



ORANGE BOWL AFTERMATH

Florida State 18, Nebraska 16

For NU and Osborne, waiting continues

By Jeff Griesch
Senior Editor

MIAMI — Bobby Bowden approached the microphones on the podium after posing for pictures in front of the Associated Press national championship trophy.



Bowden's eyes looked like he had not slept all night, but he was still all smiles at the 11:30 press conference the morning after Florida State beat Nebraska 18-16 in the Orange Bowl.

Bowden probably was smiling because he no longer has to answer the previously omnipresent question: "Will you ever win the national championship?"

"The best part about winning the title for me is that people aren't going to remind me that I haven't won a national championship," Bowden said. "It's good to finally get that off my back."

Bowden got the national championship monkey off his back, but Nebraska coach Tom Osborne will have to face the questions for at least one more season.

Bowden and the Seminoles were big winners on New Year's night, but Osborne said his players were winners, too.

"They won," Osborne said. "They didn't win on the scoreboard. But they did what they had to do. We could've won it just as easy as we lost it. The main thing is not the rings and not the championship, it's the players playing like champions, and I think they did that."

Nebraska's losing streak in bowl games grew to seven games, but de-



Staci McKee/DN

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Nebraska fans sit dejected after the game in Miami.

Cornhuskers lose title, but earn doubters' respect

MIAMI—As he walked off the Orange Bowl field, Zach Wiegert held back the tears welling in his eyes. Tommie Frazier, with his coach, Turner Gill, draped over him, fought off tears of his own.

On the way into the lockerroom, other Cornhuskers lost that fight with their feelings.

But their tears didn't mean they had lost the battle.

Although Florida State beat Nebraska 18-16, the Huskers gained something much more important than a national title:

Respect.

That seven-letter word was rarely, if ever, displayed during the buildup to the bowl. The gamblers' 17 1/2-point line was one of the

largest margins in bowl history.

And of course, the media made that spread do the splits.

Norm Hitchaguess, ESPN's prognosticator, said Florida State would win 52-20. Craig James, another ESPN analyst, said he agreed with Norm until he saw Nebraska's focus. That focus narrowed James' prediction from 42-17 to 34-17.

Sports Illustrated wrote:

"Maybe eight starting Nebraska Cornhuskers could make Florida State's two-deep. Vegas likes the Seminoles by 18. ... We like them even more. Florida State, 41-14."

To top it off, a USA Today writer said he would bathe in a vat of creamed corn if Nebraska won.



Todd Cooper

Rest assured, they're eating corn with their crow right now.

Nebraska's offensive line, labeled too slow, manhandled Florida State in the fourth quarter. The Blackshirts, labeled too slow, held Florida State's offense — which outside linebacker Trev Alberts said averaged "80 points a game or something like that" — to a season-low 18 points.

And Nebraska outyarded Florida State in virtually every category. Unfortunately, that included penalties.

Which brings me to the moaning.

Yes, Lance Gray's clip on Dixon's first-quarter punt return was questionable. Seminole William Floyd clearly fumbled before he crossed the goalline for Florida State's only touchdown. And Barron Miles' sideline bump on Warrick Dunn during the Seminoles' game-winning drive warranted a flag that shouldn't have been thrown.

Yet, none of the griping or crabbing — or the sending of game tapes to the Big Eight offices — is going to change anything, besides

Nebraska's stoic image.

"There's a lot of controversy," Dixon said. "We already had controversy with the media. Now, we have it with the officials. But I feel if we argue, we'll get put down even more."

Exactly. Nebraska coaches, players and fans should take the lumps — and swallow hard.

But that's especially difficult for the seniors who should have won a national title.

Alberts, who with one arm played better than Def Leppard's drummer, deserved better than second place and second-rate officiat-

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