

Pacific: no threat, but no easy win

By Derek Samson
Senior Reporter

Believe it or not, Nebraska's 70-21 win over Pacific Saturday wasn't easy for Nebraska coach Tom Osborne.

In the week before the game, Osborne had to keep his team focused. He didn't want them to overlook the Tigers.

Then once Saturday arrived and the game began, he had to worry about injuries after the Huskers made it obvious they could name their score.

"As far as the game goes, it was a difficult game in many ways," Osborne said. "Obviously, it was easy on the scoreboard. I thought the players handled the situation well. They took the situation seriously and came out and played hard and executed well."

The first half was all Osborne needed to look at to see if Nebraska was prepared for Pacific.

Nebraska's first seven possessions resulted in seven Husker touchdowns and a 49-0 lead at intermission.

Nebraska took its first possession 61 yards on six plays, and Damon Benning's 1-yard run gave the Huskers the first of many points to come.

After a 74-yard touchdown run by Lawrence Phillips and an 8-yard touchdown by fullback Cory Schlesinger, Nebraska had scored 21 points in 12 plays, racking up 163 yards and used only 3:48 in all three drives combined.

By jumping out to the 21-0 lead with 5:50 still remaining in the first quarter, Nebraska erased any Pacific hopes for an upset.

"I looked at the game as another Iowa State," rover Kareem Moss said, referring to the Huskers' 19-10 loss at Iowa State in 1992. "We didn't want to get upset. We played hard as a team, everyone did, even the reserves."

"If we don't improve on our depth back there in the secondary, we're in big trouble. I'd have to say right now, defensively, I'm very worried about our depth. We're not even close to being there."

CHARLIE MCBRIDE

Nebraska defensive coordinator

It was the reserves that did the rest of the damage to the 2-2 Tigers.

Starting quarterback Tommie Frazier played in only the first two series, and the majority of the starters on both the defense and offense played for only three series.

"We obviously substituted fairly freely, even in the first quarter," Osborne said. "I think Frazier went a couple series, and that's about it. So we got a lot of people playing time. I don't know how good it did our first units because they played so little."

After Schlesinger got his second touchdown of the day on a 39-yard scamper, Nebraska led 28-0 at the end of the first quarter.

Backup quarterback Brook Berringer came in to lead Nebraska to 21 points in the second quarter, including a 46-yard touchdown pass to tight end Eric Alford.

Nebraska's 49 first-half points tied a school record set in 1988 against Oklahoma State, but the record for most points in a half is 55 — coming in the second half against Colorado in 1983.

Much of Nebraska's third- and

fourth-teams took over after intermission as Pacific played Nebraska to a 21-21 tie in the second half.

"I think we got them all in today," Osborne said. "It should have been about 110 players. We'll never have more people play than we played today. It's fun to get them all in, but it's not a very fun day."

"From the standpoint of getting a lot of players in the game (it's good). If there was anything we got accomplished today, we really got a lot of playing time to some guys that really needed to play."

Nebraska defensive coordinator Charlie McBride said he was concerned with the play of the lower defensive units, especially the secondary. Pacific threw for 290 yards against the Husker secondary.

"I told the second units at half that I don't want to walk out of that stadium embarrassed because they put up 21 points," he said. "If we don't improve on our depth back there in the secondary, we're in big trouble."

"I'd have to say right now, defensively, I'm very worried about our depth. We're not even close to being there."

And with the status of starting cornerback Barron Miles unknown after he collided with teammate Eric Stokes on a first-quarter pass play, the secondary is now even more depleted.

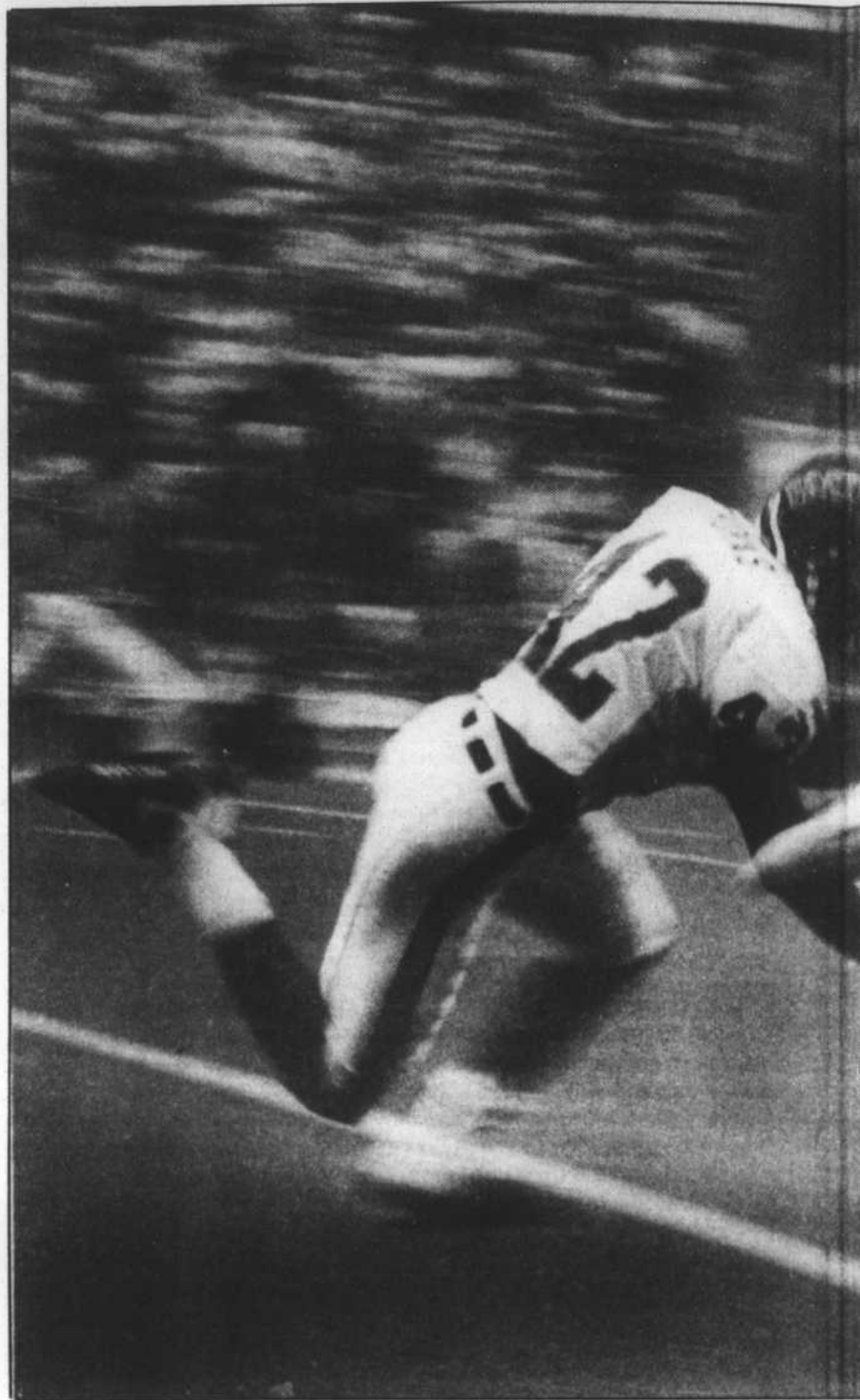
"His knee is stable, but it's pretty tight," Osborne said. "We have to hope that Barron is okay. I don't think we lost anybody for a great length of time. I hope everybody is back next week."

On the offensive side of the ball, Osborne was pleased.

Not only was the 70-21 score mighty, but Nebraska tallied up some big yardage totals.

The 4-0 Huskers finished with 699 total yards, 510 of those coming on the ground.

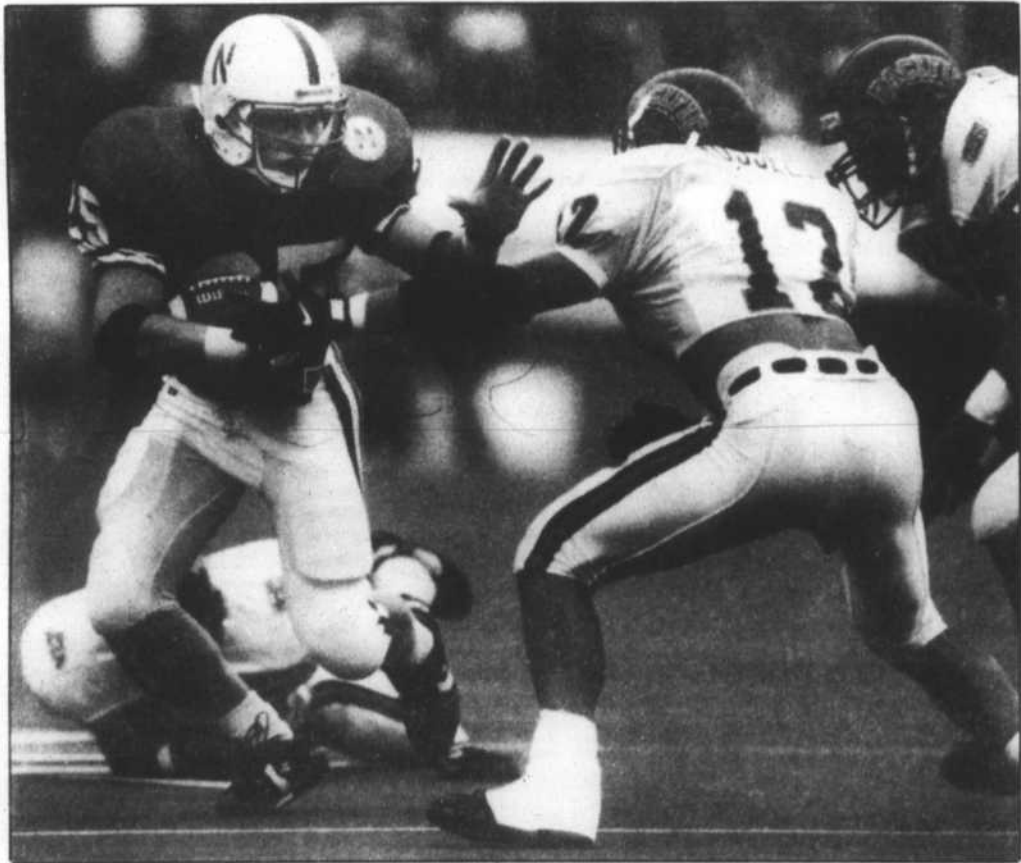
See PACIFIC on 11



Nebraska I-back Lawrence Phillips speeds by Pacific defensive back



Nebraska's Octavious McFarlin and Jamel Williams struggle to bring down Damon Bowers. McFarlin had seven tackles.



Travis Heying/DN

Wingback Jon Vedral tries to elude Pacific's Jeff Russell after a 7-yard reception.