

# Fiesta Bowl against Tennessee



## Sports Opinion

### '99 season full of bests, worsts



**Samuel McKewon**

The end of the year is upon us. Nebraska's in the bowl game. Time for NU football superlatives. So on with it...

**Best Nebraska play of the year:** Unquestionably, the first play of the game against Texas A&M. I-back Dan Alexander fumbled, opening the way for a 37-0 victory over the Aggies.

**Worst play of the year:** Unquestionably, Alexander's 50-yard touchdown run on the first play of the game against Colorado. NU should have lost that game, but won 33-30.

**Most important player defection of 1999:** Jay Runty, quarterback. Runty left just as the debate over the third-string quarterback was threatening to tear the Huskers apart.

**Most diplomatic comment of the year:** Dominic Raiola's "I hate Texas" comment.

**Best fans:** UT fans, who responded to Raiola's words with kind phrases of their own. Especially the one that was screamed at rover Mike Brown (I'm not sure if he heard it or not), "Your mother can shove a corn cob..."

**Funniest coach on the team:** Frank Solich.

**The coaches that need a little bit more love from the media:** Nelson Barnes and Dan Young. Wholly under-appreciated quote machines.

**Dapper Don award:** Bobby Newcombe, quarterback/wingback. Sharpest dresser in sports this side of One Daniel Nee.

**Don Juan (if he wanted to be) award:** Eric Crouch, quarterback. Trust me, Eric, if you ever need company, there are 10,000 women on this campus you can call.

**Best-designed football play:** It has to be that one against Texas when Crouch pitched to I-back Correll Buckhalter near the goal line. Buckhalter turned around to throw the halfback pass, couldn't do it and then fumbled the ball to Raiola. Two plays later, alas, Nebraska botched this nearly perfect design by actually fumbling the ball to the other team.

**Best performance by an opponent:** Jonathan Beasley, Kansas State quarterback. His miserable 3-for-19 passing day was the best thing that could have ever happened to Nebraska in that game. Because, let me tell you: some of those receivers, they were open.

**Worst performance by an opponent:** Hands down, the defensive line of Texas, which ties Nebraska for the best in the conference. It won one game and kept UT alive in the other.

**Best opponent, overall:** Iowa.  
**Opponent with the best uniforms:** It'd have to be the blood red and spider-blood blue getup that Kansas wears. Give it some bellbottoms, and it'd be a leisure suit. Ranks right up there with the Vegas gold Colorado wore last year.

**Most famous mother:** Earnestine Evans, ma of DeAngelo. She told us to never call back. But we did. She said leave us alone. We didn't. And then, she'd talk to us for 45 minutes.

**Checkers award:** Solich. If what Evans says about Solich's play calling is true, then Frank has been now kinged many times over.

**Religious hot water award:** Ron Brown.

**The "I didn't do anything this year but coach two great athletes and not worry about injuries, and I'm happy with that" award:** Turner Gill, whose press time, thankfully for him, went way down in 1999.

**Offensive MVP:** Tracey Wistrom, tight end. Hey, any guy who can get first team all-conference by catching only 16 passes has to be doing something right.

**Defensive MVP:** Jammal Lord, Joe Christman and others' quarterbacks. For simulating offenses and getting crunched every day because of it.

**Team MVP:** Randy Stella, special team dynamo. Know what makes a difference in games? The things Randy Stella did. Downing punts, running down punt returners and even blocking a few punts along the way. Stella has as much to do with the team's success as anybody.

And finally....  
**The "Spies Like Us" You will be given information on a need-to-know basis and right now you do not need to know" award:** Solich, again, for CIA-like debriefing of Wistrom's injury. I know how bad it is, but I'm not going to tell you, he said.

Now that's the true spirit of big-time college football.

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