



RYAN SODERLIN/DN

**NEBRASKA QUARTERBACK SCOTT FROST** tries to break free from Texas A&M linebacker Warrick Holdman during the Big 12 Championship game in San Antonio, Texas. Frost finished the game with 79 yards rushing on 15 carries and two touchdowns. He also threw for 201 yards.

## Top 25 AP Top 25

Rank	School	Record	Pvs
1	Michigan (51.5)	12-0	1
2	Nebraska (18.5)	13-0	2
3	Florida St.	11-1	4
4	Florida	10-2	6
5	UCLA	10-2	5
6	North Carolina	11-1	7
7	Tennessee	11-2	3
8	Kansas St.	11-1	10
9	Washington St.	10-2	8
10	Georgia	10-2	12
11	Auburn	10-3	13
12	Ohio St.	10-3	9
13	LSU	9-3	15
14	Arizona St.	8-3	16
15	Purdue	9-3	17
16	Penn St.	9-3	11
17	Colorado St.	11-2	18
18	Washington	8-4	21
19	Southern Miss.	9-3	22
20	Texas A&M	9-4	20
21	Syracuse	9-4	14
22	Mississippi	8-4	—
23	Missouri	7-5	19
24	Oklahoma St.	8-4	24
25	Georgia Tech	7-5	—

## USA TODAY/Coaches Top 25

1	Nebraska (32)	13-0	2
2	Michigan (30)	12-0	1
3	Florida St.	11-1	4
4	North Carolina	11-1	5
5	UCLA	10-2	6
6	Florida	10-2	8
7	Kansas St.	11-1	9
8	Tennessee	11-2	3
9	Washington St.	10-2	7
10	Georgia	10-2	11
11	Auburn	10-3	13
12	Ohio St.	10-3	10
13	LSU	9-3	15
14	Arizona St.	9-3	18
15	Purdue	9-3	16
16	Colorado St.	11-2	17
17	Penn St.	9-3	12
18	Washington	8-4	23
19	Southern Miss.	9-3	22
20	Syracuse	9-4	14
21	Texas A&M	9-4	19
22	Mississippi	8-4	—
23	Missouri	7-5	20
24	Oklahoma St.	8-4	24
25	Air Force	10-3	21

JON FRANK/DN

### Nebraska 49, Baylor 21

There had been prettier games for No. 3 Nebraska, but it was a victory just the same as NU ran out to a 42-7 halftime lead and eventually won 49-21 in front of 38,175 fans at Floyd Casey Stadium in Waco, Texas.

Nebraska was outscored 14-7 in the second half, however, prompting Osborne to raise concerns about his second and third teams.

"When we don't execute like I think we can, I'm not happy," Osborne said. "I'm just kind of upset at the fact that we didn't finish the game off playing well."

NU's first team did execute well, with Green rushing for 158 yards and Frost tallying 174 total yards.

Baylor, on the other hand, had only 203 total yards, 80 of which came on one touchdown run from Jerod Douglas.

That same Oct. 11 evening, Florida lost the top ranking with a 28-21 loss to LSU. Now at No. 2 in the nation, Nebraska was focused on another national championship.

### Nebraska 29, Texas Tech 0

If there's such a thing as a defensive gem, then

No. 2 Nebraska had one against Texas Tech, winning 29-0 in front 75,764 fans at Memorial Stadium

The Huskers' defense limited the Red Raiders' offense to 127 total yards and six first downs. Texas Tech had won two games in a row before losing to NU.

"It was definitely nice to get the goose egg," senior defensive tackle Jason Peter said. "We've been hoping for a shutout all season."

Nebraska racked up 446 total yards in the game, getting 178 yards from Ahman Green and picking up 400 yards overall on the ground. Texas Tech had only 17 yards rushing.

The next day, Nebraska was made the No. 1 team in nation by the voters as Penn State barely beat Minnesota.

Texas Tech was only the beginning of the defensive dominance. Another goose egg was yet to come in Lawrence, Kan.

### Nebraska 35, Kansas 0

The lights went out in the stadium, but not on the Nebraska defense.

The Huskers gave up only 48 total yards and got their second straight shutout in a 35-0 win over Kansas in front of 42,000 fans in a wet, cold Memorial Stadium in Lawrence.

Nebraska jumped out to a 21-0 lead in the first half, which included a power outage in the stadium's lights, and shut down KU's offense all night, surrendering only four first downs the entire game.

"Everything they came out with, we were just shoving down their throats," Peter said.

NU kept its No. 1 spot in the polls, and would continue to do so through the next week.

### Nebraska 69, Oklahoma 7

One of the greatest rivalries in college football history just might have come to an end in a debilitating fashion.

No. 1 Nebraska moved to 8-0 thrashing the Sooners 69-7 in the 69th and last straight game between the two teams in front of 75,296 fans at Memorial Stadium.

The Huskers jumped out to a 34-0 lead at halftime and never looked back, handing the Sooners the worst defeat in their history.

"We wanted to attack them a little because they were a threat," senior defensive end Grant Wistrom said.

Oklahoma dropped to 3-6 on the season. Nebraska's defense had performed valiantly for three weeks. But in its next game, the defense wouldn't save the Huskers until late in the game.

In fact, NU's national championship season would come down to a simple kick of the ball.

### Nebraska 45, Missouri 38 OT

It has been called "the immaculate reception," "the catch" and the "miracle in Missouri."

Every Nebraska football fan has seen it, and very few will forget it. It is, simply, the play that saved a national championship for Nebraska and one of the most bizarre plays in football history.

With seven seconds remaining and Nebraska trailing 38-31 to Missouri, Frost threw a pass into the endzone to intended receiver Shevin Wiggins.

Wiggins dropped it when he was hit.

As Wiggins fell to the ground, his right foot booted the ball into the air.

Freshman split end Matt Davison caught the ball off the deflection about 3 inches before it would have hit the ground. After Kris Brown's extra point, Nebraska and Missouri went into overtime tied at 38.

"I dove and had both hands out firmly, but the ball was just a couple inches from the ground," Davison said. "It was a couple inches from no national championship."

In overtime, Frost scored from 12 yards out to make the score 45-38. Then, as Missouri fans at Faurot Field stood stunned, Nebraska celebrated after sacking MU quarterback Corby Jones, stopping the Tigers' drive.

"It was kind of one of those days where somebody was going to win at the end," Osborne said. "and we're very fortunate to have won it."

The close win had its price. Nebraska had been ranked No. 1, but as Florida State and Michigan both won, the Huskers fell to No. 3.

But polls would make more of a difference down the line. At the time, NU was lucky to get out of Columbia, Mo., in contention for the national championship.

### Nebraska 77, Iowa State 14

On Senior Day in Lincoln, NU beat Iowa State by 63 points, the Huskers' largest win of the season.

And it wasn't even that close.

Third-ranked NU took a 63-7 lead at halftime, extended it to 70-7, and then put in the reserves en route to a 77-14 win over the Cyclones in front of 75,613 fans at Memorial Stadium.

NU qualified itself for the Big 12 Championship with the win, and Green rushed for a season-high 209 yards.

"You're not trying to run the score up," Osborne said, "you're trying to get players in."

Nebraska moved to 10-0, one game away from a perfect season.

### Nebraska 27, Colorado 24

Colorado was wounded. At 5-5 going into the Nebraska game, CU's pride had been beaten around and kicked in the dirt.

Despite that, the Buffaloes were likely a pass interference penalty away from upsetting the No. 3 Huskers.

But NU survived 27-24 in front of 52,378 fans at Folsom Field in Boulder, Colo.

After erasing a 27-10 deficit in the fourth quarter, CU again had the ball at its own 36 with under two minutes remaining. On third-and-10, Colorado quarterback John Hessler hit wide receiver Phil Savoy at midfield, but the play was called back because of offensive pass interference.

"They almost beat us," Osborne said.

Still, the Huskers were undefeated. And ironically, the Colorado game would be the last time NU would be challenged by any team.

### Nebraska 54, Texas A&M 15

There was no Texas two-step in the Big 12 Championship.

No. 2 Nebraska had lost to Texas the year before in St. Louis, 37-27, but pounded Texas A&M 54-15 behind the force of a 37-3 halftime lead.

A crowd of 64,824 at the Alamodome in San Antonio watched NU shackle the Aggies running

game, as A&M scampered for only 13 yards. NU finished with 335 rushing yards.

"When we play like that, we're one of the best defenses in the country," Wistrom said.

Nebraska moved on to play the No. 3 team in the country, Tennessee, in the Orange Bowl.

### Nebraska 42, Tennessee 17

At about 2 a.m. CST Jan. 3, Nebraska won its third national title in four years.

It took a 42-17 pasting of Tennessee to get it. After an unimpressive first half, NU pounded the Volunteers with the ground game and outscored UT 28-14 in the second half, laying claim to the national title in the USA Today/ESPN Coaches Poll after garnering a 13-0 record.

Michigan received the title in the Associated Press Poll after finishing 12-0 and beating Washington State 21-16 in the Rose Bowl.

A crowd of 72,385 fans at Pro Player Stadium in Miami watched Osborne, who announced his retirement just weeks before, end his 25-year career at NU with his third national title.

Green led all rushers with an Orange Bowl record 206 yards, which earned him the MVP award.

"We pounded them drive in, drive out," Green said, "driving the ball on them, passing the ball on them."

Frost, who at the beginning of the season was booed by NU fans, was now one of their heroes, outplaying Heisman Trophy runner-up Peyton Manning, who threw for only 126 yards.

In the end, it was one of the Huskers' best performances of the season on a night when they needed it most. When the coaches poll votes came in, some said it was a sympathy vote for the retiring Osborne. While it can't be proven either way, the numbers showed the Huskers to be worthy of a title.

NU had defeated two teams that finished in the top 10 by an average of 27.5 points. The Huskers had a decisive win on the road against Washington.

Beyond that were all the individual awards the Huskers garnered this season. Wistrom won the Lombardi Award as the nation's top lineman. Senior guard Aaron Taylor won the Outland Trophy, awarded to the nation's best interior lineman. Both were consensus All-Americans, and Wistrom was Big 12 Defensive Player of the Year. Peter also was an All-American by many publications.

Green was named a second-team All-American by The Associated Press and was a first-team All Big 12 selection. Wistrom, Taylor, Peter, cornerback Ralph Brown and offensive lineman Eric Anderson also were named to the team.

And once again, Nebraska led the nation in rushing, averaging 392.6 yards per game.

And so ended another year of Nebraska football, one of the most exciting and unpredictable seasons ever in Lincoln. NU won another national title, continuing a dynasty that has been unparalleled in college football since the Oklahoma Sooners in the 1950s.

In 1998, NU will look toward a new coach, Frank Solich, and a new team with new challenges. The Huskers won't likely be favored to win another national championship, but then again, not many thought they could do it in 1997.