Page 8

Sooners run over Huskers **By Paul Domeier**

Senior Reporter

NORMAN, Okla. - The Nebraska Cornhuskers helped perform their own burial Friday in Oklahoma's Memorial Stadiu

Nebraska dug a hole with two late first-half turnovers that led to two Oklahoma touchdowns and a 21-3 Sooner halftime lead. Nebraska handed the Sooners the shovel with five more turnovers in the second

half. The seven turnovers led directly to 31 Sooner points. Oklahoma's 45-10 victory is the worst defeat for Tom Osborne in his 18 years as Nebraska's coach and the worst for the program since 1968, when Osborne was an assistant and Oklahoma won 47-0.

"Naturally, I'm totally embarrassed at the outcome," Osborne said. "It was one of the poorest performances in the 28 years I've been at Nebraska.'

Nebraska will take a 9-2 record to face Georgia Tech in the Citrus Bowl Jan. 1. Oklahoma's season came to a probation-forced end with an 8-3 record.

The Nebraska seniors ended their final Big Eight season with their first loss to Oklahoma in three years. "We hated to do that — to lose first of all, then this embarrassing loss

to Oklahoma, one of our rivals," said senior center David Edeal.

Nebraska lost quarterback Mickey Joseph early in the first quarter. On a third-and-eight play from Nebraska's 33-yard line, Joseph rolled out to the left, scrambled back to the right and out of bounds, where he was pushed late.

Joseph slid into the metal bench and suffered a cut all the way to the bone on his lower right leg. Joseph will not play in the Citrus Bowl. Edeal said he didn't see much of the push, but he saw the injury. "I could see the size of the cut, even from the middle of the field,"

Edeal said.

Quarterback Mike Grant came in to continue the game plan, which Edeal said was to pass more, even before Joseph was injured. On the next Nebraska possession, Grant led the Huskers to a 30-yard

field goal by Gregg Barrios to give Nebraska a 3-0 first-quarter lead. The Sooners responded with an 86-yard drive to go up 7-3. Tailback Dewell Brewer sparked the drive with 32 yards on an option. Tight end Adrian Cooper caught a 36-yard touchdown pass from Cale Gundy, beating Husker safety Tyrone Byrd with a Willie Mays-type, over-thehead catch.

Nebraska's first turnover led to Oklahoma's next touchdown. Grant

threw a short pass over the middle to wingback Nate Turner. Sooner linebacker Reggie Barnes caught Turner with a brutal hit to force a fumble. Oklahoma's Frank Blevins recovered and returned the ball 13 yards to the Nebraska 12. Four plays later, Gundy scored on a quarterback sneak.

After Nebraska got the ball back, Grant threw an interception. Gundy threw to Cooper again, this time for 40 yards on a pass almost intercepted by Tyrone Legette, and fullback Mike McKinley scored on a nine-yard run.

Grant completed 8 of 19 passes for 107 yards and three interceptions. "We did some good things in the passing game," Osborne said, "but

we obviously had too many turnovers to beat a good football team." The Husker running game could do nothing. Until midway through the fourth quarter, Johnny Mitchell was the team's leading rusher with 17 yards on a tight end reverse. Nebraska had two other runs of 10 or

more yards, one of those Joseph's scramble for his injury. The Huskers had some abysmal rushing totals: Leodis Flowers, 9

carries, 13 yards; Scott Baldwin, 7-14; Derek Brown, 6-27; Lance Lewis, 6-14; Grant, 5-10.

Despite those problems, Nebraska threatened to make a game of it in the second half. Mike Croel forced Gundy to fumble on the first series of the half.

Grant threw a 24-yard pass to Jon Bostick and Flowers scored from two yards out to make the score 21-10. The Nebraska defense forced Oklahoma to punt, and the Huskers took over at their 21.

Blevins spoiled things with a leaping interception on a pass over the middle. McKinley pounded in the touchdown. Nebraska took possession, Grant fumbled and the Sooners recov-

ered. McKinley, who gained 87 yards on eight carries and scored three times, broke through the middle for a 48-yard touchdown run.

On the second play of the fourth guarter, Oklahoma strong safety Greg DeQuasie intercepted a Grant pass, returned it 43 yards for the touchdown and Nebraska was buried.

Not buried alive, though.

"It didn't seem like we played with the heart I expected," Osborne

Nebraska had a week without a game before the Oklahoma contest, and Flowers said he has seen that cause past Nebraska teams to come out flat

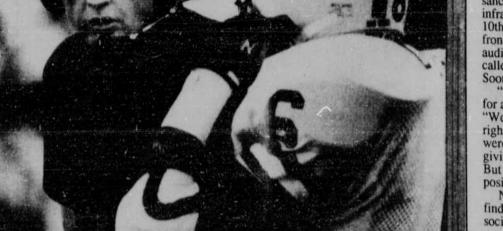
"I figure that happened today," he said. "I didn't see a lot of intensity. Several players said they thought Nebraska had gained the momen-

tum after the first touchdown after the second half. But the turnovers came back. "I think they tried," Osborne said. "The turnovers and mistakes

make it hard to play.' Third-string quarterback Tom Haase came in to throw one last interception, leading to one last field goal by R.D. Lashar with nine seconds remaining

"Some times we have played well and got beat," Osborne said. "Today didn't feel like one.





Sooner program. "This is a tremendous feeling for a football team," Gibbs said. We're making a move in the right direction. Last year, we were getting pushed around, giving up a lot of easy scores. Negative signs were hard to

But today, we saw a lot of positive signs." find for Gibbs, or anyone else as-sociated with Oklahoma's team.

Gundy with 11:19 left in the second quarter. The extra point by R.D. Lashar gave Oklahoma a 7-3 lead, and the Sooners never trailed again.

Gibbs said the catch was the biggest play of the first half for the Sooners.

Cooper, who was snubbed in favor of Nebraska's Johnny Mitchell for first-team All-Big

was far from over.

"I didn't think that lead was reasonable," he said. "Actually, I don't think we executed real well

in the first half." After Cooper's touchdown re-ception, the other first-half

Sooner scores were after Nebraska turnovers. Thirty-one of the Sooners'

total points were the result of

passes for 119 yards and a

touchdown. But, Gibbs said, the key to Oklahoma's success was defense. Linebacker Joe Bowden led

the Sooner defense with 11 tackles, seven of which were unassisted. Linebacker Mike Coats added seven more tackles against a Husker offense that was not difficult to stop, according to

Barnes, a sophomore, said he is optimistic about Oklahoma's Sooners again will be eligible for

"Today, we looked like a football team

Overall, Gibbs said, the progress made by this year's team was encouraging

"I can't sit here and reflect on what could have been this year," he said, referring to Oklahoma's three losses. "We had some chances to have a better record, but a record doesn't always indicate how good a team is.