

Three days before Nebraska took the field Friday against Colorado, the Cornhusker defense received an extra dose of motivation from the Big 12 coaches, whose all-conference team was announced on Tuesday. The best defense in the conference and the fourth-rated unit in the nation placed only two players on the league's inaugural first team.

Defensive tackle Jason Peter and rush end Grant Wistrom were Nebraska's two selections. But leading tackler Jamel Williams and returning All-American Jared Tomich were conspicuously absent from the first team. Tackle Jeff Ogard, rover Mike Minter and cornerback Michael Booker were named to the second team, while Tomich, linebacker Terrell Farley and linebacker Jon Hesse made the third team.

Safety Eric Stokes and cornerback Ralph Brown were honorable-mention selections. Williams was completely left out.

Wistrom was named by the coaches as the defensive player of the year on Wednesday and quarterback Scott Frost was chosen as the offensive newcomer of the year.

On the offensive side, linemen Chris Dishman and Aaron Taylor earned first-team all-conference honors. Place-kicker Kris Brown and lineman Eric Anderson made the second team, and I-back Ahman Green and Frost were selected to the third team. Split end Brendan Holbein, I-back DeAngelo Evans and fullback Brian Schuster were honorable-mention picks.

Injury report: Three of NU's top four I-backs were treated for injuries Friday. Green, who carried the ball only three times for nine yards, hurt his toe — not the same turf toe injury that has bothered him for much of the season — on the game's first series.

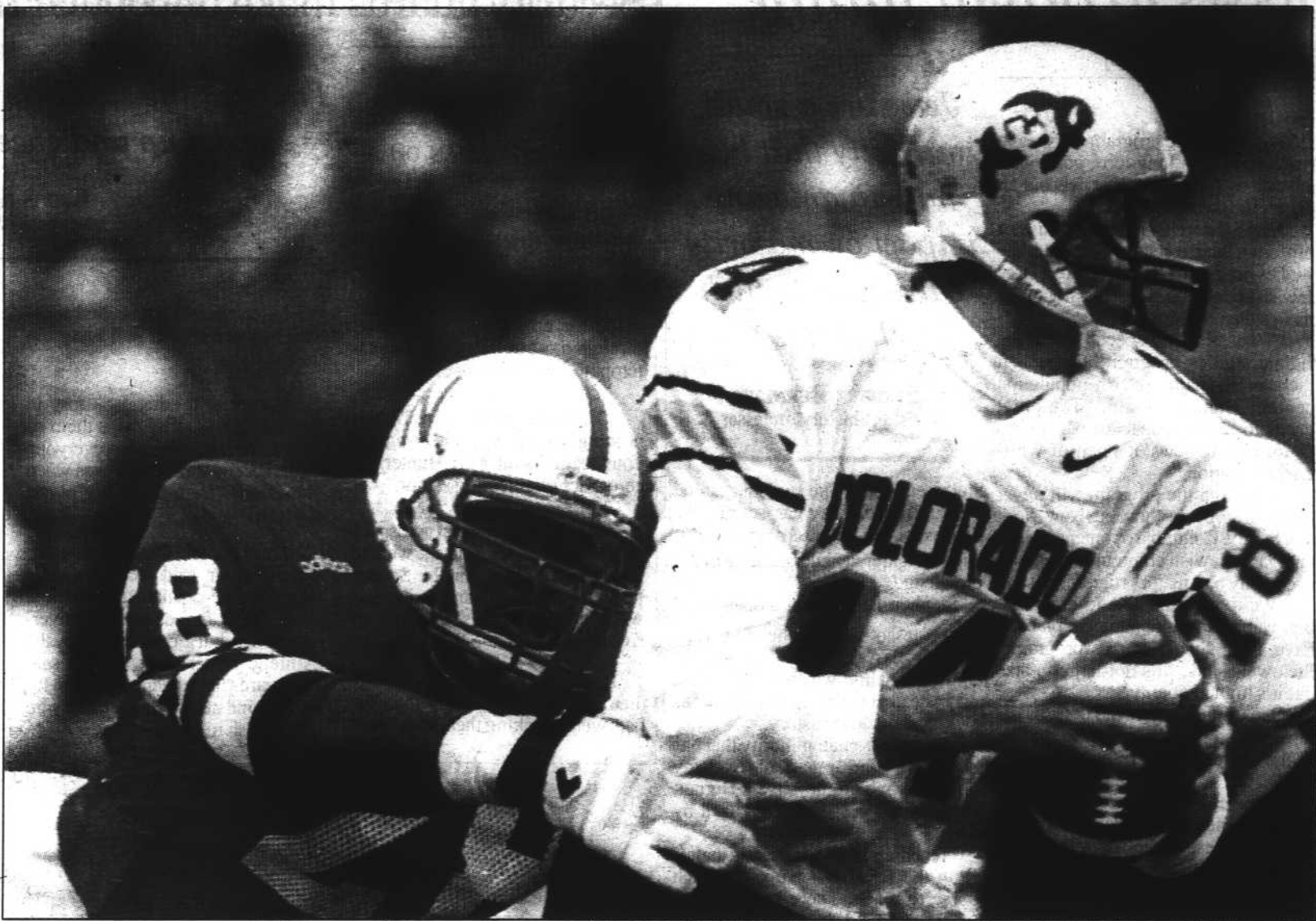
Damon Benning sprained his ankle in the first half, and Jay Sims was held out of the game because of an ankle injury, leaving NU with only one I-back — Evans, a true freshman. Evans, who ran for a game-high 123 yards and scored the only offensive touchdown, was bothered last week by a sore groin but played every series in the second, third and fourth quarters.

Split end Brendan Holbein suffered a hip flexor, but will play on Saturday.

The NU defense held Colorado to a season-low 51 yards rushing and a season-worst 277 yards of total offense. CU did not score a touchdown for the first time this season. Nebraska's top defensive unit has allowed five touchdowns this year, and only two in the Big 12 games.

Friday's 17-12 NU win also marked the 39th-straight game in which Nebraska has recorded a sack. The defense has 47 sacks this season and can break the school record of 49 — set in 1985 — with three sacks on Saturday in the Big 12 championship game against Texas.

Gameday notebook compiled by senior reporter Trevor Parks.



How the North was won

Blackshirts save the day again, holding CU without a touchdown.

By Trevor Parks
Senior Reporter

After eight-consecutive breathers, the Nebraska football team put itself in a position to choke against Colorado on a gloomy afternoon Friday at Memorial Stadium.

But with the Big 12 North Division title and a berth in the conference championship game on the line, the Cornhuskers overcame a 6-0 first-quarter deficit with a stingy defense to defeat Colorado 17-12.

The Huskers used a touchdown on an interception return, a field goal and another score from their last available I-back to secure a 17-6 lead with 6:47 left in the first half.

Then for the last 36-plus minutes of the game, the Blackshirts saved the day, allowing CU only two field goals and leading NU to its 36th-straight home victory before a season-high crowd of 75,695, which braved miserable weather conditions that included snow, sleet and rain.

"It was a little tight," NU Coach Tom Osborne said. "It's kind of tough to play a good team and have that many turnovers and survive."

By surviving the game, the elements and four lost fumbles, third-ranked Nebraska (10-1 overall and 8-0 in the Big 12) advanced to play Texas (7-4 and 6-2) in the first-ever Big 12 championship game, Saturday at 12:04 p.m. at the Trans World Dome in St. Louis.

The Longhorns earned their spot in the championship game by slaughtering Texas A&M 51-15 on Friday in Austin, Texas. Colorado dropped to 9-2 and 7-1 and will likely play in the Holiday Bowl, Dec. 30 in San Diego.

"It's a win, and we are happy about

it," NU Defensive Backs Coach George Darlington said. "Most importantly, we're pleased about the poise of our team, because there were so many opportunities to crack."

For the entire afternoon, Nebraska's poise kept it headed for a trip to the Gateway to the West. Leading 17-6, the Husker offense gift-wrapped several chances for the Buffaloes to take control of the game.

Six times in the second half, CU entered Nebraska territory, coming away with only six points. Two of those possessions began on NU's side of the field — the 39 and 24 — following Husker fumbles.

Jeremy Aldrich's third field goal of the game brought CU within eight points at 17-9 with 7:57 left in the third.

Forty-six seconds later, Colorado linebacker Matt Russell recovered a DeAngelo Evans fumble at the NU 39-yard line. But the Blackshirts did not allow a yard, and the Buffs had to punt.

Andy Mitchell's kick was downed at the NU 7, nearly leading to another Nebraska disaster. On second down and 8, Scott Frost's pitch fell to the ground, and Chris Dishman recovered the ball at the NU 4 amid a swarm of white Buffalo jerseys.

With 12:49 remaining in the game, CU moved the ball 71 yards in seven plays and gained a first down at the NU 9-yard line when wide receiver Phil Savoy wrestled a Koy Detmer pass away from Nebraska cornerback Michael Booker.

After three-straight incompletions by Detmer — who threw for 226 yards but completed just 12 of 38 passes — CU had to settle for a 27-yard Aldrich field goal with 8:46 to play, chopping the Husker lead to five points.

Detmer's final two incompletions of that drive were broken up in the end zone by cornerback Ralph Brown. The true freshman broke up seven passes Friday, breaking Barron Miles' NU record of six set in 1994 against Kansas State.

"We felt our backs were against the wall," NU linebacker Jay Foreman said. "There is a time in the game where you've got to come together like brothers and sisters out there and step up."

Gameday

Nebraska 17
Colorado 12

Nebraska Players

Rushing

Player	Att.	Yds.	TDs
28 Brian Schuster	8	51	0
7 Scott Frost	12	12	0

Receiving

Player	Rec.	Yds.	TDs
14 Lance Brown	1	10	0
10 DeAngelo Evans	1	0	0

Passing

Player	Att/Comp/Int	Yds.	TDs
10 Scott Frost	12/12/0	226	3

Colorado Players

Rushing

Player	Att.	Yds.	TDs
14 Koy Detmer	4	-2	0
20 Tim Roney	13	0	0

Receiving

Player	Rec.	Yds.	TDs
2 James Kidd	2	59	0
21 Rex Carroll	2	47	0

Passing

Player	Att/Comp/Int	Yds.	TDs
14 Koy Detmer	10/10/0	144	0

	Neb.	Col.		Neb.	Col.
First downs	13	14	Fumbles / returns	5/4	0/0
Rushing attempts	20	17	Fumbles lost / yards	2/24	0/0
Rushing yards	238	51	Penalties / yards	11/70	9/50
Passing completions	6	42	Kickoff returns / yards	5/96	1/24
Total plays	66	70	Third-down conversion	6 of 15	6 of 18
Average yards per play	4.5	4.0	Sacks / yards	3/20	2/19

Colorado	12
Nebraska	17

The Nebraska family faced its biggest test with 7:59 left in the game.

Frost was drilled by Hannibal Navies, forcing a fumble, which was recovered by Russell at the Nebraska 24. On a second-and-7 play, Detmer's pass was tipped by Booker, and Jamel Williams picked it off, returning the ball to the 19-yard line.

After the Nebraska offense went three plays and out for the fifth time of the half, CU had one final chance with 4:47 remaining.

On third and 17, the Buffs picked up a first down on a Detmer 37-yard strike to Rae Carruth at the Nebraska 28-yard line. But the Nebraska defense stiffened, placing intense pressure on Detmer for the next three plays.

On fourth down, Williams flew untouched through the CU line, and

Detmer flung the ball up for grabs before it fell to the turf, ending Colorado's final offensive possession.

"As long as their defense didn't score on us, there was no way their offense was going to score a touchdown on us," said Husker rush end Grant Wistrom, who had a team-high 13 tackles, including two sacks. "We didn't have any fear, and we knew we weren't going to lose the ballgame."

Finally with 2:53 remaining, the Nebraska offense awoke. At that point, the Huskers had only one second-half first down and 64 total yards. In the fourth quarter, NU had minus-1 yard of offense before picking up 35 on its final drive.

Fullback Brian Schuster carried three times on the final drive — all trap plays — for 18 yards, picking up one first down as NU ran out the clock to

Please see CU on 11