

# Frazier's leadership makes him

**FRAZIER** from page 1

Two of his three career losses came as Frazier became the only Cornhusker quarterback to start as a true freshman.

Considered by many to be the top option quarterback out of high school in 1992, not even then-Nebraska coach Tom Osborne could foresee the success that Frazier would eventually experience.

"Yeah, I was mildly surprised at how good he really was," Osborne said. "We thought he would have a great future. I would say he met and probably exceeded every expectation."

Attitude may have been the key to success for Frazier, who was named the Nebraska Male Athlete of the Century by the Daily Nebraskan.

"I strived to be the best player that I could," Frazier said. "That's all I think any coach can ask of a player. I think by me doing that, it wore off on other players. That led to two national championships and three undefeated regular seasons. There wasn't an ingredient that we all followed."

But if there was an ingredient that spelled winning, Frazier seemed to possess it.

His first undefeated regular season came in 1993 when Frazier, then a sophomore, helped NU to five come-from-behind victories.

The one loss came in the Orange Bowl to Florida State. Frazier matched Heisman Trophy Award winner

Charlie Ward yard-for-yard — both totaling 283 yards of total offense — as the Huskers lost the national championship 18-16.

It was at that moment, Frazier said, that something struck the minds of nearly every returning NU player.

"Knowing that we had the game won but didn't finish it off, that's when it all started," Frazier said. "Right then, we knew that, hey, there isn't any team out here that we can't play with. That just carried on for two years."

"We knew that we were going to win. By how many points, we didn't know, but we knew going into every game that we were going to win no matter what. We didn't care who was out there — the Dallas Cowboys, the Chicago Bears or Colorado or Kansas State. We were going to win."

*He's now looking and running straight at another defender, who is waiting patiently three yards away. But all it takes is a quick stutter step, a head nod and a flip of the wrist — all directed toward the halfback trailing five yards behind — to throw the defender off balance and open up a hole.*

*Not a big hole, but enough to give him a short gain. So he cradles the ball at his right side as he straightens his left arm into the chest of a lineman just past the line of scrimmage (the 25 yard-line). The lineman hugs the quarterback from the side, but the signal caller has too much momentum. The*

*second would-be tackler falls to the ground as his right hand slips away from the jersey — just below the numbers.*

When asked the first thing that came to his mind when thinking about his four-year career at Nebraska, Frazier replied, "My teammates."

And it's his teammates, he said, that deserve most of the credit for the back-to-back championships in 1994 and 1995.

"I don't think it had much to do with me," Frazier said. "That's one thing Coach Osborne did, was surround me with other players that could fit along with me to get to the next level. I didn't do it alone."

But he led them both vocally and by example — in practice and on the field.

He knew the game, Gill said, and his strong work ethic rubbed off.

"Just practicing the way he practiced raised the level of the players around him," Gill said. "When he stepped in a ball game, the level of play increased. Those things, you can't coach. He had something special about him. Just the way he addressed himself."

And it was like that from day one.

Of course, sometimes Frazier's burning desire to win became a little too hot. But in the end, it always worked out — well, all but three times.

"He was very competitive and he

really wouldn't tolerate people who didn't have the same competitive instincts," Osborne said. "So, sometimes he would come off a little abrupt. But that served him well, because as a freshman, he would get in the huddle and tell seniors to shape up or ship out."

"He wasn't abrasive, but he was a guy that would let you know what he wanted to do. I think as a quarterback, that was a good quality."

After falling one last-second field goal short of a national championship at the end of the 1993 season, Frazier didn't lose another game in his career. NU went 25-0 during his final two seasons.

But it wasn't entirely Frazier that led the Huskers to a national championship in 1994. Sideline with a blood clot in his leg after NU's fourth contest, Frazier watched as Brook Berringer finished out the last eight games of the season.

*Planting his right foot in the grass, he cuts left at the 33 1/2-yard-line — into the waiting arms of a Gator defensive back. He's caught. The defensive back wraps up and soon, another lineman is right there with him — both bodies pressing to bring the quarterback down.*

*The duo wrestle him toward the sideline as four more Gators join in the effort. But the quarterback refuses to go down. He's still on his feet as the group continues to make its way*

*toward the sideline.*

He experienced soreness in his leg against Pacific and played just the first two series. The blood clot was discovered Sept. 25, 1994.

"I wanted to leave school, move back to Florida, and be with my family," Frazier said. "That's the hardest part of anybody's career is the injury that's going to keep you away from something you truly love."

What made things even worse was the fact that doctors couldn't tell Frazier if or when he would be able to return to football.

He took anti-coagulant drugs, and returned to drills after missing the next game, but the blood clot had reformed.

"If someone tears their ACL, they know exactly how long they'll be out," Frazier said. "With me, I had no idea."

Prior to the season finale at Oklahoma, Frazier learned that he would be cleared to play in the bowl game. Weeks later, he earned the starting nod over Berringer against Miami in the Orange Bowl for the national championship.

For the first time since his freshman year, Frazier said he felt the pressure.

"Everybody has doubts after an injury, wondering if they're going to be the same player they were before the injury," Frazier said. "That's common."

With the help of a successful two-point conversion pass that tied the game at 17 in the fourth quarter, Frazier earned most valuable player honors as Nebraska downed the Hurricanes 24-17 for the national title.

The win gave Osborne his first career national championship and gave the Huskers their first title since 1971.

"I don't think it was winning the game so much as it was proving to myself not to doubt myself," Frazier said. "I think I was doubting myself more than anything. I didn't know how my leg was going to react."

"The only pressure I ever felt was the pressure I put on myself. As far as me going out and playing football for Nebraska, that wasn't pressure. I put pressure on myself to be the best that I could be. I didn't let any other pressure get on me."

From there, the momentum kept rolling.

*His legs pumping, the quarterback is pulled by the only Gator between him and the sideline. The defender falls down, attempting to bring the quarterback with him, but the strong legs of the signal caller resist. From behind, the initial defensive back, who started the tackle cluster, still has a firm two-hand grip on the quarterback.*

*But in similar fashion to the previous would-be tacklers, his grip slips and he falls to the ground. Still another Gator, who has had time to get up from a receiver's block, which had sent him to the ground, joins the effort hitting the quarterback from the right side. But he, too, hits the ground at the 47-yard line*

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