



Nebraska outside linebacker Trev Alberts (left) grabs Oklahoma State quarterback Tone' Jones while linebacker Ed Stewart closes in. Alberts and Stewart will try to help the Blackshirts atone for giving up a Big Eight-record 489 passing yards to Kansas State quarterback Chad May. DN File Photo

## Missouri QB could pose threat to NU

By Mitch Sherman  
Staff Reporter

After looking at film of Nebraska's win over Kansas State, Nebraska outside linebacker coach Tony Samuel said he hoped he wouldn't experience *deja vu* Saturday against Missouri.

Tiger quarterback Jeff Handy is capable of matching Kansas State quarterback Chad May's 489-yard passing performance against Nebraska, Samuel said. May set a Big Eight record for passing last Saturday.

"Jeff Handy is a great quarterback," Samuel said. "He's probably licking his chops looking at our film. Missouri really is playing a lot better than they were last year. They're going to be playing hard."

Handy has twice thrown for more than 400 yards in his career, including a 424-yard performance against Nebraska in Columbia, Mo., last year.

The Tigers beat Oklahoma State 42-9 Saturday behind Handy's 199 passing yards.

Although the secondary is usually blamed for big passing days, Samuel said, many of the defense's problems with the pass result from an ineffective pass rush.

"You always get questions about the secondary," he said. "You've got to have a good pass rush. You don't always have to get the sack but you have to get pressure on the quarterback."

### NOTES:

- Senior linebacker Darren Williams injured his knee and left practice early Tuesday. Husker coach Tom Osborne said he didn't know the extent of the injury.

- Linebacker Phil Ellis missed practice for the second straight day with the flu, Osborne said.

- Tight end Gerald Armstrong practiced but wasn't at full speed, Osborne said.

## Osborne welcomes defensive talk

By Mitch Sherman  
Staff Reporter

After weeks of listening to advice on the struggling Husker offense, Nebraska coach Tom Osborne welcomed conversation concerning the struggling Husker defense.

"This has been kind of a refreshing week for me," Osborne said during his weekly press conference Tuesday. "I usually get a lot of help offensively, and this week it has been a change-up. We've suddenly realized there is another side of the ball. I've been getting a good deal of help on defense."

After Wildcat quarterback Chad May passed for a Big Eight record 489 yards in Nebraska's 45-28 win over Kansas State, Osborne said he understood some of the concerns.

"Certainly there were some bad

coverages," he said. "But the guy made a lot of throws where he really got in there, and the coverage was good and the rush was good."

The secondary's spotty coverage resulted in a few big plays, Osborne said, but he isn't ready to throw in the towel.

"I'm certainly not panicking," he said. "I think we have a good defense and we'll play well down the stretch. The big thing is for our players not to lose confidence and our coaches not to decide they have to make wholesale changes."

"I think that through the first five games, we played well."

The Blackshirts' statistics back up Osborne. Despite ranking fourth in the Big Eight in pass-efficiency defense, the Huskers are second in scoring defense and first in rushing de-

fense and total defense.

Osborne said May's performance Saturday may just have been another in a line of solid performances by Wildcat quarterbacks.

Last season, Wildcat quarterback Matt Garber threw for 246 yards in a 38-24 loss to Nebraska last year in Tokyo. In 1991, Kansas State quarterback Paul Watson completed 26 of 46 passes for 340 yards in a 38-31 loss to the Huskers.

"Sometimes an athlete gets in a little different zone," Osborne said. "Once in a while you have a day like that."

"I'm tired of K-State passers having those kind of days against us. That's three years in a row I've seen them play like I haven't seen them play before or since."

Osborne said he thought the de-

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Nebraska football coach

fense would bounce back after the poor outing.

"We made some big plays at key times," he said. "They scored 28 points, which isn't good. But once in a while you'll see a good football team give up 40."

"I think we'll be all right."

## Rebuilding still puzzles Tigers' coach after four years

By Jeff Singer  
Senior Editor

Missouri coach Bob Stull is used to resurrecting football programs.

But so far, Stull is still looking to give life to the Tigers' program.

In 1984, Stull became head coach at Massachusetts and led the Minutemen to a 7-4 record one year later.

Stull performed a similar rebuilding job at the University of Texas-El Paso when he joined the Miners in 1986. UTEP had a 4-8 record in 1986, but improved each season until hitting a pinnacle in 1988 with a 10-3 record.

But since joining Missouri in 1989, the Tigers have gone 14-34-2 under Stull.

Stull said finding the keys to turning the Missouri program around has puzzled him and his staff.

"I've been in five rebuilding programs and I've had a tougher go at it here than at any other place," he said. "We've usually been improved after three years but that hasn't been the case here."

The Tigers have posted records of 2-9, 4-7, 3-7-1 and 3-8 in Stull's first four seasons with Missouri. The Tigers are 2-3-1 so far this season.

Stull said there are a few reasons why Mis-

souri hasn't been able to attain the other teams' levels of success.

"We're in a tough league and we've certainly had some tough schedules while I've been here," Stull said.

Take, for instance, the Tigers' 1993 schedule. With their Big Eight schedule, the Tigers have played Texas A&M and West Virginia, which are ranked 11th and 18th, respectively. However, Stull said, it's not time to bury the Missouri program just yet.

Last week's 42-9 win over Oklahoma State might be a step towards respectability, Stull said.

"It reaffirmed that we have a better team

than some people have given us credit for," he said. "It gave us back some credibility."

The Big Eight signed a contract this year with the Copper Bowl. The league's fourth-place team is ensured a spot in that bowl if it has a winning record.

Stull said receiving such a bowl bid would be a sign that Missouri is on its way up. But for the Tigers to go "bowling," he said, the team needs to prove itself in league play.

"The reality of it is there are a lot of teams in the league that are similar," he said. "So we're going to have to beat a team like Nebraska or Oklahoma to get into bowl position."

## Cornhusker dream team fades into late-night fantasy

It was 3 a.m., and I had been asleep for a little more than an hour.

I entered REM sleep and began to dream.

My mind was filled with visions of a Big Red Machine running up and down the college gridiron.

Unstoppable. A force to be reckoned with but not wrecked. Indestructible.

Through its first six games, Nebraska's average margin of victory was 63 points.

The Huskers could do whatever they wanted because their offensive weapons at the skill positions were unmatched at the college level.

Tommie Frazier had been throwing for more than 300 yards per game and running for 50 more.

Corey Dixon and Abdul Muhammad were averaging between 75 and 100 yards a game receiving. Gerald Armstrong was scoring two

touchdowns out of his three catches a game.

Calvin Jones was a candidate for the Heisman Trophy before an injury kept him on the sideline for four games. And while he was averaging 100 yards per game on the ground, his Heisman hopes had to be put on hold until next season.

Jones was not even the leading Heisman candidate in the Nebraska backfield.

Since Jones went down in the first game of the season, Derek Brown was averaging 180 yards per game on 20 carries, and the only thing standing between Brown and the Heisman Trophy was teammate Johnny Mitchell.

Mitchell was hauling in 10 passes per game and nearly 200 yards receiving. He was all-Big Eight, All-America, All-World, All-Universe.

It was a foregone conclusion that the Huskers would win the national



Jeff  
Griesch

championship. The only question was how bad the Huskers would maul Florida State in the Orange Bowl.

My phone rings, but I didn't wake up. This dream was better than real life. There was no way I was going to miss it.

So I stood on the sideline at the Orange Bowl on New Year's Day witnessing the game that Husker fans waited 21 years to see.

Seconds after Nebraska scored its fifth touchdown of the first half to go ahead of the Seminoles 35-7, an orange thrown by one of the ecstatic Husker fans hit me in the face.

SSSPPLLLAAATTT!!!

The shock of being beamed by the symbol that all Nebraska rallies around during the football season snapped me out of the dream.

It was so real. I brought my hand to my face to check for orange juice and pulp. But sadly, my face was dry except for the line of drool running from the side of my mouth.

I couldn't get back to sleep. So I turned on ESPN, knowing that the soothing sounds of Chris Berman's voice would sing me to sleep.

Super-late SportsCenter was on, and the NFL highlights ended any hopes that my dream might actually have been real.

Derek Brown was not in Miami at the Orange Bowl. Instead, he's the Saints' leading rusher in New Orleans. And he's running over some of the best defensive players in the NFL. Johnny Mitchell isn't catching

Tommie Frazier passes; he's snagging touchdown passes from Boomer Esiason.

I turned the TV off, dropped the remote control on the floor, stumbled back to my bed and fell face down on my pillow. I was so sad.

The Huskers are 6-0, even without the two woulda-been, shoulda-been, coulda-been All-Americans. But the offense is not the unstoppable juggernaut that might have surfaced had Mitchell and Brown decided to stay at Nebraska.

The Huskers could still go undefeated this season. They could even win an Orange Bowl. But I still have to ask "What if?"

The team that might have been a nightmare for all opponents to face is only the dream of Husker faithful.

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