

Gameday:

Blowout showcases Nebraska's bright future

Not to be condemning, but to those of you who were at the football game or saw it on television Saturday and decided to bolt to the bars, to bed or to dinner at halftime or early in the second half: Shame on you.

Not because of any lack of support (it wasn't needed), but because you missed a good show from Nebraska's second-team backfield.

It was one of the more enticing late blowout game shows in a while. It gave anyone watching a nice dose of what's to come in the future and told them that the future of the proud NU ground attack will probably be in very capable hands.



John Gaskins

I'm speaking mainly of quarterback Jammal Lord, I-backs Dahrran Diedrick and Thunder Collins and fullback Judd Davies. Each had plenty of opportunity to showcase themselves, and each delivered.

Such opportunities are rare nowadays. We now live in this wonderful world of parity, where former punching bags like Iowa State and Kansas State all of a sudden give NU a run for its money.

Aside from the Oklahoma and Colorado game, the conference season used to be a hibernation period for the Huskers. Scores like 56-17 were commonplace.

Even at that, even with plenty of budding talent on the field, we had Tom Osborne calling the plays, which meant NU went to a prevent offense, as in an offense that prevents itself from running up the score with nifty plays. Bor-ing.

But that happens rarely now. And when it does, thanks to the fact that Frank Solich has to run up the score to gain Bowl Championship Series points, NU gets a bigger green light to showcase talent.

Thank God for that. The I-backs were especially promising. It's probably been since Lawrence Phillips backed up Calvin Jones seven years ago that we've gotten to see and feel so much potential. Ahman Green busted right out of the backup role as a freshman when the whole Phillips ordeal went down.

Since then, it's been fun seeing how much of a bulldozer Dan Alexander is, but that's about it. Alexander and Correll Buckhalter have been very solid runners but haven't exactly been eye poppers that make mouths water for the future.

Quite simply, the star I-back glitter has vanished from NU since Green went to the NFL.

Solich finally brought the Thunder Saturday, and it was loud (note for the scrapbook: Thunder cliché No. 1).

The freshman from Compton, Calif., gained 48 yards on six carries and brought the glitter. Pure speed. Good fakes. A little razzle dazzle kept the interest, and some harmless showboating got an even bigger rise from those that were tired of waiting for him. Judging by his enthusiasm, he was tired of waiting, too.

The same could be said for Diedrick, who we saw more of last year. His confidence is well-documented and easily seen. Its starting to work for him.

Davies could be the most athletic full-back NU has seen - and that's quite a feat. He's huge - 6 feet tall, 245 pounds - but agile. He blocked on quite a few huge running plays and touchdowns, showed moves when he got the ball and caught a dandy 27-yard pass from Lord.

Speaking of Lord, remember when Solich couldn't figure out earlier this year who the backup at quarterback would be because none of the reserves distinguished themselves? It's not the case anymore.

NU won't exactly stroll through the motions if Crouch goes down, but it probably won't be the end of the world. And when Crouch is gone in a couple years? Watch out (for the scrapbook: no Lord cliches).

So, thank you NU first-teamers and Kansas for converging to produce a blowout. For the first time in a long time, there was reason to stick around.

I hope the beer and/or nap was enjoyable for those of you who didn't. Losers.



Kansas wide receiver Harrison Hill fumbles the ball as DeJuan Groce tackles him during the first half. NU beat the Jayhawks for the 32nd time in a row.

Josh Wolfe/DN

Kansas falls victim to Huskers' revenge

BY JILL ZEMAN

Call it revenge after last week's bitter defeat.

Or it could be the "wrong place, wrong time" syndrome.

Whatever you call it, members of the Kansas football team found themselves in a whirlwind of intensity and emotion from a Husker team out to prove itself.

"We caught a very good football team at a bad time," said Kansas Coach Terry Allen, whose Jayhawks fell to the Huskers 56-17 in Saturday's contest. KU fell to 4-5 on the season and 2-4 in the Big 12 with the loss.

"I don't know if revenge is the proper term, but they stepped it up a notch from last week," Allen said.

Allen watched Nebraska quarterback Eric Crouch visit the end zone three times before Kansas put any points on the board.

The Jayhawks were able to capitalize on a botched Nebraska punt return at the end of the first quarter.

When the ball started bouncing after the punt, it bounced off backup running back DeAnte Grixby's foot.

Kansas recovered the ball and scored five plays later with a 45-yard field goal from senior Joe Garcia with 13:40 left in the second quarter.

KU did manage to score two touchdowns, but both came in the fourth quarter with Nebraska's first-string defense watching from the sideline.

While the Jayhawks led in passing yards - 169 to Nebraska's 69 - they rushed for only 97 yards, compared to NU's 493 yards on the ground.

Kansas' total of 266 offensive yards is the team's lowest since gaining 231 yards in its 52-13 loss to Kansas State earlier this season.

"They physically dominated us," Allen said. "The defense got after us early."

A pair of freshmen were among the

"I don't know if revenge is the proper term, but they stepped it up a notch from last week."

Terry Allen
KU coach

few bright spots for Kansas against NU.

Wide receiver J.T. Thompson racked up 70 yards on three receptions, and Reggie Duncan rushed for 96 yards on 11 carries.

Smith, who passed for a career-high 327 yards last week against Texas Tech, didn't enjoy anything close to the same success on Saturday. The senior quarterback completed just 14 of 29 passes for 129 yards.

Smith said it was Nebraska's blitz that hurt his team the most.

Nebraska's defense had three sacks for 18 yards, as well as 11 quarterback hurries.

"The receivers did a good job getting open," Smith said. "They just couldn't get the ball."

Senior middle linebacker Carlos Polk, who led the Husker defense with eight tackles, also wreaked havoc on the Jayhawks, Allen said. "Carlos is an outstanding football player," Allen said. "He's very disruptive, and we saw the effects of that today."

Polk wasn't the only Husker to cause problems for KU. Junior cornerback Keyuo Craver had seven tackles and junior linebacker Mark Vedral contributed five tackles in his first career start.

On the other side of the ball, the Husker offensive line opened up massive holes, paving the way for nearly 500 rushing yards.

Please see KANSAS on 12



KU quarterback Dylon Smith gets sacked by Kyle Vanden Bosch and Scott Shanle. KU's first three drives started with sacks.

Josh Wolfe/DN