

Florida State quarterback has last laugh

Seminoles' Willis bombs Cornhusker secondary

By Jeff Apel
Senior Editor

TEMPE, Ariz. -- Florida State quarterback Peter Tom Willis showed up the Sunkist-Fiesta Bowl's officials and Nebraska's defense in the process.

Willis said after Florida State's 41-17 victory in the New Year's Day contest at Arizona State's Sun Devil Stadium that he felt frustrated when the Seminoles were called for three-consecutive holding penalties in the second quarter.

Those frustrations were short-lived, as Willis overcame a first-and-40 situation enroute to setting three Sunkist-Fiesta Bowl records and leading Florida State to a nationally televised rout of the Cornhuskers.

Willis said he had to prove the officials wrong when Florida State was called for the consecutive penalties. He accomplished it by completing a 30-yard pass to fullback Edgar Bennett, then throwing a 10-yard touchdown strike to tailback Dexter Carter.

"We took it in and scored," Willis said. "We stuck it in their face."

Nebraska coach Tom Osborne said Willis' touchdown pass hurt the Huskers because it gave Florida State a 21-10 halftime lead. He said a mental lapse by free safety Marvin Sanders led to the reception.

"We thought we were in the right coverage," Osborne said. "The guy just went to sleep a little bit."

Osborne said mistakes hurt Nebraska throughout the contest. He said Nebraska also was hurt by Willis, who set individual Sunkist-Fiesta Bowl records for total offense (414), yards passing (422) and touchdown passes (5).

"I think Willis played very well," Osborne said. "At times we got some heat on him but by and large we couldn't get to him."

"He's a great player."

Willis said his performance was not one of his best. He said his effort was aided by the Florida State receivers, who repeatedly burned the Husker defense for big chunks of yardage.

"I didn't feel like I threw the ball that well," Willis said. "The receivers just made some great catches."

Osborne said Florida State's catches were a combination of skill and luck.

"A couple times they made great catches," he said. "A couple times, it was jump balls and they came up with it."

Osborne said Florida State's passing game hurt Nebraska because it put the Huskers in a deep hole. After surrendering a 9-yard touchdown pass to split end Morgan Gregory, the third-ranked Seminoles outscored Nebraska 41-3 to raise their record to 10-2.

Nebraska, which finished 11th and 12th in the polls, also finished with a 10-2 mark. The rankings marked the first time in Osborne's 18-year Husker coaching career that Nebraska has not finished among the top 10 teams in either of the wire service polls.

Osborne said Nebraska could not change its run-oriented offense to a passing attack when it fell behind.

"We're not a team that's going to make a living throwing the ball," Osborne said, "and as we got further behind, we couldn't run the ball."

Florida State noseguard Odell Haggins said the Seminoles used their speed to stuff Nebraska's ground game. The Huskers finished with 115 yards rushing on 46 attempts.

"We just out-quickened them," Haggins said. "There's no doubt our quickness helped out."

Osborne said Nebraska also helped Florida State by committing five fumbles, three of which were lost.

"The big factor was the turnovers," he said. "I suppose that five turnovers is worth 21-28 points."

Osborne said he was embarrassed



Al Schaben/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska defensive back Marvin Sanders clings to Florida State tailback Dexter Carter as outside linebacker Mike Croel moves in.

by the game's outcome.

"We thought we were capable of winning," he said. "Obviously, we got pretty close to getting blown out."

Florida State coach Bobby Bowden said he was never worried about the game's outcome. He said he wasn't even concerned when the Seminoles blotted their first two scoring opportunities.

Florida State failed to score on its first possession when Seminole placekicker Bill Mason missed a 37-yard field goal. Nebraska then halted Florida State's next possession at the Seminoles' 3.

Bowden said Florida State started

scoring when it scrapped its running attack.

"We just said, 'Heck, let's throw the ball,'" he said.

Bowden said Florida State's offense clicked throughout the contest, as Willis completed 25 of his 40 passes while being sacked once. He said he would not trade the Seminoles' offense for any in the country.

"We could be dull, dull, dull and all of the sudden bam, bam, bam," Bowden said. "That's the way our offense is."

Bowden said he was proud of his team.

"We played real good," he said.

"I thought we played about as good as we can."

Nebraska linebacker Pat Tyrance said the Huskers played about as bad as they could. He said Nebraska made too many mistakes to defeat Florida State.

"It was just one of those things," Tyrance said. "I don't think we gave ourselves a chance."

Nebraska free safety Tyrone Byrd said the Huskers were victimized by mental breakdowns. Willis took advantage of those breakdowns, as he threw touchdown passes to wide re-

See FIESTA on 8

College presidents' reforms include unworkable rules

It'll just get right to the point: The NCAA causes more problems than it solves.

The biggest problem is that the institution's ineptitude, ignorance and existence in Fantasyland continues to be tolerated by college coaches, administrators and athletes.



Chuck Green

In many cases, even supported and encouraged.

During the past week, college presidents have met, argued and reformed in Dallas. The omniscient

Presidents Commission on Tuesday decided, among other things, to shave three games from the college basketball season.

The group's legislation reduced from 28 to 25 the number of games allowed per season in Division I and Division II, effective in 1992. In addition, preseason basketball workouts cannot begin until Nov. 1 (they could start on Oct. 15 previously), and the season will not start until Dec. 1. It used to begin on the fourth Friday of November.

Each program is allowed an exemption every four years, to play an extra game in Alaska, Hawaii, the preseason National Invitation Tournament, or against a foreign or club team.

The reduction of the number of

games probably won't affect large schools, or perennial basketball powers like Georgetown. But it will cause financial crunches on smaller schools, like Creighton, and for less nationally-recognized programs, like Nebraska.

Fewer games means less revenue. It's that simple.

Unfortunately, most of the voting presidents couldn't see the forest through the trees. Of course, four or five years down the road, when profits at their respective schools drop, they'll come to the annual January convention with flaming tongues and briefcases full of excuses, complaints and demands.

But that gem of a reform isn't the only one decided at this year's brainstorming orgy.

Spring football practice for Division I and I-AA programs will be chopped from 20 days to 15, and pads may be worn for only 10 of those days.

Originally, the Presidents Commission proposed that spring practice be cut in half, to 10 days, with no contact allowed.

Ge, what a great idea. There wouldn't be any injuries -- until the first game of the season, when the players hadn't hit or been hit for nearly a year. Because they were rusty, because they didn't know the proper hitting techniques, whatever ... the injury rates would soar.

Then what? A proposal to abolish contact football?

Another problem with the new rule is the wording. It limits spring prac-

tice to 15 days -- not 15 practices.

I can almost hear the coaches now: "What? My player has to go to class during these two weeks?! No can do. ... we have three practices a day now, ya know."

Coaches will have two-a-days in March, players will skip classes to work out and the NCAA will have a fresh new problem on its grubby, idle little hands.

It seems like the NCAA creates its own problems, then tries to reform them. I guess even presidents get bored during semester break.

The only good legislation to come out of the Dallas vacation ... er, convention ... is the new rule requiring the more than 500 Division I and

See NCAA on 10

Nee says Cornhuskers 'ran out of gas' in last half of game against Jayhawks

By Chuck Green
Senior Reporter

The Nebraska men's basketball team picked up a win and a loss during the semester break, but Cornhusker coach Danny Nee said the team easily could have had two wins.

The Huskers defeated Sam Houston State 99-91 Saturday at the Bob Devaney Sports Center, then dropped a 98-93 decision to No. 1-ranked Kansas Monday night before 13,416 fans at the Sports Center.

Nee said he thought the Huskers could have beaten Kansas with fewer

turnovers and a few more good shots at the end of the game.

Nebraska led the Jayhawks 52-42 at halftime, and the Huskers extended their lead to 13 points with a jump shot by center Kelly Lively with 16:42 left in the game.

But the Jayhawks followed the goal with a 10-0 run, cutting Nebraska's lead to three points. Kansas forward Jeff Gueldner gave his team the lead with 5:16 remaining when he scored on a layup off a fast break, and the Jayhawks held on from there.

Nee was pleased with the way his team played against Kansas.

"I'm really proud of our guys," he said after the game. "We played as best we could; but when the game was on the line, we just didn't execute the way we should have. You could tell throughout the night that Kansas was always ready to explode."

Mainly, Nee said, the Huskers just "ran out of gas."

"You could see that Kansas had the superior talent tonight," he said. "We just didn't have enough at the end."

Forward Ray Richardson led Ne-

See JAYHAWKS on 10

in brief SPORTS

NU loses one player, gains another

The Nebraska men's basketball team lost one player and gained another during the semester break.

The Cornhuskers lost forward Lewis Geter, who transferred to Ohio University. Geter, a 6-foot-6 forward, said he left the Nebraska program because he was homesick. The sophomore from Columbus, Ohio, who sat out last season as a Proposition 48 victim, scored a career-high 16 points during the Huskers' season-opening win against Missouri-Kansas City.

Geter was averaging 8.6 points and 3.9 assists per game.

Nebraska offset Geter's loss by activating forward Beau Reid, a junior who missed the first half of the season after tearing the anterior cruciate ligament in his right knee during the summer.