



In their first game as
defending national
champions, the
Cornhuskers pick up
right where they left
off -- tearing through
opponents.

by Mitch Sherman

Nebraska running back Damon Benning (left) is tackled by Oklahoma State defender during the Huskers' victory over the Sooners.

Tearing Out of the Gate

STILLWATER, Okla. — Next, please. The Nebraska football team picked up where it left off last season, pounding Oklahoma State 64-21 in front of 42,100 fans here at Lewis Field.

"I thought our top units played quite well," Nebraska coach Tom Osborne said. "Obviously, after we got beyond those, we knew we had a little depth problem in some spots."

The second-ranked Huskers, 1-0, who dominated Oklahoma State in every phase of the game, thwarted any hope of a Cowboy upset early.

After a sluggish start offensively, the Huskers scored at will for much of the game. Nebraska failed to capitalize on its first possession, after a Lawrence Phillips fumble on the sixth play of the season.

But the defense picked up the slack.

Oklahoma State's first two possessions of the night resulted in a loss of 22 yards. The Cowboys gained only 95 yards in the first half, 79 of which came on an Andre Richardson run to the Husker 1-yard line midway through the second quarter.

Nebraska pummelled the Cowboys on the ground, running for 513 yards. The Husker quarterbacks also completed 12 of 20 passes for 158 yards.

The Huskers struck first with 4:59 to

play in the first quarter on a 3-yard Phillips run. The junior I-back scored three touchdowns and rushed for 156 yards on 12 carries.

Quarterback Tommie Frazier hit six of 10 passes for 120 yards and ran for 65 yards. The senior from Bradenton, Fla., played the entire first quarter before giving way to Brook Berringer.

"I expected them to give us a harder test than they did," Frazier said. "We were better conditioned than them, and I think it really showed."

Berringer, also a senior, directed Nebraska to two second-quarter touchdowns and threw for 31 yards, completing five of eight passes. He ran for 17 yards on one carry.

The Cowboys' second drive of the night stalled at their own 13-yard line following a 15-yard personal foul that negated Oklahoma State's only first down of the opening quarter.

I-back Damon Benning replaced Phillips on the ensuing possession and ran for 36 yards as the Huskers needed 3:42 to drive 42 yards and take a 9-0 lead on a 24-yard field goal by Kris Brown.

Osborne said he was pleased with the play of Brown, the first-ever true freshman to open a season as Nebraska's top kicker. Brown missed his first extra point attempt of the night but after overcoming a shaky start, he

nailed his final eight tries.

Less than four minutes after Brown's field goal, inside linebacker Terrell Farley, playing his first game in a Nebraska uniform, picked off a pass by Cowboy quarterback Tone' Jones at the 29-yard line and returned it to the end zone, giving Nebraska a 16-0 lead.

Oklahoma State's lone highlight before halftime came on its next possession on third and 10 from the Cowboys' 20-yard line, Richardson broke free for a 79-yard run. Husker free safety Tony Veland dragged the sophomore to the turf at the 1-yard line.

Two plays later, Richardson plunged into the end zone from three yards out, drawing the Cowboys to within nine points at 16-7 with 9:53 to play in the half.

That was as close as Oklahoma State would come.

Nebraska scored on its next five possessions, the first of which came on a career-long 80-yard run by Phillips.

"They started to flow outside," Phillips said, "so I just cut it back under, and there was no one there."

The junior Heisman Trophy candidate added a 27-yard touchdown run six

minutes later.

Phillips' second score of the game gave the Huskers a 28-7 lead. Oklahoma State followed with a three-and-out series, allowing the Huskers to march 33 yards in six plays, scoring on a 1-yard Frazier run with 59 seconds left to claim a 36-7 halftime lead.

Nebraska came out firing in the third quarter. After a penalty-riddled Cowboy possession, Frazier connected with split end Reggie Baul for a 76-yard touchdown pass.

The remainder of the game showcased a variety of reserves. Several Huskers made their college debuts, including freshman I-back Ahman Green, whose first carry netted 18 yards. Green finished with a touchdown and 52 yards on six carries.

Osborne said Benning was the only Husker to leave the field injured. The junior I-back reaggravated a pulled hamstring.

"Overall, we'll have a good offense, and I think we'll have a great defense," Osborne said. "The biggest thing we need to do is develop depth. I think a night like tonight might be helpful."