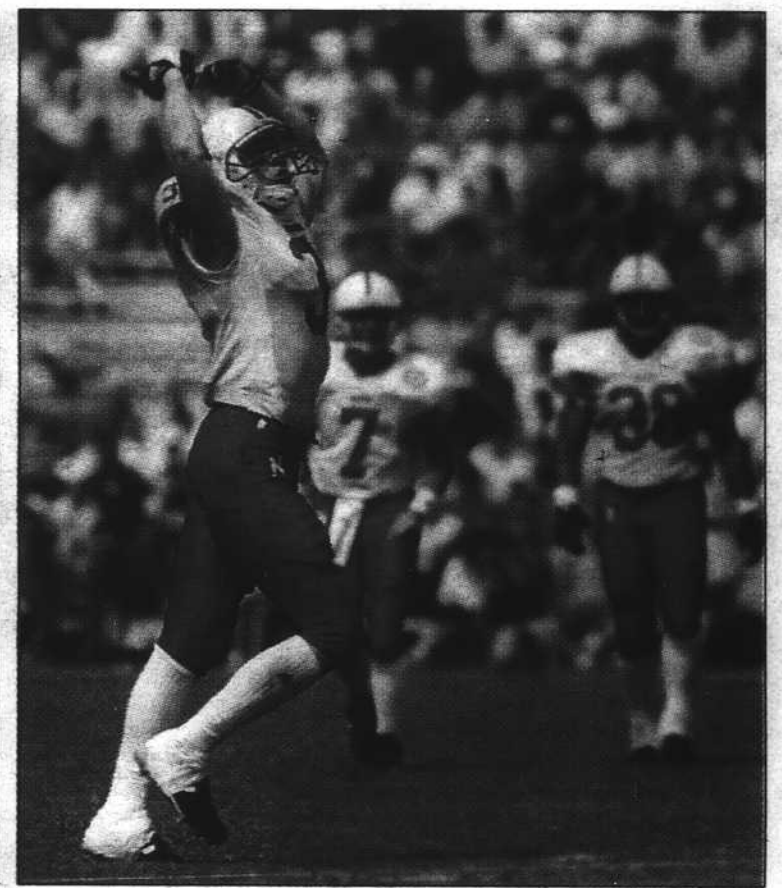


Nebraska 42, Iowa 7



Iowa offense struggles in season opener

BY JOHN GASKINS
Staff writer

IOWA CITY, Iowa — The Kirk Ferentz era at Iowa didn't exactly open in a blaze of glory, but at least it began with a glimmer of hope.

The Hawkeye defense was able to hold a potentially volatile Nebraska offense scoreless for 22 minutes Saturday and had the 24-point underdogs feeling good about their chances of upset in the locker room at halftime, trailing just 7-0.

"We were excited. We were pumped up," fatigued Iowa linebacker Aaron Kampman said after the game. "Everyone was believing. We knew that we could play with this team. I still believe we can play with this team. (But) you don't get any prizes for playing 30 minutes."

After the No. 6 Cornhuskers got their act together and schooled the Hawkeyes on both sides of the ball in the second half, Head Coach Ferentz and his players showed no signs of joy over their 42-7 defeat. The last thing they considered was calling the game a "moral victory."

Ferentz, who walked out of the locker room and into the post-game press conference stone-faced and tight-lipped, offered a rare smile and snicker when asked if he got what he wanted out of his first game.

"No, not at all," Ferentz said. "We wanted to win. We would've liked to have moved the football better and score some points, which we didn't do."

Although the defense gave up 543 total yards, 337 of them coming in the second half, it was the Iowa offense's lack of productivity that Ferentz was most disappointed with.

Some statistics that Ferentz didn't likely enjoy: 0 offensive points; 169 total yards; Eight first downs (to Nebraska's 24); 57 rushing yards on 2.2 yards per carry (to NU's 347 on 5.5); 63 percent of passes fell incomplete (NU was 10 of 15); 12 punts.

The first time the Hawks crossed Husker territory, without needing an

"The defensive guys played extremely hard and with a lot of fight. ... When you're on the field so much, something's got to give. Something's got to break."

KIRK FERENTZ
Iowa head coach

NU turnover or penalty to do so, came in their 11th possession, with about 13 minutes remaining in the game. But Iowa never made it past the NU 33-yard-line.

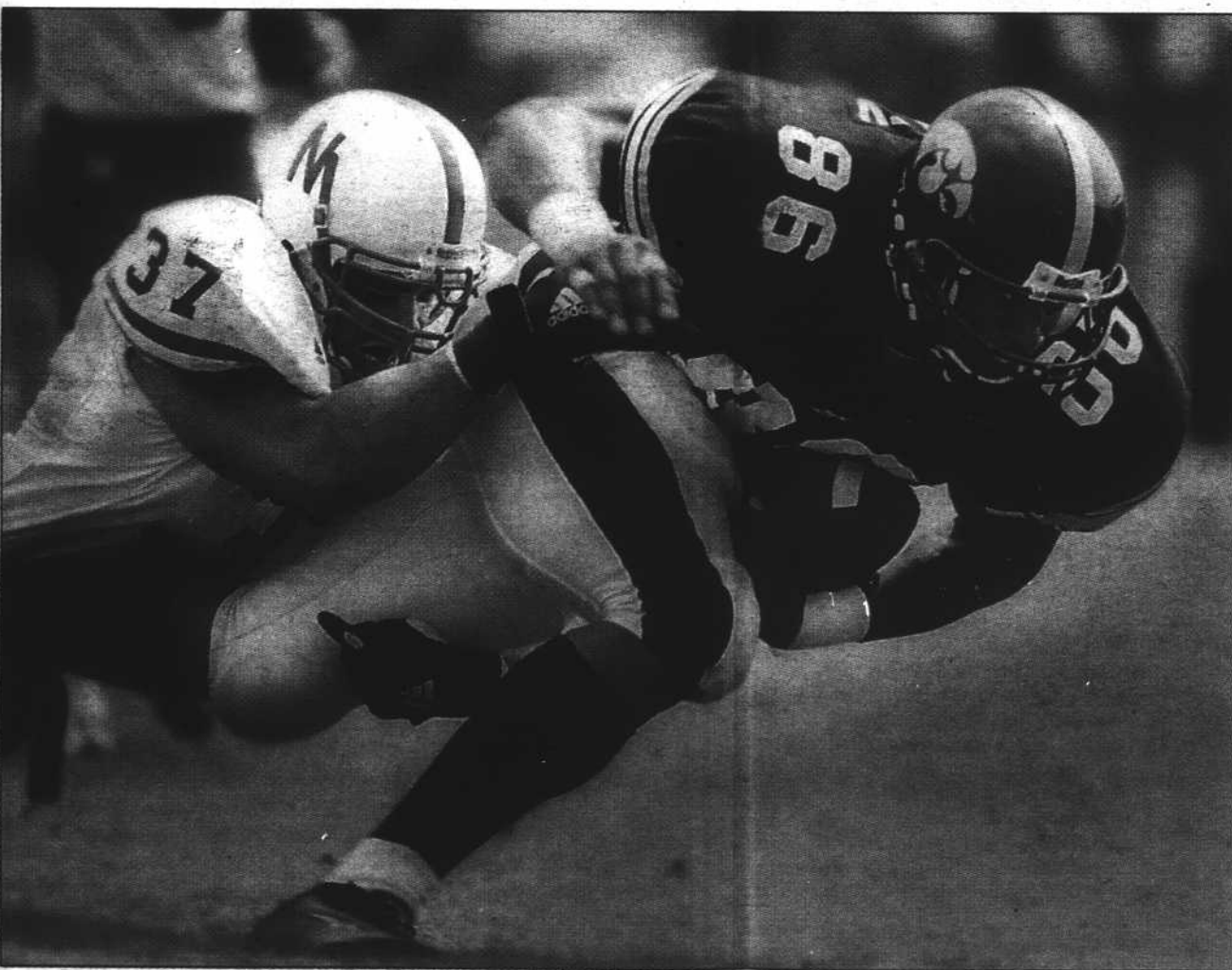
The Hawkeyes produced their first first down of the game at about the four minute mark in the second quarter — provoking a standing ovation from the fans — only to have tailback Ladell Betts fumble on the very next play.

Yet, the scoreboard read 0-0 for a majority of the first half, and Iowa was still in it.

"That's what you enjoy in football," Ferentz said. "We made some mistakes, but we were fortunate enough to go in 7-0 at half. So, from that standpoint, I thought if we could muster something, we could get something going. But it wasn't meant to be."

The second-half Nebraska takeover was due in large part to the physical punishment and wearing down the Hawkeye defenders took from having to be on the field for 33:25 of the game. The Iowa offense's inability to keep the ball moving and Nebraska's jam-it-down-the-throat, ball-control attack kept the undermanned Iowa defense on its toes.

Please see **HAWKEYES** on 14



Photos by Matt Miller/DN
(clockwise from top left)

DEANGELO EVANS is tackled by a pair of Hawkeyes. Nebraska piled up 347 rushing yards to Iowa's 57.

MIKE BROWN, left, and Iowa tight end Zeron Flemister chase after a fumble in the third quarter. NU's Kyle Vanden Bosch recovered the fumble by Iowa's Ladell Betts.

MATT DAVISON celebrates after winning the ball from Iowa's Matt Bowen on a 38-yard completion in the fourth quarter. Davison led the Huskers with four catches for 69 yards.

HUSKER QUARTERBACK Bobby Newcombe completed 7 of 10 passes, while splitting time with Eric Crouch.

TONY ORTIZ drags Iowa tight end Austin Wheatley to the ground. The Huskers held the Hawkeye offense to eight first downs in Saturday's 42-7 win in Iowa City, Iowa.