

Colorado blocks Cornhuskers from win

By Alan Phelps
Senior Editor

BOULDER, Colo. — The Nebraska Cornhuskers, after braving the bitter cold, snowballs and an occasional orange to try to get revenge on Colorado, went home a little disappointed.

"It's a bad feeling when you don't win and you don't lose," fullback Lance Lewis said.

The Huskers fought the Colorado Buffaloes to a 19-19 tie Saturday night at Folsom Field before a crowd of 52,319 and in a wind chill well below zero.

But by the last play of the game, Nebraska had a chance to ease the fans' chills with thoughts of a warm Orange Bowl trip to Miami in January.

With four seconds left on the clock, Byron Bennett attempted a 41-yard field goal to put Nebraska over the top but it was blocked in the midst of a snowball and orange barrage from Colorado fans.

"I'm not sure the ball got up very good," Coach Tom Osborne said of the kick. "It was well inside of Byron's range and all he had to do was get it up and it would have been a good kick."

Osborne said it was "unfortunate" that crowd interference such as the snowball throwing never gets called by the referees.

"When you're trying to kick the winning field goal and you've got about 10 snowballs and a couple of oranges rolling in there, it didn't help," he said.

The section of red in the northwest corner of the stadium had something to cheer about when Husker I-back Derek Brown ran up the right side of the field for a touchdown on the second play of the game. It was called back, however, because of an extra man Nebraska had on the line, and the Huskers were forced to settle for a field goal with 11:20 left in the first quarter.

Colorado was quick to answer. The Buffaloes marched down the field, piled up four first downs and capped off the drive with an 11-yard touchdown run by quarterback Darian Hagan. With 7:20 left in the quarter, Colorado had taken the lead at 7-3.

The two teams took turns frustrating each other for the next 10 minutes of play until a 27-yard field goal by Colorado's Jim Harper put the Buffaloes up 10-3 with 6:54 left in the second quarter.

Nebraska returned fire late in the quarter when a short punt by Colorado punter Mitch Berger set up a Jon Bostick 49-yard touchdown pass from

Keithen McCant. The subsequent extra-point attempt by Bennett was blocked and Colorado linebacker Greg Biekert scooped up the ball and weaved his way through 85 yards of Nebraska defenders for a safety. Instead of a 10-10 tie, Nebraska trailed 12-9 at halftime.

The Huskers were quick to even up the score in the second half; Bennett kicked a 35-yard field goal on Nebraska's first possession.

On Colorado's next possession a Nebraska personal foul gave Colorado a first-and-goal situation on the Nebraska 10-yard line. After two runs by running back Lamont Warren were stuffed, Hagan went in himself from four yards out to give Colorado the lead back at 19-12.

Nebraska answered with 9:19 in the fourth quarter after a 55-yard, seven-play drive capped off by a 7-yard run by Brown.

Although Nebraska players were disappointed with the tie, they said the game still proved something about Nebraska.

"We didn't lose," Husker wingback Nate Turner said. "We proved we can play in the fourth quarter with anybody."

Outside linebacker Travis Hill agreed.

"Everyone who said we couldn't win, we couldn't do anything, we shut them up," he said. "We're still in the front seat for the Big Eight championship."

Turner said he felt Nebraska was the better team, but it was "a little sluggish coming out."

"For a while we were beating ourselves," McCant said. "You can't do that when you're playing a team like Colorado in their own backyard."

Brown said he also thought the team could have done better in the first half.

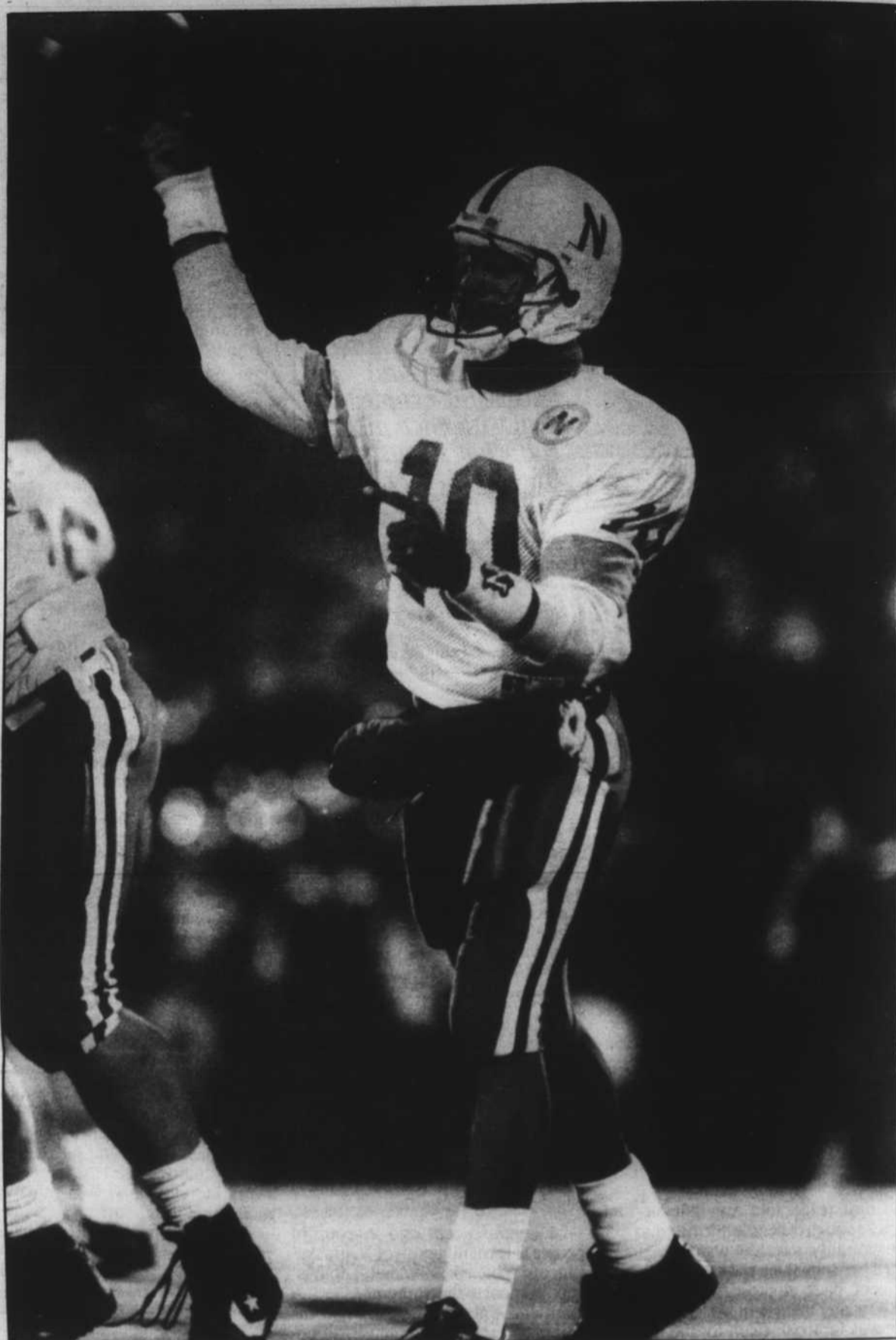
"I don't know if it was the cold, or a lack of confidence," he said.

Osborne said he thought the Huskers played well throughout the game, particularly in the second half.

"We're pleased with the effort of our players. Naturally, we wanted to win, and I thought we could get it," he said.

Osborne pointed to the game's two blocked kicks as plays that hurt the Huskers, especially the first block, which led to a three-point swing after Colorado's defensive extra point return.

Brown said the game also heightened the Colorado-Nebraska rivalry. "It's war now, not just any game," he said. "It's war between us."



TOP: Nebraska quarterback Keithen McCant gets off a pass during Nebraska's 19-19 tie with Colorado.
ABOVE: Derek Brown bobbles the ball as he follows the blocks of Nate Turner (22), against Joel Steed, and Lance Lundberg (77).
RIGHT: Colorado quarterback Darian Hagan is pursued by Cornhuskers Kevin Ramaekers (67), John Parrella (92) and Travis Hill (93).

Photos by Jeff Brown/Special to the DN

NU vs. CU stats

FINAL SCORE: NU 19, CU 19

Scoring by quarter:

	CU	NU
1st	7	3
2nd	5	6
3rd	7	3
4th	0	7

Attendance: 52,319

NU - FG Bennett 27
 CU - Hagan 11 run (Harper kick)
 CU - FG Harper 27
 NU - Bostick 49 pass from McCant (kick failed)
 CU - Biekert 85 blocked conversion return
 NU - FG Bennett 35
 CU - Hagan 4 run (Harper kick)
 NU - D. Brown 7 run (Bennett kick)

	CU	NU
First downs	19	15
Rushes-yards	51-160	40-112
Passing	140	181
Return yards	56	20
Comp-Att-Int	10-23-0	8-20-0
Punts	7-34	7-44
Fumbles-Lost	3-0	3-0
Penalties-yards	5-44	4-26
Time of Possession	32:01	27:59

Amie DeFrait/DN