, six players went to major college football programs, and four (including him) went during his senior year.

"He was a great motivator and he went to a lot of work to get his players recruited," Sanders said.

Sanders credits Jackson for his decision to sign with Nebraska.

"Jackson was a very honest man and he thought Nebraska had a very honest program," Sanders said. "I remember him telling me one night, 'No matter where you decide to go,

always go somewhere there's a lot of integrity.' He told me that Coach (Tom) Osborne was the man with the most integrity in college football."

Sanders said he once considered transferring from Thornwood, after getting mixed up with the wrong crowd.

Jackson changed his attitude, he said.

"He took me aside and said, 'Running from your problems isn't going to solve it,'" he said. "He told me to never be a quitter and that's something I always look back on. He turned things around for me."

Jackson's influence precipitated Sanders' desire to also become a football coach after graduation.

"That made me want to have that kind of influence on somebody else," Sanders said.

Sanders said he wants to coach at the high school level because "that's

where personalities and attitudes are molded and shaped."

"Hopefully, I can lead some guys in the right direction like Coach Jackson did with me," he said.

Jackson recalled the homecoming game in Sanders' senior year when Thornwood defeated its rival Home-wood-Flosmore for the first time in seven years.

Sanders had 15 tackles, two interceptions and more than 100 yards receiving in that game.

"He put on a spectacular show," Jackson said.

Sanders remembers that game, but said the last game of his high school career was the most memorable.

"I remember me and Coach Jackson just standing on the field looking at the scoreboard and realizing there is no more," Sanders said.

"That was really hard, but it's still the most memorable."

Cornhuskers 'Kruse' to Runza Invite title

By Darran Fowler
Senior Reporter
and Cory Golden
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska volleyball team found the road against Houston a little tough until junior Val Novak set the Cornhuskers into "Kruse" control.

Nebraska coach Terry Pettit said Novak, the Huskers' setter, and sophomore outside hitter Janet Kruse provided the lift Nebraska needed to defeat the Cougars Saturday night to capture the Runza Invitational title.

Nebraska won the five-game match 15-5, 9-15, 17-19, 15-8 and 15-5.

"I thought at the end 'Kruser' and Novak elevated our play attackwise," Pettit said. "Val got the ball to 'Kruser' and 'Kruser'

started to terminate."

Seventh-ranked Nebraska defeated Bowling Green 15-13, 12-15, 15-9, 15-6 Friday night in a match that featured the Huskers' first game loss of the season.

Houston beat Kansas State by scores of 15-11, 15-13, 11-15, 15-11 on Friday and beat Bowling Green by scores of 15-9, 3-15, 15-8, 12-15, 15-12 Saturday. Also on Saturday, Kansas State posted a 15-11, 17-15, 15-10 victory over Bowling Green.

Novak and Kruse were named to the All-Tournament team, after Novak, the tournament's Most Valuable Player, tallied 80 assists and Kruse 28 kills against Houston. Both were career bests. Kruse also set a Nebraska record for attacks with 59 en route to a 25-kill performance against Bowling Green.

Houston's Susan Rice and Julie Gates,

Kansas State's Lynda Harshbarger and Bowling Green's Lisa Mika also were named to the all-tourney team.

Houston coach Bill Walton said he was impressed with the performance of Kruse and Novak in the tournament.

"Janet Kruse had a great weekend," Walton said. "She hit over people, she hit around people, she hit through people... I thought she was pretty studly."

"I thought Val Novak was also critical to Nebraska's win. She chased down a lot of balls and she put a lot to her hitters off bad passes."

In the third game, with the Huskers trailing 14-9, Nebraska captain Virginia Stahr left the match with a sore right shoulder.

Behind Novak and Kruse, Nebraska rallied back to take the lead 17-16, in what was the game's fifth lead change, before losing the

game.

But it wasn't all Kruse and Novak.

"I thought Becki Bolli was a major factor in the match," Pettit said, "not just because we ran points when she was in, but because she changed the tempo."

The junior serving specialist laid down a game-high five aces, but her jump serve did more than just disrupt the Cougars' service reception, Walton said.

"(Bolli) was a big help to Nebraska off the bench," Walton said. "They would need a boost and she'd come in and get the momentum with a couple of points."

Pettit credited Stahr for benching herself, and praised her replacements -- Sara Hesch and Stephanie Thater.

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