

SPORTS

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12-0 season will inspire Huskers in Miami

By Mitch Sherman
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It has been five years since Nebraska played a team ranked lower than No. 3 Miami in a bowl game.

And it's been six years since the Hurricanes played a team ranked as high as No. 1 Nebraska on Jan. 1.

But as evidenced by prior games in the series between Nebraska and Miami, national rankings don't mean a whole lot when these two teams meet.

It's been 11 years since the No. 1 Cornhuskers met the No. 5 Hurricanes in the Orange Bowl following Nebraska's 12-0 season.

After 60 minutes of what many still consider the greatest bowl game ever played, Miami prevailed 31-30.

Nebraska coach Tom Osborne said he remembers that night well, but said it has been too long for that contest to serve as inspiration for this year's 12-0, top-ranked Huskers.

"You can think about the revenge part," Osborne said, "but I don't think it's going to motivate a lot of these guys."

But, Osborne said, Nebraska doesn't need motivation from the past. This season has been enough.

"It would be awful nice to win for lots of reasons," he said. "The main reason we want to win is simply because it's the last game and we're undefeated. And it's probably for the national championship."

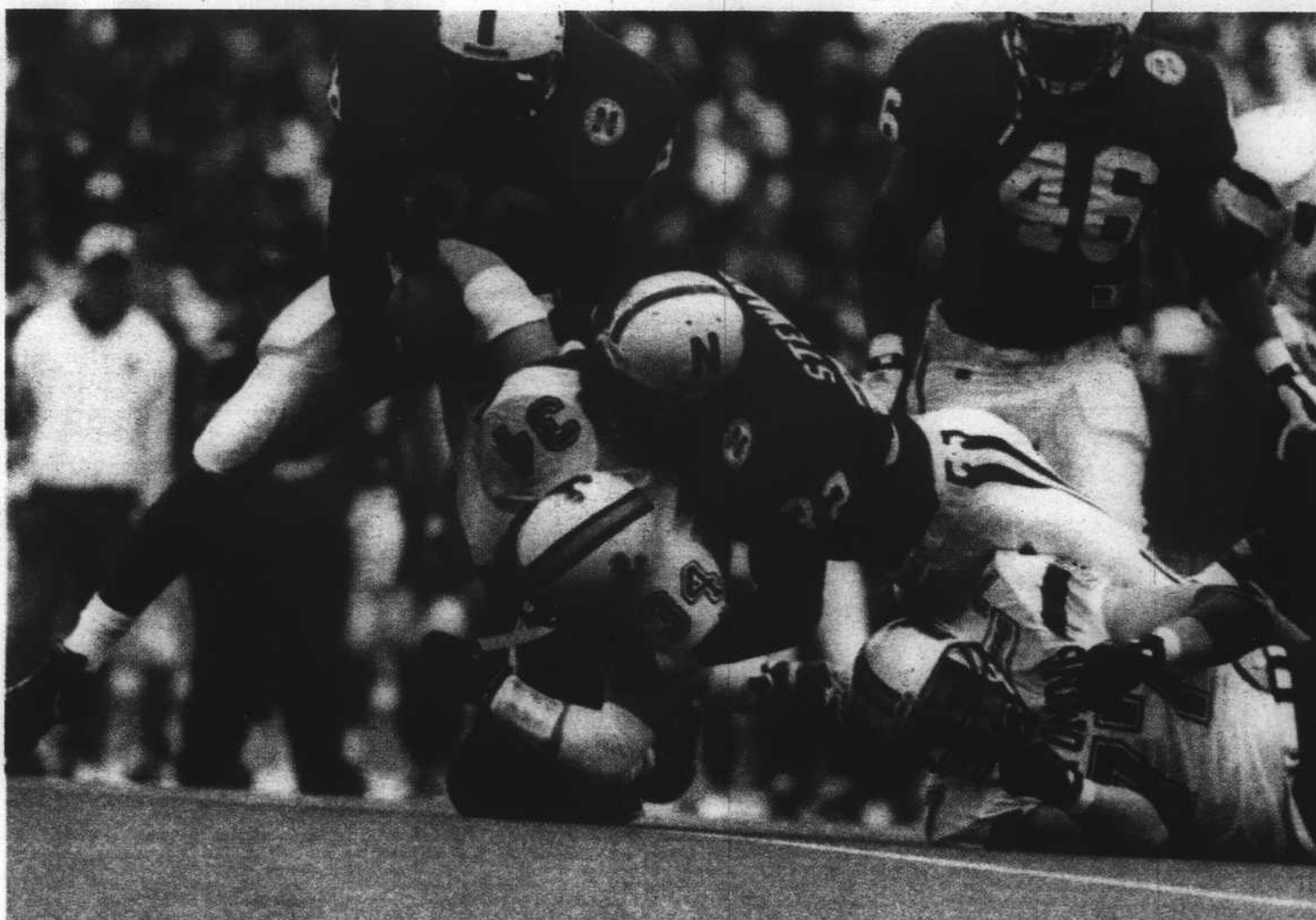
For Osborne, a national championship would be a first. The nation's most winning active coach has been at the helm of Nebraska since 1973, two years after the Huskers last won college football's most sought-after prize.

But if it's to happen this season, Osborne said, the Huskers will have to penetrate Miami's defense, which ranks first in the nation, allowing only 221 yards per game.

Osborne could not say much else about the Miami defense, anchored by Lombardi and defensive player of the year award-winner Warren Sapp.

Miami ranks seventh in the nation against the run, first against the pass, and is allowing 10.8 points per game, also first in the nation.

"I guess the thing that impresses me is that you don't see many big plays against them," said Osborne, who hasn't won a bowl game



Nebraska's Ed Stewart tackles Wyoming's Ryan Christopherson, forcing a fumble. Stewart and the Nebraska defense will try to stop Miami on Jan. 1 in the Orange Bowl.

since Jan. 1, 1987. "They make you work your way down the field. It's important that you play error-free football."

Nebraska's offense has been nearly as impressive as the Hurricane defense this season. The Huskers average a nation-leading 340 yards per game on the ground. Nebraska ranks fifth in the nation in total offense and sixth in scoring offense.

But since a blood clot sidelined Heisman Trophy candidate Tommie Frazier in early October, the Huskers have relied heavily on their defense, which leads the Big Eight and ranks in the nation's top ten in every major

category.

Frazier has been healthy since the Huskers' 13-3 victory over Oklahoma, a game in which he did not play. Osborne said he had not yet made a decision on whether Frazier or Brook Berringer would start on Jan. 1.

What he did know is that it will be important for the Nebraska defense to guard the run well. The 'Canes, who, over the past decade, have been known as one of the nation's most prolific passing teams, are averaging 179 yards per game on the ground this year.

"I think their offensive line is probably a little more solid," Osborne said. "When they

had (Gino) Torretta and Alabama beat them in the Sugar Bowl, they had to rely almost exclusively on the pass."

In the 34-13 Alabama victory Osborne was referring to, the Hurricanes ran the ball 18 times for a total of 48 yards.

In the past, Nebraska had made the trip after Christmas. Last year, the Huskers arrived in Miami on Dec. 22. This year's date of arrival is Dec. 23.

"We'll do about the same thing as last year," Osborne said. "With the weather pattern we have here, I think it's important to have some time to acclimate to the humidity."

Nittany Lions claw their way past the Lady Huskers

By Mitch Sherman
Senior Reporter

The Nebraska volleyball team's first loss of the 1994 season was also its only loss of the 1994 season and its final loss of the 1994 season.

The No. 1 Cornhuskers fell to fifth-ranked Penn State 12-15, 15-11, 15-9, 15-8 Saturday night before an NU Coliseum crowd of 4,248.

Playing in the final match of the Midwest region with a berth in the Final Four at stake, Nebraska, 31-1, was out-hit, outblocked and outplayed by the 31-3 Nittany Lions.

"Penn State played a great match," Nebraska coach Terry Pettit said. "They did a couple of things that indicated their experience. They played well in the first game and lost. And they still had the energy to come back. I commend them for that."

Early in the first game, Nebraska looked as if it was going to extend its home-winning streak to 44 matches. The Huskers jumped to an immediate 3-0 lead. But Penn State roared back, eventually taking a 7-6 lead on one of Nebraska's 33 hitting errors.

The Lions increased their lead to 11-8, but Nebraska used a 7-1 run to take the first game 15-12. With setter Christy Johnson serving, outside hitter Billie Winsett slammed home the final kill.

Nebraska continued to play well

in the second game, overcoming a 5-1 deficit to take a 10-6 lead. It was at that point that the roof began to cave in on Nebraska.

"We had an opportunity to take control in the second game," Pettit said. "For one reason or another, we didn't do it."

Behind the play of freshman Terri Zemaitis, the Lions scored nine of the next 10 points to win the second game 15-11 to even the match at one game apiece.

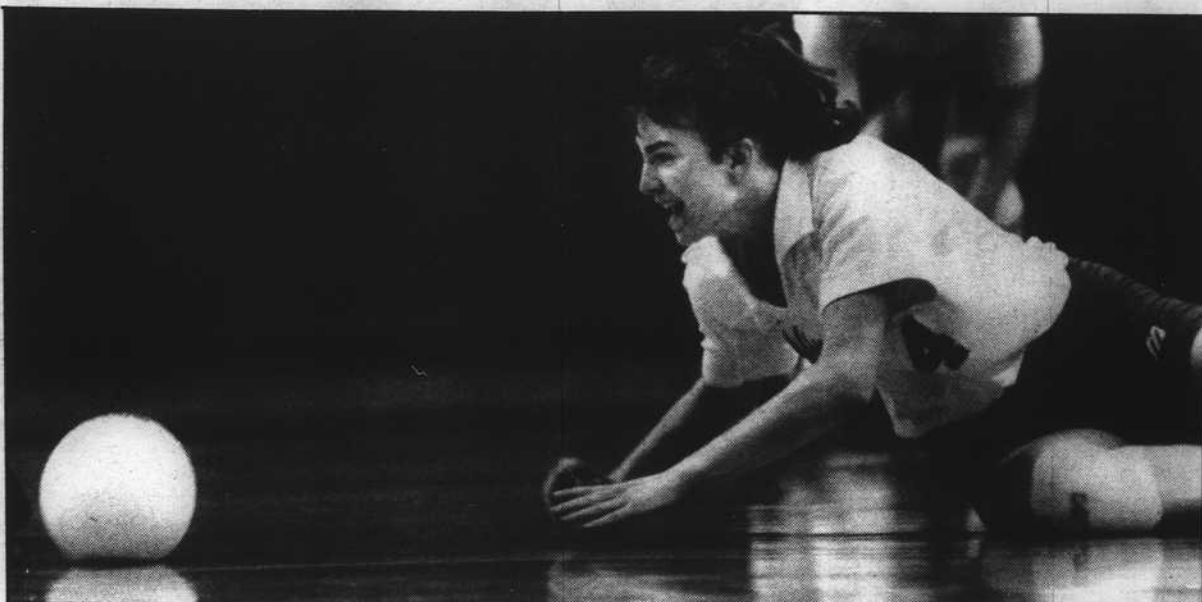
"I think the better team won tonight," Pettit said. "Penn State was a better team than we were tonight. They hit .310, and there was no way we were going to beat them if they hit .310."

Nebraska hit .224, exactly .100 lower than its nation-leading average of .324. The Huskers were led by Allison Weston's 32 kills, but the junior All-American candidate hit only 299.

As a team, Nebraska was outblocked 10-3, and the Lions finished with six players registering double-figure kill totals.

Nebraska opened a 4-2 lead in the third game, but Penn State rolled off eight consecutive points to momentarily take the crowd out of the match.

The Huskers scored the next four points before the Lions rolled off another streak, this time a 5-1 run to win game three 15-9.



Nebraska outside hitter Billie Winsett comes up short on a dig in Nebraska's loss to Penn State Saturday night.

"I'm pleased with the effort we gave," Pettit said. "It's been a wonderful season for us."

Pettit said he was particularly happy for seniors Kelly Aspegren and Peggy Meyer, who played the final matches of their collegiate careers Saturday night.

"They both had great senior years," he said.

With a victory in the fourth game, Nebraska had a chance to send the match to a rally-scoring fifth game, but Penn State erased all hope by opening a 7-0 lead behind the serving of Claudette Otero.

Nebraska closed to 7-4 before the Lions scored another four points to take an 11-4 lead. A final rally by the Huskers fell short with the score 14-

8, and Penn State outside hitter Zeynep Ton pounded the last ball.

"As an athlete, you never want to feel like it's slipping away," Winsett said, "because if you do, it will. If I had a feeling, I just blocked it out. We looked at each other and said, 'We can take this away from them. They are not going to take this away from us in our gym.'"