

Statistics don't lie; Huskers fail to stay with Washington

By Chuck Green
Senior Editor

Derek Brown sat in the South Stadium lounge Saturday night, ready to answer questions from the nation's media.

His eyes were filled with tears. Brown, Nebraska's starting I-back, had just led Cornhusker rushers with 100 yards and two touchdowns on 21 carries during Nebraska's 36-21 loss to fourth-ranked Washington at Memorial Stadium.

He remained unconvinced that the better team had won the game.

"We should have won the game," Brown said. "We had them, and they scored off of our mistakes. I thought we were a better team than they were. But the scoreboard didn't show it."

The statistics didn't either. They were as convincing as the North Stadium scoreboard cutting through the cool Lincoln night: Washington 36, Nebraska 21.

Washington: 618 yards of total offense; Nebraska: 308.

Washington: 335 yards rushing; Nebraska: 135.

Washington: 30 second-half points; Nebraska: 7.

Washington: A 2-0 record and intact No. 4 ranking; Nebraska: 2-1 and on its way out of The Associated Press Top 10.

It went on and on.

"They have a very fine football team," Nebraska Coach Tom Osborne said of the Huskies. "They just played better than we did. I don't think we're out of Washington's league, but we just weren't able to hold up tonight."

"There probably will be a lot of pretty good teams this year that won't come as close to beating Washington as we did tonight."

Washington's win broke, or came close to breaking, several long-standing Memorial Stadium and Husker records. Among them:

● Washington's 31 first downs were the most against Nebraska, breaking the previous record of 29 set by Oklahoma in 1954.

● The 618 yards generated by the Husky offense was the most since Oklahoma rolled up 656 yards in 1956.

● Washington's 36 points were the most scored on Nebraska in Memorial Stadium since Syracuse beat the Huskers 38-0 in 1958.

● The loss ended Nebraska's 20-game non-conference opponent win streak, which dated back to 1988, when the Huskers lost to UCLA 41-28 in Pasadena, Calif.

The loss was Nebraska's sixth-straight to a team ranked in the AP Top 25 poll.

But a Nebraska loss to Washington looked improbable during the first half. The Huskers took charge early, scoring on their second possession on a 27-yard run by Brown.

Throughout the first quarter, Husker running backs shredded Washington's defense, gaining 75 yards on the ground.

Washington got on track in the second quarter, driving 98 yards in 10 plays and scoring on a 9-yard run by Husky quarterback Billy Joe Hobert.

Hobert finished the day with 283 yards and one touchdown passing, completing 23 of 40 with two interceptions.

The scoring drive came after Husker punter Mike Stigge boomed a 68-yard punt to the Washington 2-yard line.

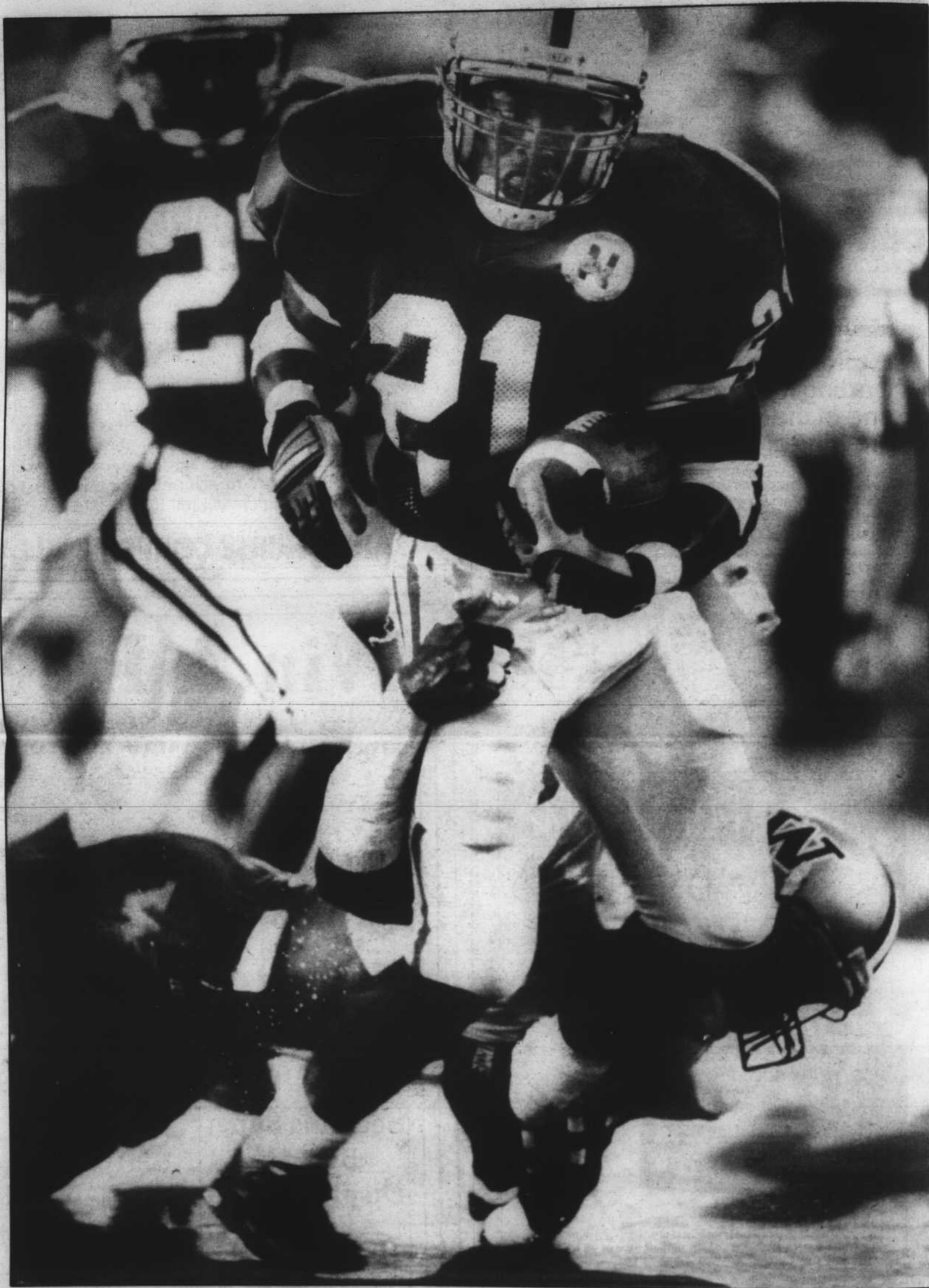
The punt was the longest of Stigge's Nebraska career.

"I wasn't expecting it to go that long," Stigge said. "But it took a good bounce, and we took it."

The Huskies missed their extra-point attempt after the touchdown, allowing Nebraska to hold on to its thin 7-6 lead until Husker quarterback Keithen McCant connected with split end Jon Bostick, the lone Washington native on Nebraska's roster, for a 42-yard touchdown that increased the Huskers' lead to 14-6 at half time.

The second half, though, was a different story.

Washington took the opening drive 51 yards in eight plays and scored on a 43-yard field goal by Travis Han-



Shaun Sartin/DN

son. After fumbling a punt, Washington allowed Brown's second touchdown of the day, a 2-yard burst up the middle, and trailed 21-9.

But that was to be Nebraska's final score of the game.

Washington answered with a 12-play, 76-yard drive capped by a 15-yard touchdown run by Husky tailback Beno Bryant that cut Nebraska's lead to 21-16 with 19 seconds left in the third quarter.

The Huskies took the lead on their next possession on an 8-yard pass from Hobert to flanker Orlando McKay that put Washington ahead 22-21 with 11:20 remaining. They then scored on their next two drives, a 3-yard run by Hobert and an 81-yard run by Jay Barry, to put the game out of reach.

Bryant led all rushers with 139 yards on 17 carries, and Barry added 114 for the Huskies.

Osborne said he was impressed

with Washington's defense.

"They compare with some of the very best defenses we've seen over the years," he said.

Osborne said he is anxious to see how his players will rebound after the loss.

"I think we can play better than this," he said. "I hope so, anyway. If not, it'll be a pretty long season."

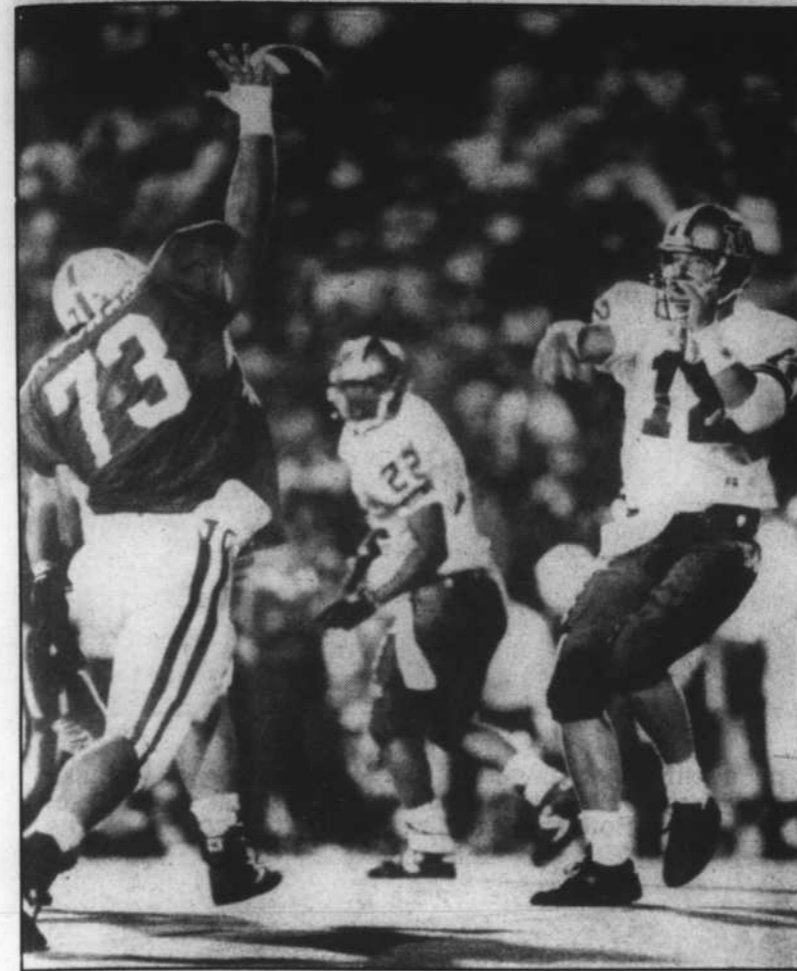
But a strong comeback is the only acceptable direction to take, according to Brown.

"We've got a lot of work ahead of us, and I know we'll all work hard," he said. "We've just got to turn our attention to Arizona State."

How will the players concentrate on improving against the Sun Devils after the disappointing loss?

"I don't know," Brown said, shaking his head. "You just do it... just do it."

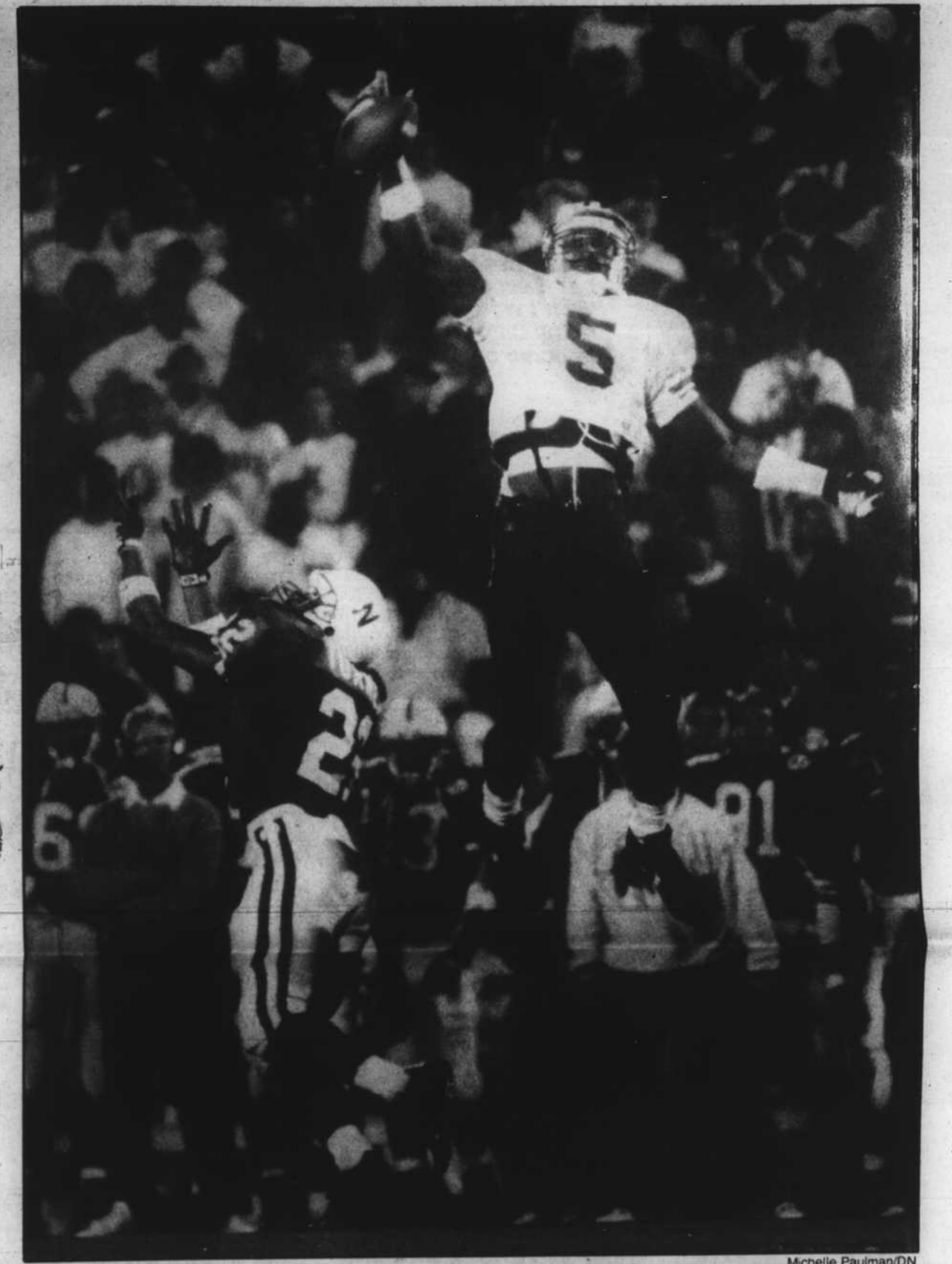
His eyes again filled with tears.



Shaun Sartin/DN



Lisa Pytko/DN



Michelle Paulman/DN

NU vs. UW stats

FINAL SCORE: UW 36, NU 21

Scoring by quarter:

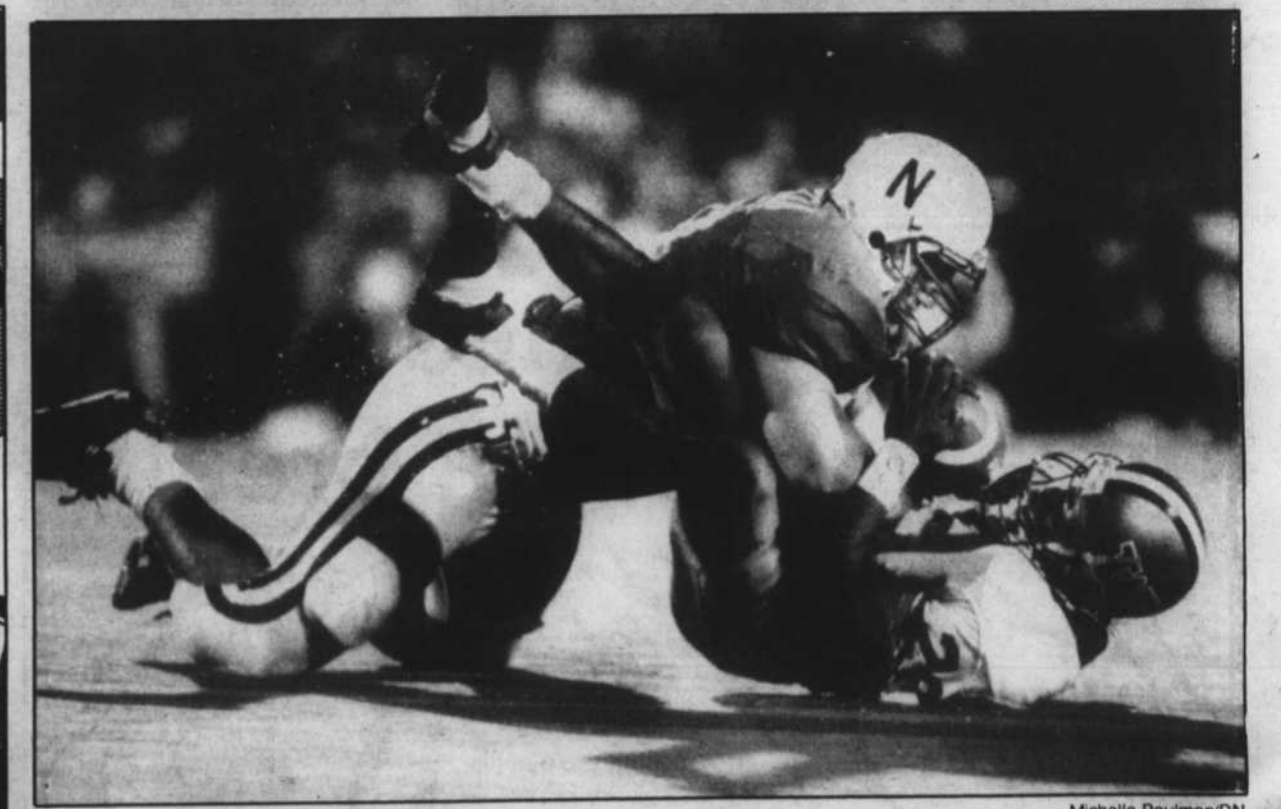
	UW	NU
1st	0	7
2nd	6	7
3rd	10	7
4th	20	0

Attendance: 76,304

NU - D. Brown 27 run (Bennett kick)
 UW - Hobert 9 run (kick failed)
 NU - Bostick 42 pass from McCant (Bennett kick)
 UW - FG Hanson 43
 NU - D. Brown 2 run (Bennett kick)
 UW - Bryant 15 run (Hanson kick)
 UW - McKay 8 pass from Hobert (pass failed)
 UW - Hobert 3 run (Hanson kick)
 UW - Barry 81 run (Hanson kick)

	UW	NU
First downs	31	15
Rushes-yards	47-335	36-135
Passing yards	283	173
Total yards	618	308
Return yards	9	33
Passing	23-40-2	12-29-2
Punts	5-41.0	9-44.3
Fumbles-lost	3-1	1-1
Penalties-yards	8-91	4-29
Time of possession	35:38	24:22
Third-down conversions	7-14	6-16

Amie DeFrain/DN



Michelle Paulman/DN