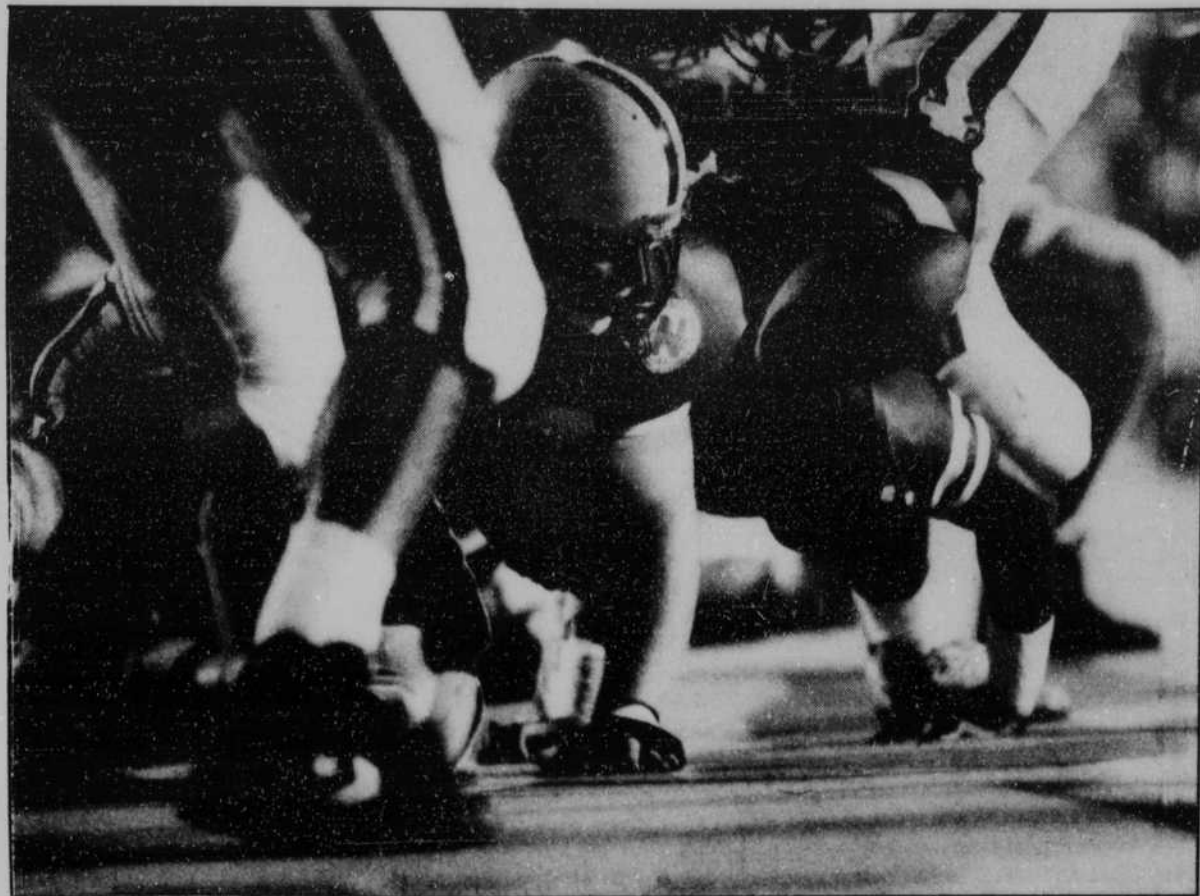


Quarterbacks sneak through Baylor defense



Michelle Paulman/Daily Nebraskan

Center David Edeal watches the ball bounce out of quarterback Mike Grant's hands during the Baylor game. "I thought the ball was in, but my body definitely wasn't," Grant said of his touchdown attempt Saturday.

By John Adkisson
Staff Reporter

Nebraska's quarterback tandem of Mike Grant and Mickey Joseph ran into a buzz saw on Saturday night, but escaped unscathed.

The two quarterbacks led a Nebraska offense which only managed to score 13 points against Baylor, a team which was ranked fifth in pre-season Southwest Conference balloting.

Despite the lack of scoring, Grant and Joseph said they were relatively happy with their performances.

"We knew they were going to be one of the best defenses we faced all year," said Grant.

Grant, starting his first game as quarterback, threw for 86 yards without an interception. He also ran for 16 yards in the game.

Grant said he knew that the Nebraska offense, which scored its only touchdown in the final minute of the game, eventually would cross the goal line.

"I knew that if we would keep wearing them down that we would get there," Grant said.

Grant threw two crucial strikes to wide receiver Jon Bostick. In the first half, Grant hit Bostick along the sideline for a 34-yard gain which set up a field goal. In the fourth quarter, Grant again hooked up with Bostick for a 23-yard gain on third down.

"He (Bostick) tells me to put it in the area and he'll get to it," Grant said. "I guess he did."

Grant was also involved in a con-

troversial fourth-quarter play. Grant appeared headed for a touchdown when he fumbled near the goal line. The referee ruled the fumble a touchback and gave Baylor the ball.

"I thought the ball was in, but my body definitely wasn't," Grant said.

Joseph entered the game for Grant in the first quarter after Grant went to the turf with a knee injury.

"When I saw Mike take that hit, I knew that he'd got stung pretty good," Joseph said. "I just readied myself to do the best I could do."

Joseph, who played less than Grant, rushed for 27 yards, but threw the game's only interception.

"I hung the ball a little too long and made the wrong judgement on the interception," Joseph said.

Joseph said that he wasn't upset with his lack of playing time.

"It's just the way things happened," Joseph said. "You've just got to be ready. If you're sent in to play just a minute, you've got to put everything you have into that minute."

Nebraska coach Tom Osborne said the two played well in the opener, and that the two are still battling for the starting spot.

But no matter who the starter, both quarterbacks were happy to get the first game out of the way.

"It was a good challenge to get a game like that under our belts," Joseph said. "Now we can go on and learn from that experience."

Grant agreed. "I won't have those jitters when the game starts next time," he said. "I feel pretty confident now."

Osborne

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As Osborne noted, the average game has about 140 plays from scrimmage; this one had 121.

Osborne said Baylor's game plan was to keep the ball out of Nebraska's hands and stay as close as possible. With that strategy, Nebraska led only 6-0 going into the last minute of the game.

"The whole script went just about the way it had to for them to win the game," Osborne said.

And in mentioning the number of plays in the game and the time-of-possession statistics, Osborne wasn't just defending his offense.

"The reason I bring this up: Northern Illinois is going to try to run the ball," Osborne said.

The Huskers will play the Northern Illinois Huskies at 1:30 p.m. Saturday at Memorial Stadium. Northern Illinois primarily runs the wishbone and has quarterback Stacey Robinson, who rushed for 1,443 yards and 19 touchdowns in 1989. On Saturday, Northern Illinois rallied from a 10-0 halftime deficit to beat Eastern Illinois 28-17.

Last year Nebraska defeated Northern Illinois 48-17 after being tied 17-17 at halftime. The Huskies finished the season 9-2 and were disappointed that they did not receive a bowl invitation.

"Knowing now how things worked, they could have had our place in the Fiesta Bowl," Osborne said.

Nebraska might be going with a first-time starter at quarterback for the second game in a row. Starter Mike Grant missed practice again Tuesday with a bruised knee but should return today. Osborne said he is not sure if Grant will play Saturday.

If Grant doesn't start, Mickey Joseph will. Osborne said he was planning on playing Joseph, who played Saturday, anyway.

Cornerback Bruce Pickens also missed practice Tuesday with a sprained ankle. Wingback Tyrone Hughes is suffering from a bruised shoulder but practiced and left tackle Terry Eyman, recovering from viral pneumonia, joined in the full-pads workout.



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