

## POSTGAME



## WIN BY A WHISKER

Martinez keys comeback in one of his finest performances

By Sam McKewon  
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

EVANSTON, Ill. — He barely cracks a smile. Not a big grin or a dour frown or a laugh or a mean mug to be found on Taylor Martinez's face.

It's not an opinion to call him an enigma. It's an observation.

But with just more than eight minutes left in Saturday's game against Northwestern, the enigma could still deliver Nebraska's season from a self-inflicted tailspin and a 28-16 deficit.

So at twilight in this stadium, Husker senior safety P.J. Smith paid the quarterback a sideline visit. The Huskers were in the kind of hole — actually, metaphorically, perhaps even emotionally — that it might as well have been a visit to some oracle.

"Bring us home," Smith said to Martinez. "You go down there and score. We'll get the ball back. And you go score again."

"I got you," Martinez replied.

And after the Wildcats dropped two interceptions thrown right into their paws, the junior from Corona, Calif., did bring it home in a stadium that practically felt like it for Nebraska. The Huskers beat Northwestern 29-28 in a game that boiled down to Martinez's late touchdown marches and a missed 53-yard Wildcat field-goal attempt with just more than one minute remaining.

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Tom Shatel

*Bumbling but gutsy Huskers clean things up in nick of time*

EVANSTON, Ill. — One down, five to go.

It's that simple. No, really.

That's how you need to look at this Nebraska football season from now until the Huskers run out of fumbles or games. Whichever comes first.

Bo Pelini promised good things would happen if Nebraska won out. He didn't say how it would happen.

Nobody here cared, at least they shouldn't have, as Pelini walked off the Ryan Field turf late Saturday afternoon to the chants of "Bo! Bo! Bo!"

Nebraska 29, Northwestern 28. How did that happen?

The Big Red should have won big. The Big Red should have lost by 12. They tried to beat themselves. They ended up beating the Wildcats in a thriller and notched the first leg of the six-game gauntlet Pelini laid down.

On a colorful, crisp fall day just off of Lake Michigan, Nebraska showed the patient is still alive. But he is definitely going to need some blood pressure medicine to make it to the finish line.

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MATT MILLER/THE WORLD-HERALD

Nebraska coach Bo Pelini, with arms raised, celebrates with other coaches and players after Northwestern misses a potential game-winning field goal with 1:10 left in Saturday's game. "I'll take this win any day," Pelini said after NU made up a 12-point deficit. "Because it wasn't looking good there for a while."

#### MORE HUSKER COVERAGE INSIDE

NU won. But coach

Bo Pelini and the

Huskers continue

to live on the edge,

writes Dirk Chatelain.

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After giving up an 80-

yard run early in the

second half, Nebraska's

defense stepped up

and excelled when it

counted. Page 7CF

#### MORE NU COVERAGE ON OMAHA.COM/BIGRED

Watch postgame

press conference

video with Husker

coach Bo Pelini and

players Will Compton

and Taylor Martinez.

See a postgame

video of World-

Herald staff writer

Jon Nyatawa

breaking down

Saturday's game.

See photo

showcases of the

action on the

field and the fans

in the stands at

the game.

#### MORE FOOTBALL INSIDE

Kansas State rocks West Virginia,

Oklahoma State tops Iowa State

and Michigan edges Michigan

State. That, conference

roundups and more.

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**HAWKEYES DOWNED:** Iowa falls behind 38-0 and gives up 504 yards of offense in a 38-14 loss to Penn State. Page 5CF



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