

The Top 25: How They Fared

The Associated Press
rankings.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Miami (11-1) lost to Alabama 34-13	Alabama (13-0) beat Miami 34-13	Florida St. (11-1) beat Nebraska 27-14	Texas A&M (12-1) lost to Notre Dame 28-3	Notre Dame (10-1-1) beat Texas A&M 28-3	Syracuse (10-2) beat Colorado 26-22	Michigan (9-0-3) beat Washington 38-31	Georgia (10-2) beat Ohio State 27-14	Washington (9-3) lost to Michigan 38-31	Colorado (9-2-1) lost to Syracuse 26-22	Nebraska (8-3) lost to Florida State 27-14	NC State (9-3-1) lost to Florida 27-10	Stanford (10-3) beat Penn State 24-3	Florida (9-4) beat NC State 27-10	Ohio State (8-3-1) lost to Georgia 21-14	Boston College (8-3-1) lost to Tennessee 38-23	Tennessee (8-3) beat Boston College 48-23	Washington St. (8-3) beat Utah 31-28	N Carolina (8-3) plays Mississippi St. tonight	Mississippi (8-3) beat Air Force 13-0	Penn St. (7-5) lost to Stanford 24-3	Arizona (6-5-1) lost to Baylor 20-15	Southern Cal (6-5-1) lost to Fresno St. 24-7	Mississippi St. (7-4) plays N Carolina tonight	BKU (6-5) lost to Kansas 23-20

Omaha World-Herald Sports

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Tom
Shatel

No Shame In This One

Miami

Pride.
This is what it came down to for the Nebraska Cornhuskers on Friday night in the Orange Bowl.

When Florida State scored midway through the first quarter on an easy pass and it looked the way so many other bowl busts have begun. When FSU led at the half, 20-7. When FSU led in the fourth quarter, 27-14.

Yes, it was FSU, 27-14. Yes, another New Year, another Old Bowl Loss. Another loss on grass to a Florida team. Another finish outside the Top 10. Another opponent accepting the MVP trophy. The whole bit.

But this one was different. For one reason.

Pride.
Say what you will. This wasn't the Consolation Bowl. There's no glory in losing. Florida State yawned in the rain. Saint Bobby Bowden, who can relate to the pain Tom Osborne has suffered, took it easy on a friend.

Doesn't matter. This was different. There was pride.

Maybe the expectations are warped, the bowl standards at an all-time low. Perhaps there have been so many bowl losses — six straight now — and so many lopsided games to Florida State and Miami that the How-Nebraska-Played barometer has grown. The Huskers get much more slack than they used to.

Gutsy Defense

And, lest we forget, this was supposedly going to be the ugliest of them all. The boys in Vegas said so with their 10½-point spread. This was going to be Florida State junior quarterback-point guard Charlie Ward pelting the Huskers "overmatched" defense with passes and then teasing them with his elusive, quick scrambling ability. This was going to be Florida State playing the Huskers like a pinball machine.

Nebraska didn't tilt.
Yeah, sure, another bowl loss. Tell it to your favorite Colorado booster. I'm not going to rip Nebraska for this one. The defense played gutsy, gambling football against the hottest offense in college football. The offense was sloppy yet scored and was trying to put another one in — not pack it in — as the game ended.

Nebraska calling timeouts in the final minute to get the ball back and score? You have to love it.

Pardon the rose-colored glasses. But there were other things to admire in this one, going on the Bowl Barometer, of course.

Two TD Passes

■ Even in their second-lowest yardage game of the year, the Huskers had two offensive touchdowns; through the air, no less. The Huskers hadn't scored a touchdown in the Orange Bowl since the 1984 loss to Miami.

■ Ward played the entire game. Honest, now, did you think that would be the case?

■ Ward admitted afterward that the Huskers took the Seminole out of their celebrated shotgun offense. Obviously, so did the second-half downpour of rain.

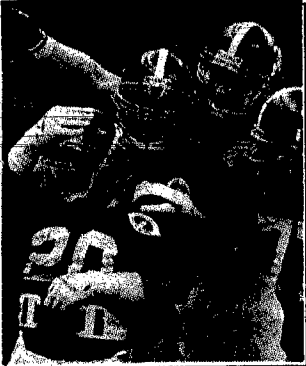
But Ward, voted the Orange Bowl MVP, hardly dominated the Nebraska defense the way the pregame script had it. He was 15 of 30 for "only" 187 yards, two touchdowns and one interception.

Ward actually was more dangerous when he scooted from the pressure and the pocket, jiggerbugging his way for huge chunks of yards and first downs. But, again, the balanced 'Noles needed a running game (221 yards) as much as passing (215). At times, it seemed their best offense was handing off to freshman wide receiver Tamarick Vanover, the second-coming of former Notre Dame running back Rocket Ismail.

■ Junior wide receiver Corey Dixon, who seemed to come of age with five catches for 123 yards, including one juggling touchdown catch and another reception to the FSU 1-yard line to set up the second score. Dixon looked like the kind of game-breaking receiver Osborne feeds.

■ The margin of defeat. This was the closest Husker loss since the 31-28 loss to FSU in the 1988 Fiesta Bowl — when this wretched streak began. And

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THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
BAMA BUDDIES: Sherman Williams, No. 20, is congratulated on a touchdown.

Tide Shakes, Rattles, Rolls Over Miami

THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS

New Orleans — The King is dead. In the "City That Care Forgot," anarchy reigned.

One of the quarterbacks in the Sugar Bowl was supposed to get rattled. One of them was expected to succumb to pressure. Who believed it would be the Heisman Trophy winner?

In a span of 16 seconds at the outset of the second half, Miami senior Gino Torretta threw consecutive interceptions that No. 2 Alabama turned into two touchdowns and a national championship.

Alabama routed the Hurricanes 34-13 Friday night in the 59th Sugar Bowl

Classic before 76,789 fans at the Louisiana Superdome. Thus began a celebration in the French Quarter that might not end until Mardi Gras.

"We had a great game plan for the Miami offense," Alabama linebacker Antonio London said. "They talked a lot of noise all week long. They were talking a lot of trash, but they couldn't get it done."

The Crimson Tide, 13-1, assured itself of its seventh national title by wearing down the Hurricanes, 12-1.

The Crimson Tide ended Miami's reign over college football one game short of two seasons by gradually depriving Miami of each of its weapons. First, Alabama shut down the running game.

Then it zeroed in on Torretta and his corps of receivers.

Though All-America defensive ends Eric Curry and John Copeland rarely got to Torretta, their relentless rush forced him to make terrific misjudgments. Alabama, which led 13-6 at the half, punted after failing to move with the second-half kickoff.

On first down, Crimson Tide cornerback Tommy Johnson stepped in front of Kevin Williams, intercepted a square-out pass and returned it 23 yards to the Miami 20. Derrick Lassic scored from the one six plays later.

On the first play after the kickoff, Torretta smelled pressure, took a short drop and threw over the middle to

tailback Jonathan Harris. Before he released the ball, safety George Teague jammed Harris at the line and waited.

The pass came right to him at the Miami 31, and Teague took off around right end, high-stepping the last 10 yards to score with 9:56 left in the third quarter.

Torretta made a run at Teague and then simply stood on the sideline, hands on hips.

Williams gave Miami brief hope of a comeback with a Sugar Bowl-record 78-yard punt return for a touchdown with 12:08 to play. But Miami's fate appeared sealed on its previous possession, which ended at the Alabama 11

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NU Frustration Continues

BY STEVEN PIVOVAR
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Miami — The new year again brought celebration for Florida State, frustration for Nebraska.

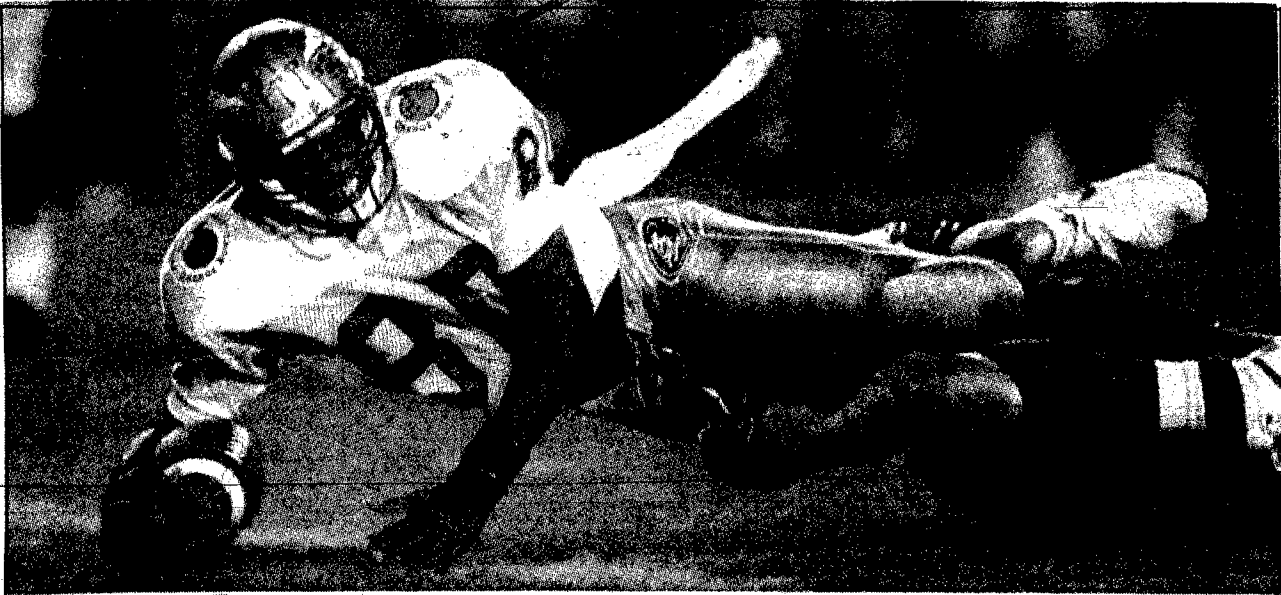
The third-ranked Seminoles, relying on defense and the leadership of quarterback Charlie Ward, handed No. 11 Nebraska a 27-14 loss Friday night before a rain-drenched 57,324 in the 59th Orange Bowl game. The victory marked the eighth straight time that the Seminoles end their season on a winning note, an NCAA record.

The loss extended Nebraska's skid in postseason appearances to six in a row. The Huskers have not opened the new year with a victory since defeating Louisiana State University in the 1987 Sugar Bowl.

"They've got a great football team," Nebraska Coach Tom Osborne said, praising the 11-1 Seminoles. "Our effort was good enough to win, but our execution wasn't."

"We played well enough to win. I imagine many people won't see it that way. We missed a couple of field goals and had a couple of turnovers. If those things don't happen, it's a ball game."

Nebraska, finishing 9-3, fell behind 20-0 as it squandered scoring opportunities when kicker Byron Bennett missed two first-half field goals. The Huskers also handed Florida State a cheap touchdown when freshman quarterback Tommie Frazier threw away a pitch. Florida State defensive end Dan Footman recovered the ball on the Nebraska 2-yard line to set up the Seminoles' second touchdown of the game.



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
FSU TOUCHDOWN: Tamarick Vanover, having beaten Nebraska cornerback John Reece, stretches across the goal line to score the Seminoles' first touchdown on a 25-yard reception with 7:41 left in the first quarter.

Footman's play was one of several big ones turned in by the Florida State defense, which held Nebraska to a season-low 144 yards rushing. The Huskers' 290 yards of total offense was its second-lowest total of the season.

"Our defense did a great job, except

for a few big plays," Florida State Coach Bobby Bowden said.

Nebraska scored its first touchdown on a 41-yard pass from Frazier to Corey Dixon. A 37-yard Frazier-to-Dixon completion set up the Huskers' other score.

Those two defensive breakdowns

weren't enough to do in the Seminoles, who assured themselves of a Top Five finish in the ratings for a sixth straight season with the win. Only Oklahoma and Miami can match that run.

Florida State, which lost only to Miami this season, might move up a

notch to second in the polls after Alabama's win over the top-rated Hurricanes in Friday's Sugar Bowl. Bowden rejected suggestions that the Seminoles might be able to stake a claim to the top spot with another strong finish to the

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Holtz Plugs Notre Dame For Top Spot

THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Dallas — The Cotton Bowl isn't NCAA basketball, and that's too bad for Notre Dame.

The way in which the Irish dismantled previously undefeated Texas A&M 28-3 Friday and finished their season with seven straight victories would make them one of the favorites in any postseason tournament.

Lou Holtz said he felt that way, and so did Rick Mirer, who finished up one of the greatest quarterback careers ever at Notre Dame with the MVP offensive player award.

The only Irish regret Friday: Why was Miami ever taken off the schedule?

Holtz said the Irish squad is better right now than any team he ever coached, including the 1988 national championship team and the 1989 team that went 12-1.

"I think we are the best team in the country, and I feel we should be ranked second," Holtz said. "To take it one step further, I think we should be ranked first. At the end of the year, we were playing better than any other team I have been around."

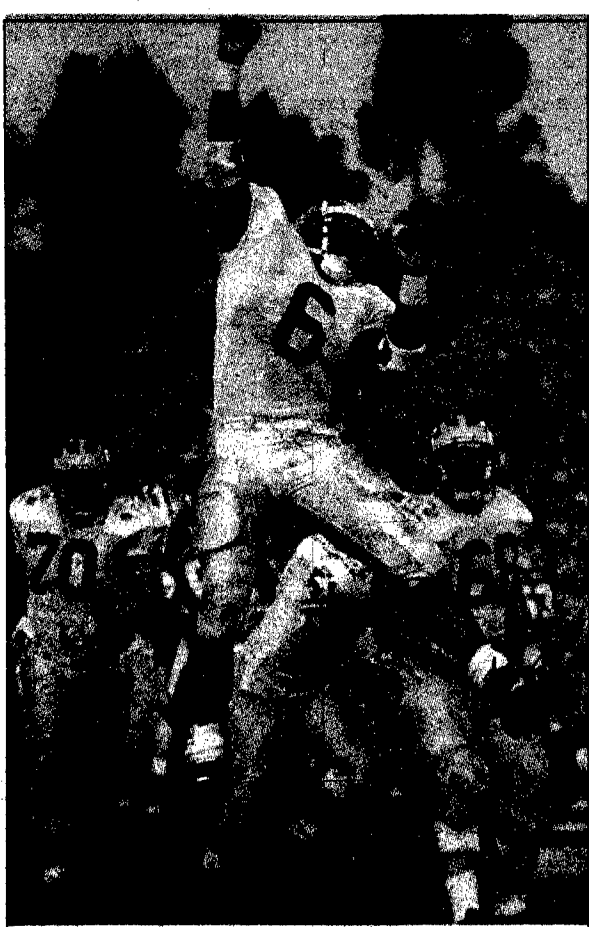
Notre Dame had no chance to win the national championship after it lost to Stanford on Oct. 3 because it dropped so far in the polls and there was no way to recoup a top position because it no longer faced the Hurricanes regularly.

After Mirer threw for two touchdowns and Jerome Bettis turned in his second straight three-TD performance in a bowl game, Holtz was asked if he regrets the Irish dropping Miami from its schedule.

Notre Dame was the last team to beat the Hurricanes in 1990.

"We'd love to play Miami," Holtz said. "I always felt that way. But it

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The Rose Bowl's Victors

Michigan sophomore running back Tyrone Wheatley celebrates his third-quarter touchdown in the Wolverines' 38-31 Rose Bowl win over Washington on Friday. Michigan had fallen to the Huskies in last year's game. Story, Page 40.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bufs' Kicking Game Stumbles in Defeat

Tempe, Ariz. (AP) — Colorado quarterback Kordell Stewart tried the diplomatic approach, blaming a multitude of sins for his team's loss. Coach Bill McCartney refused to sugar-coat it.

McCartney said a "butchered" kicking game cost the 10th-ranked Buffaloes Friday in their 26-22 Fiesta Bowl loss to No. 6 Syracuse. Mitch Berger, Colorado's regular punter who was filling in for suspended place-kicker Pat Blottiaux, missed two extra points and a short field goal attempt.

Stewart said the three interceptions he threw were big reasons for the loss. "Everybody is going to say it was the kicker's fault," he said. "It wasn't. The offense didn't do its job."

McCartney interrupted his quarterback.

"It was the kicking game," McCartney said. "We butchered the kicking game and it cost us. We missed two extra points and a short, chip-shot field goal."

The Buffaloes also allowed a 100-yard kickoff return by Kirby Dar Dar on the final play of the third quarter that McCartney called "the biggest play of the game." It gave Syracuse a 26-16 lead seconds after Colorado had drawn within 19-16.

With the area between the hashmarks a sea of sand in Sun Devil Stadium, Dar Dar used the grassy left sideline in returning the kickoff.

Qadry Ismail took the kickoff on the 6-yard line and handed off to Dar Dar, a sophomore who broke free of a tackle by Greg Lindsey and covered the rest of the distance untouched.

"I was trying to get a good handoff to Kirby, but I thought Colorado's defense read it," Ismail said. "But Kirby Dar Dar broke the tackle and was off to the races."

"If Kirby can get to the corner, he's going to outrun anyone," said David

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NU Faces E. Illinois Tonight

WORLD-HERALD BUREAU

Lincoln —. Players on the Nebraska basketball team dragged themselves off an airplane Friday to go practice for tonight's 7:05 home game against Eastern Illinois.

The 20th-ranked and 8-3 Huskers are coming off a 1-3 trip to California and Hawaii. NU left Honolulu at 2:30 a.m. CST Friday and spent 11 hours en route home through San Francisco and Denver to Lincoln.

About 2,000 tickets are available for the game at the Bob Devaney Sports Center to be broadcast by KEAB (1110 AM) with pregame coverage at 6:45. Eastern Illinois was an NCAA tourna-

Woolridge Hurt In Accident

University of Nebraska basketball player Andre Woolridge was injured Friday night after the car he was driving struck a utility pole.

Woolridge, 19, was taken to St. Joseph Hospital where he was treated and released, a hospital spokeswoman said.

The accident, at 4318 N. 31st St., occurred at 8 p.m. when Woolridge lost control of his vehicle. Fire Battalion Chief Robert Bosiljevack said.

Firefighters helped Woolridge out of his car, Bosiljevack said. He was able to walk to the ambulance.