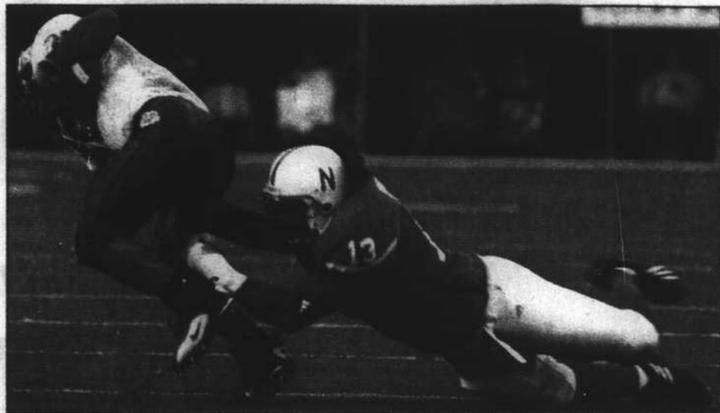


# Nebraska 56, Kansas 17



Josh Wolfe/DN

"What we were looking for was a game where we put together four quarters of offense, defense and special teams. That was pretty much the case today."

**Frank Solich**  
NU coach

## NU proves dominant over KU

*Powerful running game, solid defense help the Huskers steamroll over Jayhawks*

BY DAVID DIEHL

Two different games, two different teams.

Looking nothing like the Cornhuskers who stumbled through a 31-14 loss to No. 1 Oklahoma just seven days ago, Nebraska flat-out steamrolled unranked Kansas 56-17 in front of a record crowd of 78,096 at Memorial Stadium.

Behind a rock-solid power running game and a defense with fire in its eye, Nebraska proved to its 238th consecutive sellout crowd that there would be no hangover from last week's setback to the Sooners.

Quarterback Eric Crouch returned to form, rushing for four touchdowns and throwing for another, leading NU to 562 yards of total offense.

Players said NU needed a performance like it had on Saturday to prove it can still dominate. The truth is, many players expected that type of performance.

"Coming into the game, I saw it in everybody's eyes," rush end Kyle Vanden Bosch said. "We wanted it bad."

That inspired defense held the Jayhawks to 266 yards of offense, more than 100 below their season average. KU had just 122 yards through the first

three quarters.

The team's first three drives all started with a quarterback sack. And often-harassed Dylon Smith was forced into completing just 14 of 29 passes with one interception in KU's 32nd-straight loss to Nebraska.

"They just physically dominated us," Kansas Coach Terry Allen said. "We have no excuses about that."

The defensive performance, and the game overall, was a huge step in the right direction, Vanden Bosch said.

"We wanted to come out and really show that we were still a great team capable of dominating," he said. "I'm just very proud of our players and the way we responded today."

After surrendering 418 yards to Oklahoma last week, Defensive Coordinator Craig Bohl said the Blackshirts were as fired up as he had seen them all year.

Vanden Bosch and linebacker Carlos Polk were the leaders in shutting down KU's offense. Often in the Jayhawks' backfield, the pair disrupted the Kansas rushing game all afternoon, forcing the team to rely on the pass.

"I'm pleased we made them one-dimensional," Bohl said.

One-dimensional doesn't really do the NU defense justice. At halftime, the Blackshirts had held KU to 1 rushing

yard on 14 attempts. Second-string running back Reggie Duncan's 34-yard romp to open the fourth quarter was 20 yards more than Kansas' team total at that point.

To stop the run, Bohl said he had freed up Polk to do more things against Kansas. The senior from Rockford, Ill., responded with a team-high eight tackles and three for losses, a performance that was his best of the year, Bohl said.

Vanden Bosch said his fellow co-captain was "unstoppable."

"Carlos stepped up and had a huge game," Vanden Bosch said. "He made open-field tackles like they were nothing."

It's not like Kansas' passing offense was Heupel-esque, either. KU managed only 169 yards through the air, while it had averaged 237 in its past three contests.

NU Coach Frank Solich said his team made a statement to the rest of the Big 12 and the country with the win.

"What we were looking for was a game where we put together four quarters of offense, defense and special teams," Solich said. "That was pretty much the case today."

That was especially the case for the Nebraska offense.

NU jammed the ball down Kansas' throat every minute of the four quarters, amassing 493 yards on the ground and attempting only eight passes in its 81 plays.

The "stop us if you can" method held effective as the Cornhuskers scored on five of its first six drives. The only unsuccessful drive was halted by halftime.

Quarterback Eric Crouch led the way with his hand in five scores. The junior led all rushers with 127 yards on 13 carries, becoming NU's all time leading rusher among quarterbacks with his record-setting day.

Crouch said NU didn't need to throw the ball against Kansas.

"When the running game is working so well, and you can pick and choose from your playbook, and those plays are getting you first downs and a lot of yards," Crouch said, "there's no reason to go away from that."

That philosophy allowed Nebraska to have three rushers run for more than 100 yards for the first time since 1988. Along with Crouch, Dan Alexander put up 119 yards on 15 carries and Correll Buckhalter had an even 100 on 16 attempts.

Nebraska's first series saw Alexander carry the ball six times in a row and move it 55 yards single-hand-

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**Kyle Vanden Bosch**  
NU rush end

edly before Eric Crouch took a quarterback sneak in one yard for the game's first points.

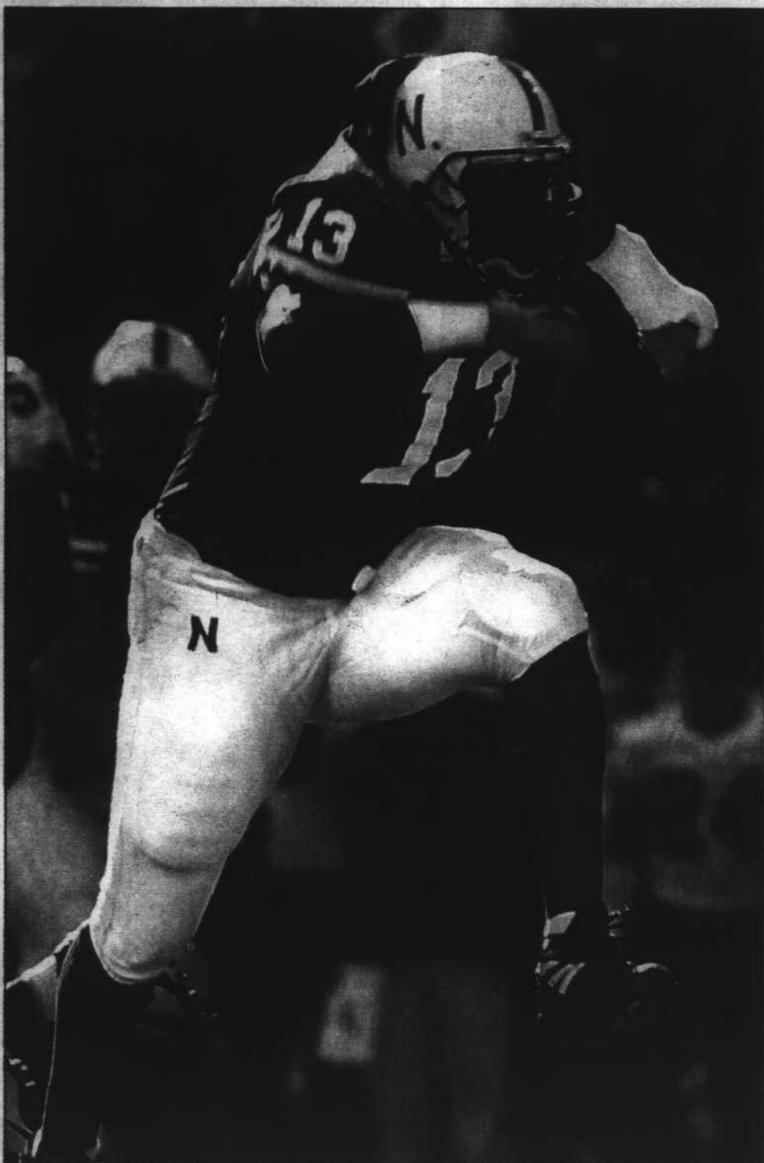
The steamrolling rushing attack was the plan all along, Solich said.

"We were trying to make them stop our power game and then our option game," Solich said. "If they were doing that, we would have looked to move the ball through the air with play-action passes or whatever it would take."

That wasn't needed as Crouch and backup Jammal Lord threw only for a combined 69 yards.

Still, the Huskers put a Big Red check mark by the first test on the mission that is the rest of the season, Crouch said.

"We need to prove ourselves game after game," Crouch said, "and it started with Kansas. I'm very proud of everyone on this team."



Scott McClurg/DN



Nate Wagner/DN

Derek Lippincott/DN

**TOP OF PAGE:** NU senior Carlos Polk takes down KU's David Winbush during the second half. KU rushed for a total of 97 yards, while the Huskers rushed for 493.

**FAR LEFT:** Husker Blackshirt Carlos Polk celebrates after a sack in the second quarter on Saturday at Memorial Stadium.

**LEFT:** Husker fans Brett Richardson (right) and Brad Bangs adorn their school spirit in bodily form as they pose to be Nebraska corn during the game against Kansas on Saturday at Memorial Stadium.

**ABOVE:** NU quarterback Eric Crouch breaks away from a Kansas tackler on Saturday. Crouch rushed for four touchdowns and passed for one more in Nebraska's 56-17 win.