

# Heskeu, offensive line in gear after Husky win

## Anonymous letter provides 'fuel to the fire' for one of NU's captains

By DAVID WILSON  
Senior staff writer

A letter was tacked to the bulletin board outside the Nebraska football locker room early last week.

The envelope - postmarked Orlando, Fla. - was addressed to "Ms. Josh Heskeu," the Cornhuskers' senior center.

"Congratulations, Josh," it reads. "You are the captain of the worst offensive line in Nebraska football history. Hope your teammates are proud."

Also included were some predictions: "Washington 24, Huskers 0. Season: 7-5."

The offensive line didn't exactly take the words to heart, Heskeu said, but it did add some "fuel to the fire."

**Heskeu** In a 55-7 win over eighth-ranked Washington on Saturday, the NU offensive line proved at least one critic wrong, paving the way for a 434-yard Husker rushing performance.

"I think anytime you can rush for over 400 yards against the No. 8 team in the nation, that should silence some people," Heskeu said. "We just have to keep up the intensity for the rest of the season."

Though it hadn't been accomplished this season, Heskeu said, the offensive line's goal every week is to help Nebraska put up 400 yards on the ground.

NU's previous rushing high came in its season opener against Louisiana Tech, when the Huskers ran for 289 yards.

"It's a little bonus to do it against the No. 8 team in the

nation," junior tackle Jason Schwab said. "I think we made a big statement with our rushing game."

Washington attempted to confuse the Husker offensive line by "stemming" - jumping positions on the line after Nebraska came set.

But the Huskers, NU Offensive Line Coach Milt Tenopir said, were prepared for the Husky defensive schemes.

They countered by snapping the ball on the quarterback's first sound - often before the Husky linemen were set - or by waiting until UW was done moving.

"If we went on the sound, we'd catch them in the middle of a stem," Heskeu said. "They'd be off balance, and we'd knock the crap out of them."

The end result, Tenopir said, was the offensive line's best game of the season.

But that's to be expected.

"You're supposed to play better each game," Tenopir said. "And I think we have. They played well and very aggressive."

Schwab agreed.

"Our goal is to improve each game," Schwab said. "A lot of teams beat a big top-notch team, and they think their season is over and their season is going to be successful. That's not the way it works."

"If we went on the sound, we'd catch them in the middle of a stem. They'd be off balance, and we'd knock the crap out of them."

JOSH HESKEU  
NU center

"It counts as one win. That doesn't mean you're going to win it all. Our goal is to be in Tempe (Ariz.) on Jan. 4."

Success came Saturday with the help of big plays, a rested offensive line and good execution, Heskeu said.

But Schwab also credited the togetherness of the Husker linemen.

"Our unity is unbelievable," Schwab said. "We're all so tight. We're all for one. That's just the way it is. We're a real big family."

"Heskeu, he's coming along as a leader. He's our leading senior, along with (seniors Ben) Gessford and Brant Wade. They've showed tremendous leadership qualities, and that helps us come together as a unit."

The younger and more inexperienced linemen have stepped up, too, Tenopir said, but all three seniors have shown leadership qualities - including Heskeu.

"He keeps them going and he keeps them fired up," Tenopir said.

An occasional letter doesn't hurt either.

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