



National Champions



Jon Waller/DN

Nebraska coach Tom Osborne is carried around the field by Kareem Moss and Jon Vedral after the Huskers' 24-17 win over Miami in the Orange Bowl. Nebraska won its first national championship since 1971.

Final Polls

The top 25 teams in the Associated Press college football poll, with first-place votes in parentheses.

Rank	School	Rec.	Pts.	Pvs.
1	Nebraska (51.5)	13-0-0	1,539.5	1
2	Penn St. (10.5)	12-0-0	1,497.5	2
3	Colorado	11-1-0	1,410	4
4	Florida St.	10-1-1	1,320	7
5	Alabama	12-1-0	1,312	6
6	Miami, Fla.	10-2-0	1,249	3
7	Florida	10-2-1	1,153	5
8	Texas A&M	10-0-1	1,117	8
9	Auburn	9-1-1	1,110	9
10	Utah	10-2-0	955	14
11	Oregon	9-4-0	810	12
12	Michigan	8-4-0	732	20
13	Southern Cal	8-3-1	691	21
14	Ohio St.	9-4-0	672	13
15	Virginia	9-3-0	648	18
16	Colorado St.	10-2-0	630	10
17	North Carolina St.	9-3-0	511	23
18	Brigham Young	10-3-0	500	22
19	Kansas St.	9-3-0	496	11
20	Arizona	8-4-0	364	15
21	Washington St.	8-4-0	344	24
22	Tennessee	8-4-0	303	-
23	Boston College	7-4-1	236	-
24	Mississippi St.	8-4-0	160	16
25	Texas	8-4-0	90	-

The top 25 teams in the CNN/Coaches' college football poll, with first-place votes in parentheses.

Rank	School	Rec.	Pts.	Pvs.
1	Nebraska (54)	13-0-0	1,542	1
2	Penn St. (8)	12-0-0	1,496	2
3	Colorado	11-1-0	1,382	5
4	Alabama	12-1-0	1,344	6
5	Florida St.	10-1-1	1,329	7
6	Miami, Fla.	10-2-0	1,229	3
7	Florida	10-2-1	1,186	4
8	Utah	10-2-0	1,029	12
9	Ohio State	9-4-0	842	11
10	Brigham Young	10-3-0	832	19
11	Oregon	9-4-0	831	9
12	Michigan	8-4-0	787	18
13	Virginia	9-3-0	765	16
14	Colorado St.	10-2-0	681	10
15	Southern Cal	8-3-1	670	22
16	Kansas St.	9-3-0	661	8
17	North Carolina St.	9-3-0	626	20
18	Tennessee	8-4-0	520	24
19	Washington St.	8-4-0	449	23
20	Arizona	8-4-0	405	13
21	North Carolina	8-4-0	313	14
22	Boston College	7-4-1	304	25
23	Texas	8-4-0	244	-
24	Virginia Tech	8-4-0	189	15
25	Mississippi St.	8-4-0	158	17

DN graphic

Nebraska's Perfect Season

Aug. 28	NU	31	West Virginia*	0
Sept. 8	NU	42	Texas Tech	16
Sept. 17	NU	49	UCLA	21
Sept. 24	NU	70	Pacific	21
Oct. 1	NU	42	Wyoming	32
Oct. 8	NU	32	Oklahoma State	3
Oct. 15	NU	17	Kansas State	6
Oct. 22	NU	42	Missouri	7
Oct. 29	NU	24	Colorado	7
Nov. 5	NU	45	Kansas	17
Nov. 12	NU	28	Iowa State	12
Nov. 25	NU	13	Oklahoma	3
Jan. 1	NU	24	Miami	7

Home team in red

* at the Meadowlands

DN graphic

Worth the wait!

By Jeff Griesch
Senior Reporter

The quest is over. The pursuit of a national championship has come to an end for the Nebraska Cornhuskers, and for the first time in 23 years, the Huskers' season had a happy ending.

With a 24-17 victory over the Miami Hurricanes at the Orange Bowl in Miami on New Year's night the Huskers gave Tom Osborne his first national title as head coach at Nebraska.

As fullback Cory Schlesinger tumbled into the end zone with his second touchdown against the Hurricanes, the monkey was lifted from Osborne's back, and more than a decade of near misses and year end frustration was finally over.

Schlesinger's run capped Nebraska's first perfect season since 1971 and ended seven straight unhappy new years for the Huskers.

Nebraska defensive tackle Terry Connealy tried to put the emotions of all the Huskers into words.

"We've been waiting 23 years for this and now we're right back where we belong — on top," Connealy said. "We won this for the whole state of Nebraska."

Perhaps it was fitting for the Huskers to win the title on the same turf and against the same team that began the long line of heartaches.

The 1983 Huskers missed a championship by a fingertip as a lunging Hurricane defender deflected Turner Gill's pass to Jeff Smith for a failed 2-point attempt.

That Nebraska team was considered one of

the greatest college football teams of all time, and many concluded that if Osborne couldn't win with that team, he would never win.

Last year, the Huskers lost by a foot as kicker Byron Bennett's right foot misfired on a last-second field goal attempt, and Florida State walked away with the title.

The Huskers earned respect against the Seminoles and gave Nebraska fans hope that the New Year's Day drought would end, while Osborne became the media's sentimental favorite to win.

After shutting out West Virginia, the Huskers looked ready to cruise through the regular season and into the Orange Bowl.

But Nebraska's vision of a dream season was dealt a serious blow against Texas Tech when starting safety and defensive signal caller Mike Minter was lost for the season with a knee injury.

Converted quarterback Tony Veland became a starter against one of the best passing teams in the nation — UCLA — with less than a game of experience in the secondary under his belt.

Veland and the Nebraska defense played well and routed the Bruins.

The Nebraska offense brutalized the Bruins' defense, and it appeared the Huskers' running machine could coast for the next three weeks while preparing for a test against Kansas State.

But Tommie Frazier left the Pacific game with soreness in his right calf.

Doctors found blood clots in Frazier's leg and said his season was over.

Osborne's jinx appeared destined to con-

tinue.

Brook Berringer took the reins. The junior from Goodland, Kan., was inexperienced and unproven. Most importantly, he was no Tommie Frazier.

The Huskers' title hopes were all but lost. Nebraska struggled to escape with a 42-32 win over Wyoming, but Berringer suffered a partially collapsed lung as the Huskers' ride got even rougher.

Matt Turman became Nebraska's top quarterback, and the season rested in the hands of the undersized, overachieving walk-on from Wahoo.

While the Nebraska's walking wounded staggered into Manhattan, Kan., Chad May and Kansas State waited in the wings to emerge as a Big Eight contender.

The Nebraska offense stumbled, but the defense gave the Huskers a 7-6 halftime lead. Berringer returned in the second half and the Huskers sealed a 17-6 win.

After Berringer's gutsy showing, he became the leader as Nebraska continued its quest for a title.

Colorado came into Lincoln termed a team of destiny after a dramatic, 'Hail Mary' win over Michigan.

The Buffaloes entered the game averaging more than 40 points per game, but the Husker defense blitzed quarterback Kordell Stewart into oblivion and held Heisman Trophy winner Rashaan Salaam in check as Nebraska won 24-7 and reclaimed the No. 1 ranking.

The Huskers survived a scare against Iowa State to set up the final showdown with Oklahoma.

But the showdown turned into a sideshow after doctors cleared Frazier to play, and the debate whether Frazier or Berringer would start in the Orange Bowl began.

The quarterback debate raged until Frazier was named the starter just three days before the Orange Bowl.

After Frazier threw an early interception, Berringer took over.

Berringer led the Huskers until throwing a fourth quarter interception on first-and-goal from the Miami 4-yard line.

Frazier returned to lead a dramatic fourth-quarter comeback and earn Most Valuable Player honors and a national title.

It was a storybook ending for Frazier, whose mid-season depression turned to elation after the Orange Bowl.

"Everyone was very excited. Everyone was jumping around. You couldn't hear yourself think," Frazier said. "It was something you will savor for a lifetime."

Penn State coach Joe Paterno told Osborne years ago that the Husker coach would win a championship when he least expected it.

In a season filled with ironies, it is only natural that Paterno's Nittany Lions may go down in history with the 1983 Huskers as the best teams without titles.

Perhaps it is also appropriate that after 23 years of waiting, the 13,000 thousand fans who filled the Bob Devaney Sports Center to see the Huskers return home had to wait almost three hours longer than expected to cheer for their beloved Big Red.

It was well worth the wait.