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## Huskers punish Vols with rush game

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times in the past decade. "This is what Nebraska was known for over the years," Solich said. "We want to be able to run the football and get something done when we do it. To control the ball like that, I thought that was vitally important."

But Crouch, who had 212 total yards, I-back Dan Alexander who had 108 rushing yards and Willie Miller, who had 89 rushing yards proved NU still had its mojo.

Of course, big plays like Bobby Newcombe's second quarter punt return for a touchdown, which helped put NU up 17-0, and Crouch's four passes of more than 17 yards didn't hurt. Neither did two important Nebraska interceptions.

"We knew they were going to make big plays, we knew we were going to make big plays," Tennessee Coach Philip Fulmer said. "We had people on our heels all year last year, and we found out what it feels like tonight."

In UT's defense, the Vols were able to give the Huskers a run for their money despite two 17-point deficits. Senior quarterback Tee Martin threw for 267 yards, was 19-34 for passing and quickly knifed NU's defense in a momentum-changing, 65-yard touchdown drive

to cut the gap to 17-7 right before halftime. UT scored a touchdown quickly in the third after Alexander fumbled.

But Nebraska's offense kept UT's offense off the field and out of striking distance by holding a 34- to 26-minute time-of-possession advantage. It was able to run out the final 7:25 on the clock after Tennessee closed the lead to 31-21 following a 44-yard trick play pass.

On defense, Nebraska wasn't quite as solid, but did keep UT from a bunch of big plays. Nebraska Rover Mike Brown was still left with a not-so-perfect feeling.

"We made way too many mental mistakes," said Mike Brown. "It wasn't that we weren't giving great effort for four quarters, but we didn't play the type of football we were capable of playing for four quarters."

Not only was the win sweet for Brown because it came in front of many of his friends and family from hometown Scottsdale, but also because it sent Defensive Coordinator Charlie McBride out a winner.

McBride, who orchestrated a defense that, seven years ago, lacked speed and turned it into one of the nation's most feared in his last seasons, announced his retirement publicly after the game. Brown said a select few knew before the game it

was McBride's last, but he didn't want that to be a distraction from the game.

"Over the last few years, I've contemplated retirement," McBride said. "I love my family very much. I think it's time for them. So I'm going to pull the plug."

"So thanks to everybody. I don't want to take away the game from this football team because this is a very, very special team. As far as I'm concerned, they are No. 1. There's no question about it."

Pollsters thought otherwise, as Florida State capped its first perfect season and second national title with a 46-29 victory over No. 2 Virginia Tech in the Sugar Bowl on Jan. 4. NU finished second in the coaches' poll and No. 3 in the Associated Press poll.

But Davison thinks the victory could help the Huskers next season.

"This was a huge win for us," he said. "We wanted to come out and show the nation that we should have been in New Orleans competing for the national title."

"I've been here for three years now, and it's been a good ride so far. We want to go out as champions. With this win, we should get to the top of the polls in the preseason next year. With the guys we have coming back, we're not going to be very happy if we don't come out on top."

## McBride retires following Fiesta Bowl victory

MCBRIDE from page 24

off the field, and it means a whole lot to me that he confided in me and trusted me to keep quiet."

Speculation had arisen earlier in the week of preparation for the game that the game would be McBride's last. And how fitting it was. McBride, as an assistant under Frank Kush at Arizona State, won his first game in Sun Devil Stadium 37 years ago. His career ended just as it had begun, with McBride trying to shed the spotlight and a win.

"I don't want to talk a lot about this," a teary-eyed McBride said. "But I do want to say one thing: My first win was when I was coaching at Arizona State with Frank Kush at this stadium, and my last win was here, too. It meant so much to me."

NU captain Mike Brown, the leader of the defense, said afterwards that McBride told the team the win was his greatest ever. McBride said all year long this group of Blackshirts was special and maintained that statement after the game.

"If you could only know the players that I had over the years, especially this group, and I've said this is a special group," McBride said. "They're self-motivated, and they can play like hell."

Ralph Brown said McBride had confided in a few players before the season that this would be his last, and it showed the trust he had in those few to keep it a secret throughout the whole year.

This year's defense will graduate two All-Americans in Mike and Ralph Brown, while also losing six other starters. The Husker defense ranked fourth in overall defense nationally, and sixth coming into the game in rushing defense at 77.1 yards per game. It gave

up an average of 12.5 points per game.

Steve Warren compared losing McBride to the loss of another great Husker coach two years ago in Tom Osborne.

"I kind of sensed it was coming," Warren said. "A lot of the younger guys knew in the back of their minds, but they have to come back next year, and they really didn't want it to happen. It was hard on them at first, and they were a little disappointed, but that comes with having a coach like McBride."

McBride's announcement before the game in the week leading up to the Fiesta Bowl put pressure on the Blackshirts to send him out a winner in his last game, Warren said.

But it also gave them a motivation and in McBride fashion, the seniors didn't worry about themselves, but the coach they had known throughout their Husker careers.

"I wasn't worried about losing my last game," Warren said. "I am a senior, but I kind of threw that in the shadows, and I told all the rest of the defensive lineman to not even worry about me. They were saying 'We have to win it for Steve and Coach McBride,' but I was saying, 'Don't even worry about me.'"

McBride had the third-longest tenure on a Husker staff known for maintaining assistant coaches for some of the longest tenures in the game today. Ranked behind George Darlington and

Milt Tenopir, McBride finished his 23rd year this season.

One could talk for ages about the awards and accomplishments of McBride and his defenses, but his main concerns were his players and family, along with a word one doesn't often hear on a football team.

"I honestly love them," McBride said. "We talk about that. That's a word we're not afraid to use on our football team. I love my family very much. I think it's time for them. So I'm going to pull the plug."

And his players felt likewise about the man who stood up for his players through the thick and thin.

"He has been a father figure for us," Ralph Brown said. "He has been a best friend to some of us, and he wanted to go out with this group of seniors with a win and he did. He has meant so much to me on and off the field and has had a great impact on players' lives, and that is why we dedicated this game to him."

Husker Coach Frank Solich, who named Linebackers Coach Craig Bohl as McBride's replacement 24 hours later, said it was a sad day for Nebraska football.

"There's a reason why Nebraska has had great defensive football teams over the years," Solich said. "Coach McBride is that reason. He talked about love. His players love him, and they play for him."

## Injuries hurt Huskers in loss to Minnesota

From staff reports

Facing their most formidable dual opponent up to this point of the season, the No. 8 Cornhusker wrestlers dropped their record to 2-1 following a 29-13 loss at No. 4 Minnesota.

Coach Tim Neumann said earlier in the season that depth could be a problem for his team, and the injury bug has hit and definitely has hurt NU.

Nebraska was missing four starters because of injury: 125-pound Paul Gomez has an ankle sprain, 141-pounder Justin Flores sat out with a

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concussion, 165-pounder Tony Denke has a strained knee and heavy-weight Pat Miron is lost for the season with a torn right anterior cruciate ligament.

The Huskers, however, started hot with 197-pounder Brad Vering's 17-7 major decision over Minnesota's No. 12 Owen Elzen. That improved the No. 3-ranked wrestler's record to 18-1 and also gave NU a 4-0 lead.

The lead was Nebraska's first and last. After heavyweight Matt

Zutavern, wrestling in Miron's place, was pinned, the lead was relinquished to 6-4 UM, and the Golden Gophers didn't look back.

Four Minnesota victories, with a Todd Beckerman win at 133 pounds sandwiched in between, gave UM a 20-7 advantage and all but wrapped up the dual because Minnesota was assured of six points at 165 pounds because of an NU forfeit.

Nebraska's Bryan Snyder, boosting his record to 18-1, and Ati Conner tacked on the last two Husker victories to provide 13 team points.