

Osborne says he's glad Oregon game is over

By Chuck Green
Senior Reporter

Saturday's game against Oregon State was one Nebraska coach Tom Osborne was glad to see end.

Osborne's distress wasn't directed at the final score -- the No. 3-ranked Cornhuskers won the game 35-7 -- and it wasn't necessarily the defensive effort that bothered him. Nebraska's defenders sacked the Beavers' quarterback Nick Schlichtle 11 times for 89 yards.

Oregon State's defense didn't particularly annoy Osborne, either. The stunts, blitzes, loops, coverages and aggressiveness caused the Huskers problems, he said, but second-half adjustments countered the Beavers' efforts.

Nothing in particular aggravated him. Everything put together, though, was a different story.

"I'm glad that's over with," Osborne said. "I was afraid of today, and I wasn't at all surprised. We played a couple of good games and had everybody feeling good about themselves.

"I was afraid if we didn't play well, we'd get beat."

For the second consecutive week, Nebraska's defense "played a fine game," Osborne said. The Huskers held Oregon State to minus-36 yards rushing, but gave up 264 yards passing.

Schlichtle completed 18 of 39 passes and was intercepted twice.

Meanwhile, Nebraska's offense rolled up 397 yards, including 278 yards rushing. Wingback Richard Bell led the Huskers in rushing with 82 yards on five carries, including a 48-yard reverse midway through the third quarter.

Husker I-back Ken Clark carried 20 times for 59 yards and a touchdown -- a 2.9 yard-per-carry average. He had been averaging 7.4 yards per carry coming into the game.

Nebraska led 14-0 at halftime, having scored on a 7-yard run by quarterback Gerry Gdowski and an 8-yard burst up the middle by fullback Bryan Carpenter.

Gdowski completed 5 of 14 passes for 110 yards and a touchdown, and rushed for 47 yards on nine carries.

After trading possessions through the opening minutes of the second half, Nebraska drove 80 yards in four plays, sparked by Bell's 48-yard reverse. Clark scored from two yards out to extend the Huskers' lead to 21-0 with 5:38 remaining in the third quarter.

On the following Oregon State possession, the Beavers threw on 10 consecutive plays, completing six of them, and capped an 11-play, 75-yard drive with a 2-yard run by fullback Pat Chaffey with 2:10 left in the quarter.

"I told the defense at halftime I wanted a shutout," Nebraska defensive coordinator Charlie McBride said. "Maybe I should have kept my mouth shut."

With 13:39 left in the game, Gdowski dropped back and hit split end John Bostick for a 60-yard touchdown pass to increase the Huskers' lead to 28-7.

Bostick originally had planned to redshirt this season, but the plan was changed when starting split end Morgan Gregory suffered a sprained ankle against Minnesota last week.

Mark Dowse ended the scoring with 4:24 left in the game when he caught a 9-yard touchdown pass from quarterback Mike Grant.

Osborne said he "wasn't very happy" at times with the way the offense performed.

"We had a lot of second-and-eight situations, and that's not our style of play," he said. "You've got to make the big plays and we didn't make as many of them as we should have. We were not in good tempo for the offense."

Happiness came easy for the defense, though. Seven players recorded sacks, and Reggie Cooper and Bruce Pickens each intercepted a pass.

Outside linebacker Mike Croel led the Husker defense with eight tackles, including six unassisted, and linebacker Pat Tyrance added seven.

McBride attributed the Huskers' success with quarterback sacks to the "dime" defense, which is used primarily against teams with passing offenses and employs five defensive backs, faster linebackers and the best pass rushers on the defensive line.

"This year, we've elevated our process," he said. "Last year, we had one basic front. This season, our outside people (linebackers and cornerbacks) are opening up some things for our inside guys."

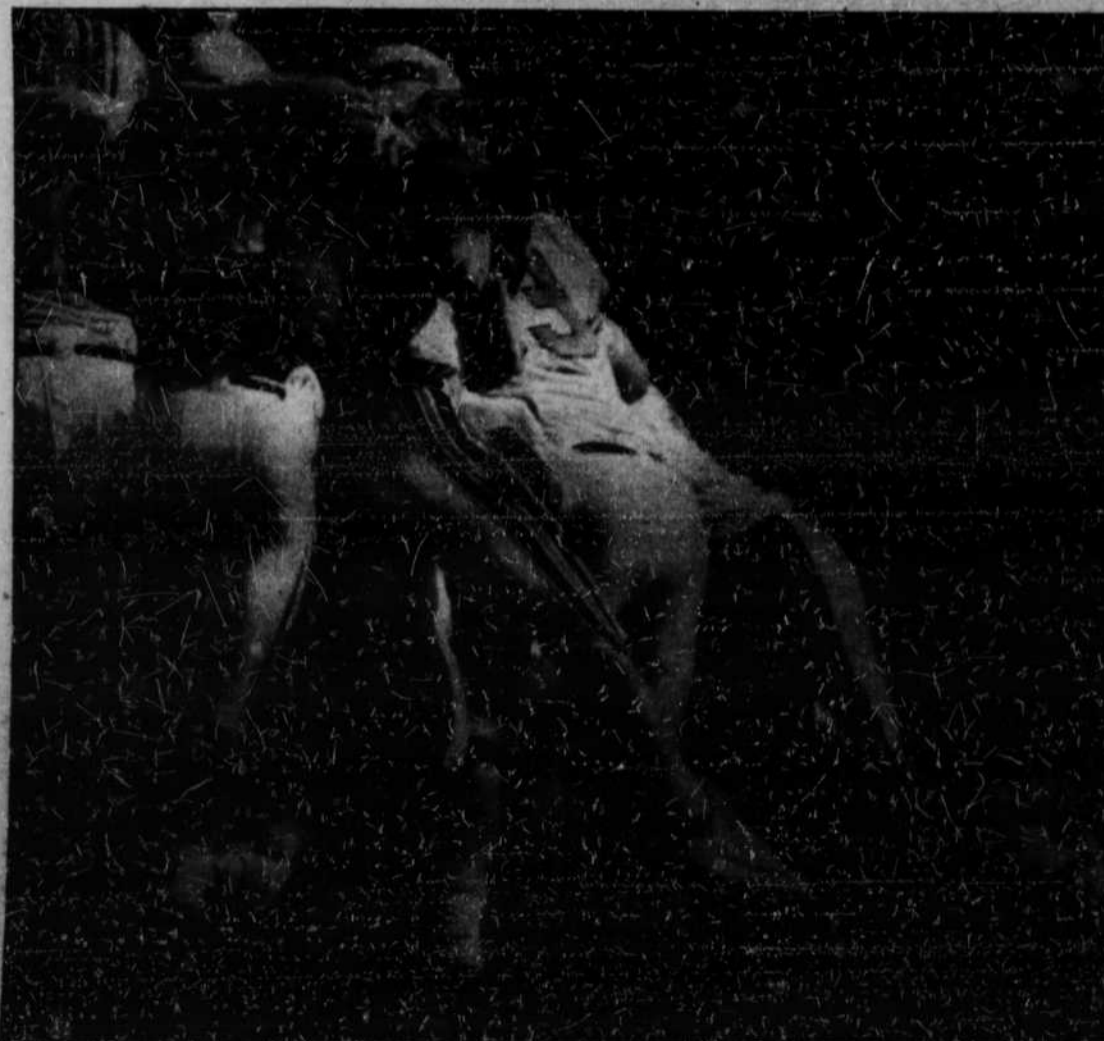
Osborne said he expected a difficult time with Oregon State.

"They have a quality football team and they played very hard," he said. "We could have played better in some areas, but I'm not too disappointed with the way it ended up."

"Don't give up on us yet. We'll get better."



Clockwise from upper left: Oregon State cornerback Kelly Hughley (17) breaks up a second-and-20 pass to Richard Bell (21) late in the second quarter. Junior I-back Terry Rodgers returned to play Saturday with form reminiscent of his father, Johnny Rodgers, but rushed for only 5 yards in 4 carries. Nebraska's Pat Engelbert (97) clenches his fist with satisfaction after sacking Oregon State's Nick Schlichtle. Nebraska's J. Spitzberger (86) interferes with Oregon State's Phil Ross (81) in the second half. The ball fell incomplete, but Oregon State took the penalty. Jeff Mills trounces quarterback Nick Schlichtle midway through the fourth quarter, causing a fumble.



Photos by William Lauer, David Hansen and David Fahleson