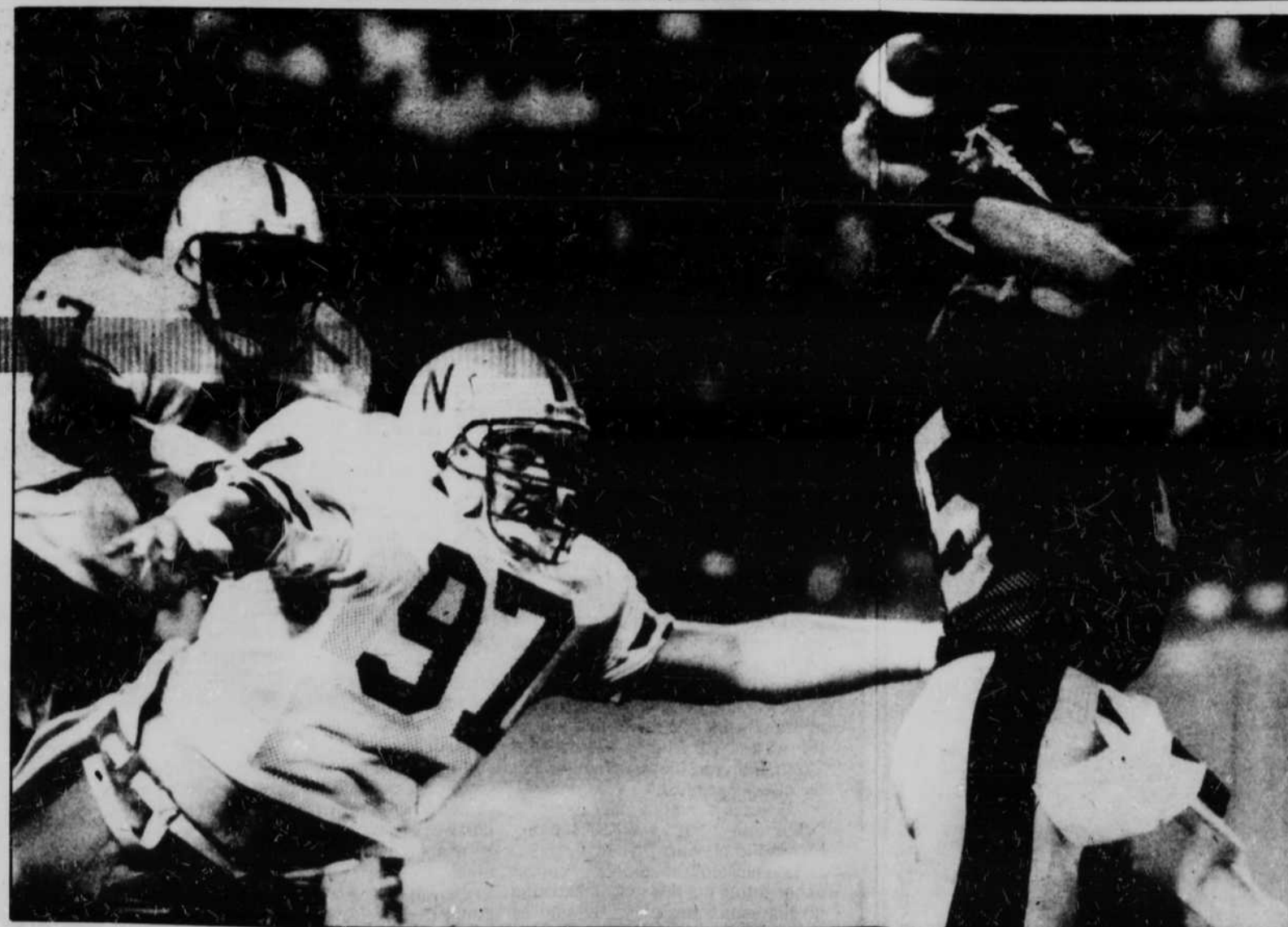
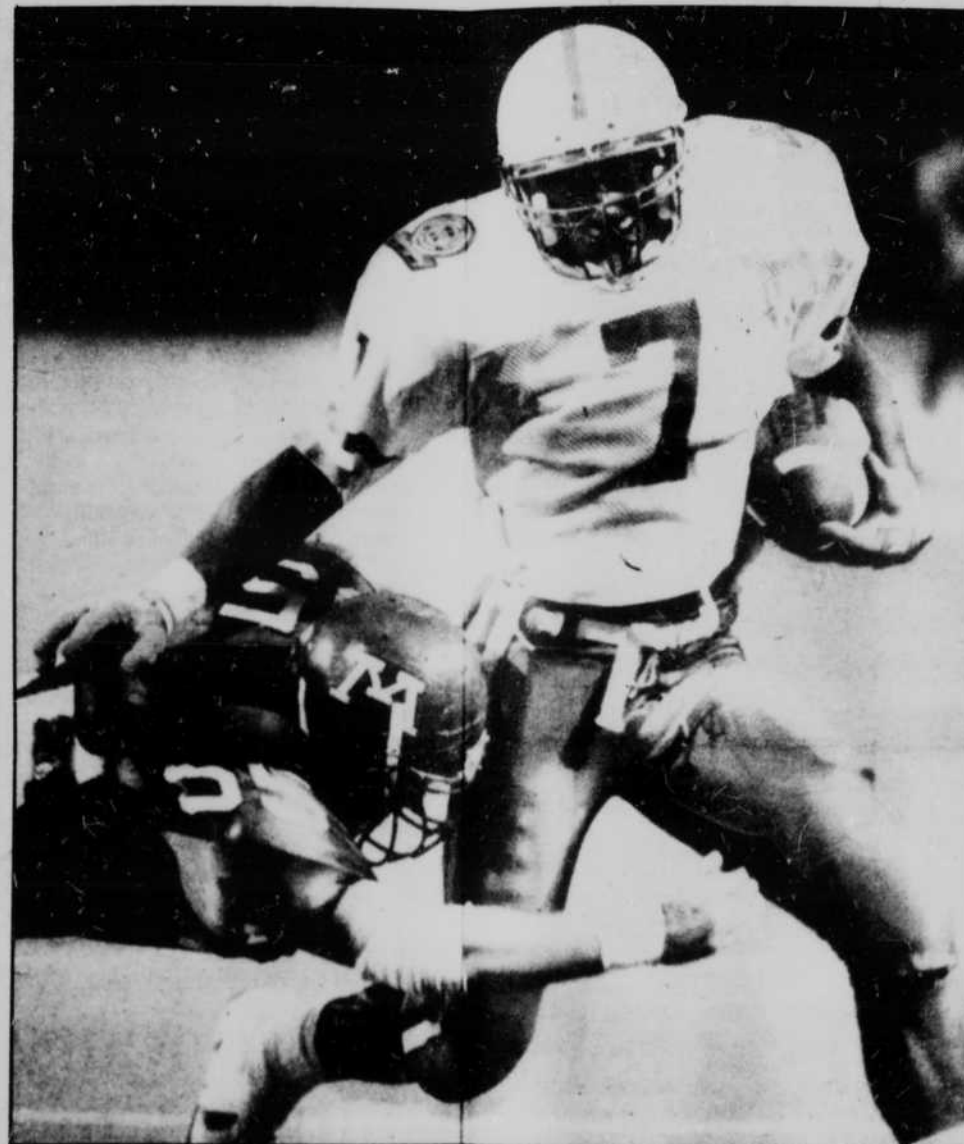


Above: Nebraska quarterback Gerry Gdowski fires a pass under the protection of offensive guard Jim Wanek. **Above Right:** Defensive tackle Kenny Walker pursues Minnesota quarterback Scott Schaffner. **Middle Right:** Nebraska running back Andre McDuffey shrugs off Minnesota linebacker Joel Staats. **Above Far Right:** Nebraska coach Tom Osborne and Minnesota coach John Gutekunst leave the field together following the Huskers' 48-0 victory over the Golden Gophers Saturday evening in the Metrodome. **Right:** Middle guard Pat Engelbert puts pressure on Minnesota quarterback Scott Schaffner. **Far Right:** Wingback Richard Bell tries to brush off Minnesota defensive back Fred Foggie.



Huskers at home in the Dome

By Chuck Green
Senior Reporter

MINNEAPOLIS -- A University of Minnesota football fan shuffled past the press section Saturday night on his way out of the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome.

"Damn it," he muttered, shaking his head. His eyes were filled with tears.

There was little more he could have said. He just had watched No. 3-ranked Nebraska shut out his Golden Gophers 48-0, extending the Cornhuskers' win streak against Minnesota to 13.

But no tears could be found in Nebraska's locker room after the game. The defensive players were especially cheerful.

So was Nebraska coach Tom Osborne.

"Our defense played tremendous football," he said. "We played defense like I thought we could play defense. We were able to get wound up and zero in on them a little better than on Utah, and that helped."

In Nebraska's first two games, against Northern Illinois and Utah, the Huskers surrendered 47 points in their first two games -- the most points given up by a Nebraska team in the first two games since 1957.

But Saturday, Nebraska's defense held Minnesota to 163 total yards and did not allow the Gophers into Nebraska territory until the fourth quarter, with 12:53 remaining.

While Nebraska's players celebrated, Minnesota coach John Gutekunst tried to salvage optimism.

"To say I'm disappointed is an understatement," he said. "We didn't give ourselves a chance to see if we can play with Nebraska."

Nebraska defensive coordinator Charlie McBride said the defense "had something to prove" against Minnesota.

"There were some things said about our defense that our players didn't appreciate," he said. "Our kids weren't really mad. But they felt like they had to play harder to do a good job."

McBride said Nebraska's first two games didn't allow the Huskers to employ their usual defensive sets because of the unusual offenses they faced.

"But tonight we were able to play stuff we worked on all

spring," McBride said.

Gutekunst said he was impressed with Nebraska's defense. "I have to give their defense credit," Gutekunst said. "When you get a shutout in today's football, it's an accomplishment."

Offensively, the Huskers rolled up 530 yards -- 295 rushing and 235 passing.

"This was by far the most complete football game of the season for us," Osborne said. "I felt we would probably go for four quarters, that this might be a one touchdown or 10-point game."

Osborne's concern was credible only until the second quarter. After a first-quarter, 6-yard touchdown run by I-back Ken Clark, placekicker Gregg Barrios booted a 38-yard field goal with 11:30 left in the half to extend Nebraska's lead to 10-0.

After trading possessions, the Huskers faced a second-and-11 situation at the Minnesota 26-yard line. Quarterback Gerry Gdowski rolled right and drilled a pass to wide-open wingback Richard Bell for a touchdown. The extra point by Barrios increased Nebraska's lead to 17-0.

Gdowski completed 10 of 15 passes for 180 yards.

Clark added a 14-yard touchdown run with one minute left in the second quarter to give the Huskers a 24-0 lead at halftime.

Clark's 104 yards on 18 carries put the senior I-back at seventh on Nebraska's all-time career rushing yardage list. He now has 2,239 yards.

Chris Drennan added a 42-yard field goal and I-back Leodis Flowers scored on a 1-yard run in the third quarter to increase Nebraska's lead to 34-0.

Flowers added a 37-yard run in the fourth quarter, and finished the night with 49 yards on eight carries.

Sophomore wingback Mark Dowse closed out the scoring with a 7-yard run with 2:02 left in the game.

Midway through the fourth quarter, many of the 58,368 fans on hand -- almost half of whom wore red -- groaned as Husker quarterback Mike Grant took the field with the offense. Grant, a 6-foot-2, 200-pound sophomore from Valrico, Fla., had not played in Nebraska's first two games under the assumption that he would be redshirted.

But it was not to be.

"We talked last week about the possibility of him playing tonight," Osborne said. "I just don't think right now, with the style of offense we've been running, that we can afford not to play him."

"The odds of us getting through the season with Gdowski staying healthy and playing well the rest of the way is maybe not that good."

Osborne said his concern was heightened when Gdowski left the game in the third quarter with a bruised elbow.

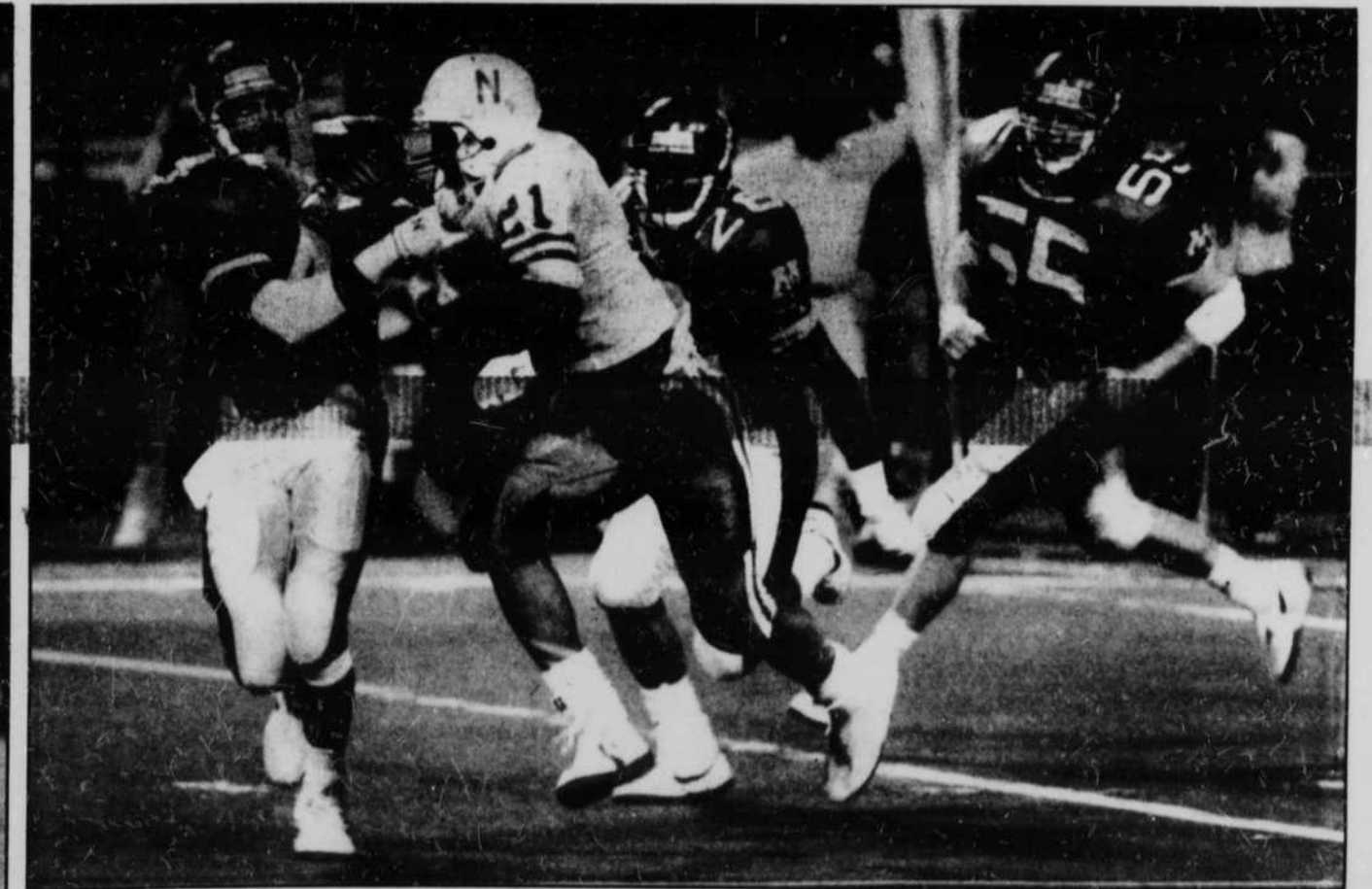
Plus, "I don't particularly want to go into next year starting over in experience at quarterback," Osborne said.

Grant completed 2 of 3 passes for 34 yards and rushed four times for 32. He was listed as the No. 3 quarterback on last week's Husker depth chart.

Grant said he would rather redshirt this season, "but it's something I had to do, I thought, for the betterment of our team."

"I thought that maybe since I'll be going into the No. 1 spot next year, I didn't want to go into spring with no experience at all," he said. "I feel all right about it."

"It's whatever is best for the team."



Photos by Dave Hansen and Eric Gregory