

# Huskers' on-target passing opens up offense

By JAY SAUNDERS  
Staff writer

The majority of the attention in the Nebraska football team's 56-27 win over Louisiana Tech went to the Bulldogs' passing game.



Gill

Most of that came from Tech receiver Troy Edwards, who set an NCAA record for receiving yards in a single game with 405 on 21 receptions.

On the other side of the ball, the Cornhuskers had their best passing percentage game since 1993, when

NU completed 14 of 17 passes against North Texas.

No. 3 NU may not have thrown the ball as many times as Louisiana Tech, but the passing game had the right effect.

"Even though we only threw 13 passes," NU Coach Frank Solich said, "we completed 10 of those. I think we showed an offense that moved the ball on the ground and through the air."

The 10 of 13 passing, nearly 77 percent,

is better than any performance the Huskers had last year. The closest NU came last season was a 75 percent (9 of 12 passing) performance against Iowa State.

Sophomore Bobby Newcombe started his first game as a quarterback, and completed nine passes in just 10 attempts. His only incomplete pass: a throwaway under pressure from the Bulldog defense. Newcombe threw for 168 yards.

Freshman Eric Crouch replaced Newcombe in the fourth quarter and tossed three passes, completing one of them.

"We know no one is perfect," Quarterbacks Coach Turner Gill said, "but we couldn't have done any better."

Because of an injury to Newcombe, Crouch may see a lot more playing time this weekend against Alabama-Birmingham.

Gill said whichever signal caller plays on Saturday, the Huskers' offense will run without a hitch.

"Eric is very capable of running, throwing and reading defenses," Gill said.

Crouch and Newcombe are not the only factors in the passing offense.

Both Gill and Solich said the receivers and tight ends are aiding the offensive attack.

Nebraska returns nine players who caught at least two passes last season. Six of

those players caught passes against Louisiana Tech. Only Lance Brown won't play Saturday because of an ankle injury suffered on Monday.

Sophomore Matt Davison, who caught two passes for 11 yards, said the seasoned group of receivers helps the offense's passing game.

"I think it all has to do with how confident we are," Davison said. "We have a very experienced receiving corps."

Saturday, Louisiana Tech played what Gill called a "three-deep" defense. The Bulldogs played nine defenders close to the line of scrimmage to defend the run. That left only three defensive backs to cover Husker receivers.

The result: big cushions for the NU receivers on quick out patterns toward the sidelines and long, play-action passes over the middle.

Twice, Newcombe hit tight end Sheldon Jackson with long passes in the middle of the field. Newcombe also had success with short passes right in front of Tech defensive backs.

Both Davison and senior split end Kenny Cheatham, who led all receivers with three catches against Tech, said the Huskers' ability to pass should help the running game, forcing the defense to

Year	Game	Comp-Att	Yards	TD	%
1991	Oklahoma St.	17-19	231	3	89
1993	North Texas	14-17	215	3	82
1996	Louisiana Tech	10-13	188	1	77
1997	Iowa State	9-12	121	0	75
1997	Kansas	13-18	273	3	72

JON FRANK/DN

respect play fakes from Newcombe and passes out of the option play.

"With us passing well, teams may have to change up the way they play defense a little bit," Cheatham said. "That is when we go right up the gut at them."

Is it possible to think that if NU could keep throwing the ball efficiently, the Huskers could change their offense to look somewhat like Louisiana Tech, with four wide receivers and 60 passes a game?

Not likely.

Cheatham said he doesn't think Husker fans need to worry about seeing a change in the offensive attack. Expect the option again vs. UAB.

"We could have thrown the ball all day," Cheatham said, "but I don't think we are going to go to that extreme."

## CU musters six points; no match for Huskers

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"But he said that they have to try to schedule top 10 teams to stay competitive, and I understood that. I just told Terry I'd call him back in a few years when we are a top 10 team."

Wallace was only half-joking. The second-year CU coach has pushed the Bluejays into the Missouri Valley spotlight.

Creighton just reinstated its volleyball program in 1994 after a brief hiatus but has been able to build a solid team with strong recruiting. Wallace expects the eight-member 1998 class to have a positive impact on the program during the next four years.

Melissa Walsh, a freshman middle blocker, said Tuesday's match against Nebraska will only help her teammates.

"This is something that none of us have ever experienced before," Walsh said. "But we know we could have done better out there."

Walsh, who led the Bluejays with eight kills and 29 attacks, said she felt frustrated at times during the match.

In the first game, NU setter Fiona Nepo reeled off 10 straight points before Creighton earned possession. Walsh scored CU's only two points in

"This is something that none of us have ever experienced before."

MELISSA WALSH  
CU freshman middle blocker

game one.

"We started real tense," Walsh said. "But after the first game, we gelled a little better. We started playing our game."

Pettit credited both Wallace and the Bluejays for their persistence during the match. But he offered little hope for a future meeting between the two in-state schools other than a scrimmage in the spring.

"We're switching to a Wednesday-Saturday schedule next year, and we don't have any midweek dates available," Pettit said. "It will be difficult to continue next year."

## Tyson finds trouble in Las Vegas

LAS VEGAS (AP) - Mike Tyson picked the wrong time to get into a fight.

Tyson's boxing future became even cloudier Tuesday after police in a Washington, D.C., suburb said he punched one man in the chest and kicked another in the groin after a minor traffic accident a day earlier.

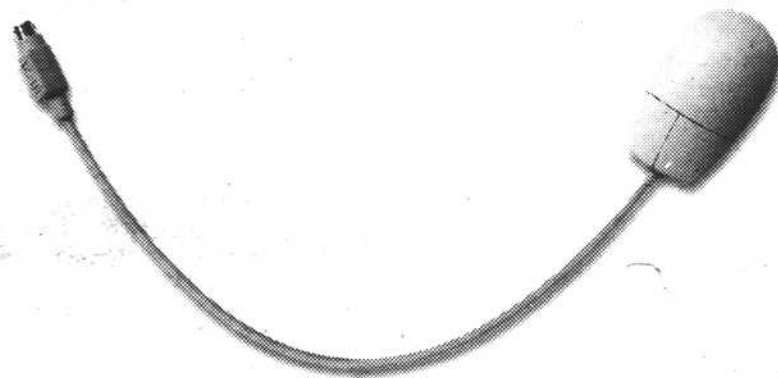
The incident came less than three weeks before Nevada boxing authorities meet to decide whether Tyson has learned to behave himself enough to

be licensed again to resume his career as a heavyweight fighter.

"This complicates matters," a source close to the Nevada commission said.

There were no serious injuries in Monday's altercation - though Tyson later complained of chest pains and was treated at a hospital emergency room - and no arrests were made. Police classified it as a "misdemeanor assault" and said it would be up to the other drivers if they wanted to seek charges.

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