

Big 12 Notebook

The Nebraska football players saw more emotion than usual from NU Coach Tom Osborne after the Orange Bowl Jan. 2. With the crowd chanting his name, Osborne — who announced his retirement last month — jogged off the field and met with his players in the locker room one last time.

"You could hear his voice crack every now and then but it wasn't like you'd expect," NU left guard Aaron Taylor said. "He got a little emotional and he told us thanks for everything."

Prior to the Orange Bowl kickoff, Roswell, Ga., native Terry Pledger won \$1 million dollars in the Gillette Touchdown Challenge. Pledger, who was randomly selected from more than one million entries in a sweepstakes, tossed a football 10 yards through a target that was 30 inches in diameter.

Despite his winnings, Pledger, who is married and has four kids, said he will not quit his job as a parking-lot line painter.

His newfound fortune also earned him interviews on numerous national television shows, including Primetime Live and the Late Show with David Letterman.

Tennessee punter Chris Hogue's 78-yard punt in the first quarter set a Tennessee bowl record. Hogue also set the Volunteer bowl record for punting average with 52.3. The mark also broke the Orange Bowl average for punts.

NU's Shevin Wiggins, used primarily as a return specialist and receiver during the regular season, scored on his second rushing attempt of the game for his first career touchdown.

It was his first score since 1993, when he ran for 32 touchdowns as a senior at Manatee High School in Florida. He was named the Florida High School Offensive player of the year.

Some fans partied all day long outside of Pro Player Stadium before the Orange Bowl.

Vendors at the Coors Light Tailgate Party used 200 kegs to serve an estimated 32,000 glasses of beer. But it didn't come cheap.

Fans, who began arriving at 10 a.m., had to pay \$10 to get into the party and then pay \$4.25 per glass of beer.

Orange Bowl notebook compiled by senior reporter Shannon Heffelfinger

Bowl victory convinces coaches NU is No. 1

BY ANTONE OSEKA
Staff Reporter

MIAMI — Michigan had already put the finishing touches on an undefeated season, but that didn't stop the Nebraska football team from pleading its case for a national championship.

A 49-17 win over then third-ranked Tennessee in the Orange Bowl Jan. 2 earned the Cornhuskers (13-0) the top spot in the USA Today/ESPN poll by two votes. Michigan (12-0), which defeated then eighth-ranked Washington State 21-16 Jan. 1, finished first in the Associated Press poll.

I-back Ahman Green led the way for the Huskers as NU Coach Tom Osborne ended his 25-year head coaching career with his third national championship before 72,385 fans at Pro Player Stadium.

Green took 29 carries for an Orange Bowl record 206 yards. The 6-foot, 215-pound back from Omaha, who announced Wednesday that he will take his chances in the NFL draft rather than return for his senior season, was named the game's MVP.

"It means a great deal to me," Green said. "My line, they've been blocking for me well all year. I've got to give it to my line and the offense as a whole."

The Huskers totaled 534 yards of offense — including 409 yards on the ground. But their success wasn't

"They were getting fatigued in the middle of the second quarter, you could hear them huffing and puffing."

AARON TAYLOR
NU offensive guard

instant. Nebraska was forced to punt in three of its first four possessions and only took a 14-3 lead into the locker room at halftime.

But NU senior guard Aaron Taylor said it quickly became evident that the Volunteers were beginning to wear down. Tennessee finished the season 11-2 and ranked seventh in the AP poll.

"They were getting fatigued in the middle of the second quarter. You could hear them huffing and puffing," Taylor said. "They eventually rolled over, and we could do what we wanted to them."

Nebraska and Tennessee seemed to do a role reversal in the first half, as NU went to the air to open up the running game. Green carried the ball 11 times for 31 yards in the first half.

NU senior quarterback Scott Frost completed seven of 10 passes for 109 yards in the first two quarters. His counterpart, Heisman trophy runner-up Peyton Manning, was 13 of 19 for 96 yards.

"They (Tennessee's defense) came

out fired up and stopped our run," Taylor said. "We had to loosen up their defenses with our passes."

The Volunteers, conversely, went to the ground to open the passing game for Manning. Running backs Jamal Lewis, a freshman, and Mark Levine rushed 11 times for 80 yards at the half.

Defense and special teams came up big for NU in the first half, contributing to both Husker touchdowns.

NU rush end Mike Rucker recovered a Lewis fumble and wingback Lance Brown recovered a fumbled punt to set up both scoring drives. At the end of the half, Eric Warfield picked off Manning, but Nebraska couldn't capitalize on the possession.

"Coach Osborne said we had to come out in the second half and put points on the board, keep pounding on them as much as you can," Green said. "We pounded on them, drive in, drive out, driving the ball on them, passing

Please see BOWL on 8



Football Game Review

Nebraska					Tennessee								
Rushing					Rushing								
No.	Name	Yds	Avg	TD	No.	Name	Yds	Avg	TD				
30	Ahman Green	206	7.1	2	31	Jamal Lewis	80	8.4	0				
45	Joel Makovicka	61	6.8	0	19	Mark Levine	30	15.0	0				
7	Scott Frost	60	3.5	3	17	Tee Martin	11	11.0	0				
Receiving					Receiving								
No.	Name	No	Yds	Long	TD	No.	Name	No	Yds	Long	TD		
88	Sheldon Jackson	4	56	25	0	12	Marcus Nash	5	53	20	0		
30	Ahman Green	3	31	29	0	6	Jer. Copeland	4	30	13	0		
12	Bobby Newcombe	1	22	22	0	24	Shawn Bryson	4	25	8	0		
Passing					Passing								
No.	Name	Att	Cmp	Int	Yds	TD	No.	Name	Att	Cmp	Int	Yds	TD
7	Scott Frost	12	9	0	125	0	16	Peyton Manning	31	21	1	134	1
							17	Tee Martin	4	4	0	53	1
Game Stats					Game Stats								
	Nebraska	Tennessee		Nebraska	Tennessee								
First downs	30	16	Fumbles	3	2								
Rushing attempts	68	21	Interceptions	1	0								
Rushing yards	409	128	Penalties / yards	8 / 63	5 / 97								
Passing attempts	12	35	Punt returns / yards	3 / 31	2 / 4								
Passing completions	9	25	Kickoff returns / yards	1 / 29	5 / 94								
Passing yards	125	187	Time of possession	36:03	23:57								
Total plays	60	56	Third-down conversion	4 of 10	2 of 10								
Total yards	534	315	Fourth-down conversion	1 of 2	1 of 1								
Average yards per play	8.9	5.6	Sacks / yards	1 / 9	0 / 0								
Scoring Summary													
Team	Qtr	Scoring play	Conversion	Plays-Yds	Score								
				Nebraska	Akron								
NU	1st	Ahman Green 1 yd run	Kris Brown kick	8-78	7-0								
NU	2nd	Shevin Wiggins 10 yd run	Kris Brown kick	3-15	14-0								
UT	2nd	Jeff Hall 44 yd field goal		7-35	14-3								
NU	3rd	Scott Frost 1 yd run	Kris Brown kick	12-80	21-3								
NU	3rd	Scott Frost 11 yd run	Kris Brown kick	8-73	28-3								
UT	3rd	Pearless Price 5yd pass from P. Manning	Manning pass failed	9-72	28-9								
NU	3rd	Ahman Green 22 yd run	Kris Brown kick	4-80	35-9								
NU	4th	Scott Frost 9 yd run	Kris Brown kick	9-66	42-9								
UT	4th	Andy McCullough 9 yd pass from T. Martin	T. Stephens pass	8-80	42-17								

