

Michael
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Sports Editor

Storybook End
Eludes Huskers

Tempe, Ariz. — The pass zoomed across the Arizona sky, a perfect 60-yard spiral that carried Nebraska's hopes for a storybook comeback victory.

But the only player with a chance to catch it wore high-top black shoes and played for Michigan, and, sure enough, he intercepted it in the end zone.

That closed the book on this season, and the end of the story was a 27-23 Cornhusker loss in the Sunkist Fiesta Bowl.

Steve Taylor, the freshman quarterback who almost pulled out a victory, had been trying to hit Rod Smith. When Taylor scrambled, Smith came running back upfield.

"I just assumed he was going to keep running, since we needed a touchdown," Taylor said. "But he, did what he's taught to do — come back to the ball whenever the quarterback scrambles."

The Huskers finish with a 9-3 record, not a bad season, but short of their own expectations. They had a chance to win the national championship two games ago, but now might finish out of the Top 10 in both major polls for the first time in Tom Osborne's 13 seasons as head coach.

3rd Quarter Worst

The final quarter of the season was as exciting as any. The third quarter was the worst of any.

Led by sophomore quarterback McCathorn Clayton, the Huskers had controlled the first half. They ran the ball well, with Osborne mixing plays nicely and staying with his best-in-the-nation rushing attack except for two passes, one a 5-yard touchdown to Doug DuBose.

No one else had scored two touchdowns in the first half against Michigan, which gave up only five in the regular season. Nebraska led 14-3 and had a chance to score a third first-half TD after Tony Holloway sacked Michigan quarterback Jim Harbaugh for a 22-yard loss.

Proof, it seemed, that this was Nebraska's day came on the next play, a punt. Nebraska failed to catch the ball — but it hit and bounced backward about 10 yards toward the Michigan players. If Nebraska was playing Oklahoma, the ball would have rolled 25 yards in the opposite direction, hit a NU player in the foot and be recovered by a Sooner.

But this was a beautiful, 60-degree day and Nebraska was playing beautifully.

The Huskers took over on the Michigan 46 with 44 seconds left, and Clayton hit Todd Frain for a gain to the 20. This looked too easy.

It was. Officials called Brian Blankenship for holding, wiping out the play, and NU didn't score. No matter. The Huskers were outplaying Michigan in every way, and all they had to do in the second half was to keep playing their hearts out and not make mistakes.

For Nebraska, the entire third quarter was a mistake.

No Explanation

Nebraska fans at Sun Devil Stadium, as well as those back home, watched in horror as a devilish set of circumstances unfolded.

There's no easy explanation for why it happened. Every player on the team would rather fall on a cactus plant than be a party to what occurred.

Tom Rathman and Doug DuBose, two of the Huskers' best players, bumped into each other and DuBose fumbled, leading to a Michigan touchdown.

Clayton fumbled and Michigan scored again. Michigan blocked a Dan Wingard punt and scored a field goal. Wingard, who kicked 'em long and high all year, then kicked one out of bounds only 30 yards downfield. Two pass interference penalties on Nebraska led to another Michigan touchdown and its 24th point of the quarter.

The NU defense looked dead-tired and the offense looked dead.

More Confidence

When the fourth quarter started with Michigan punting to the Nebraska 3-yard line, it looked hopeless. Clayton moved the Huskers to their 17.

Enter Steve Taylor.

Against Oklahoma, he had gone in with Nebraska trailing 20-0. After that game, he looked shell-shocked.

"When I went into the Oklahoma game, I hadn't taken many snaps with the first-string offense," he said Wednesday. "But I've been working with the first unit since Dec. 13 and everything worked out OK."

Well, not everything. Taylor completed only two of nine passes. But he excelled with his running, accelerating for 76 yards on 10 carries, including a 25-yarder.

His first drive ended at the Michigan 19 on a fourth-down incompletion, but his second ended with Taylor scoring on a sneak with 2:29 left, cutting the margin to 27-21.

The Huskers had a chance.

After the NU defense stopped Michigan, and the Wolverines took an intentional safety so they could free-kick from the 20 instead of punt from the end zone, Taylor trotted onto the field a third time, expecting to win the game.

Taylor's long pass ended up in the wrong hands, and NU lost. But mark the 1986 Fiesta Bowl as the day the young man came of age as a college quarterback.

OU Stakes Its Claim for No. 1

Miami (AP) — Oklahoma ended Penn State's dream of a perfect season and any debate over who's No. 1 in college football Wednesday night.

The third-ranked Sooners, behind a 71-yard pass play from freshman quarterback Jamelle Holloway to tight end Keith Jackson and a defense that forced five turnovers, defeated the No. 1 Nitany Lions 25-10 in the Orange Bowl.

"Our defense was able to make the big plays," Oklahoma Coach Barry Switzer said. "You look at the ballgame and it comes down to one thing — great defensive play."

With No. 2 Miami losing 35-7 to Tennessee in the Sugar Bowl and No. 4 Iowa falling 45-28 to UCLA in the Rose Bowl, that left only the final Associated Press poll between Oklahoma and Switzer's third national championship

in 13 years. The Sooners were national champs in 1974 and 1975.

'Beat 2nd-Best Team'
Both Oklahoma, the preseason No. 1 choice, and Penn State, which suffered its first loss in four Orange Bowls, finished the season at 11-1.

The AP poll will be released at 5:30 p.m. CST today, but the Sooners felt that would be a foregone conclusion.

"We beat the second-best team in the country," Switzer said. "There's no way a national championship is going to come easy. You just don't expect that. You have to beat a great football team to win the national championship, and we did tonight."

Last year, Switzer and the Sooners arrived in Miami shooting their mouths off in ridiculing Brigham Young. But BYU became the national champion when Oklahoma lost to Washington 23-

17 in the Orange Bowl, a game in which the famed Sooner Schooner galloped onto the field and drew a 15-yard penalty that cost Oklahoma a key field goal.

This time, Oklahoma didn't need the Sooner Schooner.

Carr Leading Rusher
The Sooners had a couple of horses of their own in Jackson, a 241-pound tight end, and 215-pound fullback Lydell Carr. And they provided the big plays, along with pint-sized Tim Lashar, who kicked an Orange Bowl-record four field goals.

"Records are going to be broken sometime, but national championships can never be taken away," Lashar said.

Jackson's TD catch from Holloway put Oklahoma ahead to stay, 10-7, early in the second period. Carr provided an insurance touchdown when he raced 61

yards with 1:42 remaining as Oklahoma was trying to run out the clock.

Carr led all rushers with 148 yards on 19 carries and Oklahoma finished with 228 on the ground, 107 below its per-game average after being held to 31 rushing yards in the first half.

Holloway's long pass to Jackson, who caught it at the Penn State 30, put Oklahoma on top 10-7 after the Sooners spotted the Lions an early touchdown on fullback Tim Manoa's 1-yard run.

Won 54 Straight as Starter
"After that first drive, we got back on track and played typical Oklahoma football," Sooner defensive end Kevin Murphy said.

Lashar kicked field goals of 26, 31 and 21 yards in Oklahoma's 16-point second quarter, the last two coming after long interception returns. Defensive backs Sonny Brown and Tony Rayburn picked

off poorly thrown passes by Penn State quarterback John Shaffer, who had won 54 consecutive games as a starter dating back to the seventh grade.

"You guys made a heck of a lot more of that than I ever did," Shaffer told reporters after the game. "My throws were bad throws, and they killed us. And it's just too bad that the performance of one person can hurt an entire team like it did today."

Shaffer finished game with 10 completions on 22 attempts for 74 yards.

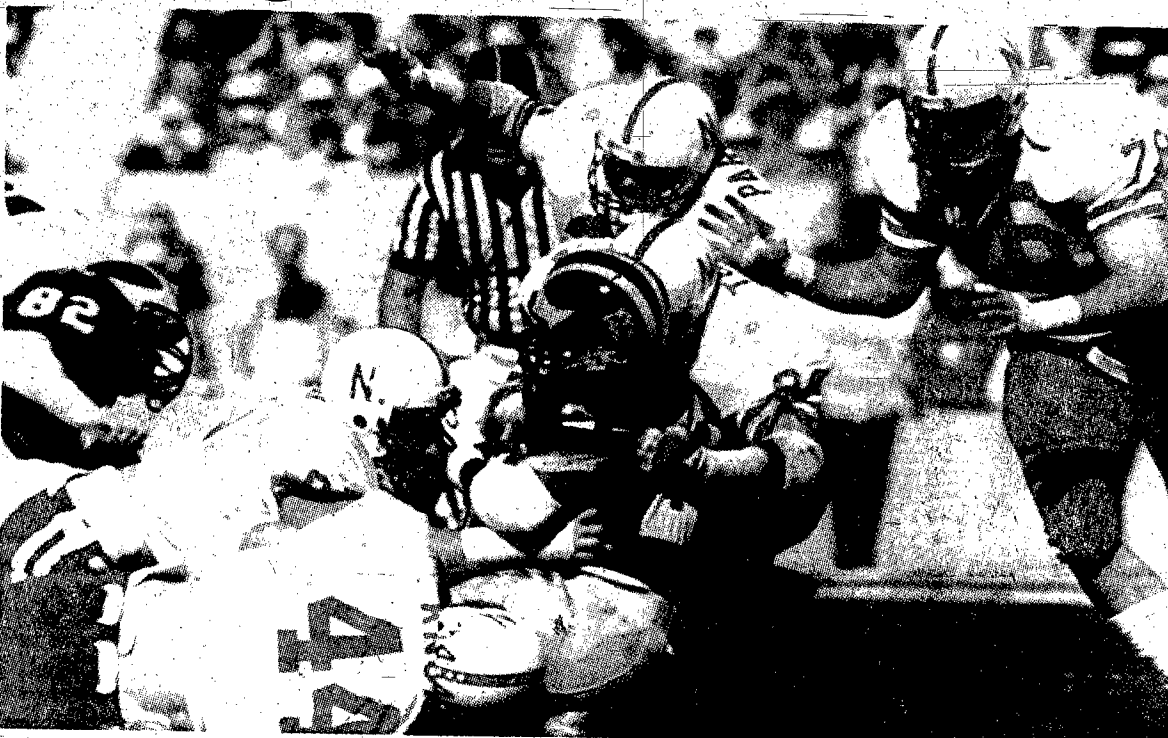
"For us to have done well, we would have had to have a better passing game, and I was a little disappointed we weren't more effective throwing the ball," Penn State Coach Joe Paterno said.

Oklahoma clinched its victory on Ly-

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NU's Fiesta Rally Falls Short

Michigan 3rd-Period Bite Decisive



Rich Janda/World-Herald

Nebraska's defense denies Michigan a first down... Michigan running back Gerald White, No. 22, fails to gain yardage on a third-and-one play at the Nebraska 46 early in the second quarter. Assisting on the tackle are Nebraska's Scott Tucker, No. 89, and Mike Knox, No. 44. Michigan didn't make a first down on the next play and Nebraska took over on downs. The Nebraska defense held Michigan to 224 yards and the Wolverines averaged 3.6 yards per play.

For 1986 Starting Position

Taylor, Clayton Eye Spring Duel

By Michael Kelly

Sports Editor

Tempe, Ariz. — McCathorn Clayton ran the show for Nebraska's first 48 offensive plays in the Sunkist Fiesta Bowl, Steve Taylor for the final 21.

Both return next season to compete for the starting quarterback job, and who will start might dominate off-season discussion by Nebraska fans.

"I'm going into spring ball probably as the No. 2 quarterback," Taylor said after the Huskers' 27-23 loss to Michigan. "I'll just work hard and try to compete with Mac. I guess whoever is the best quarterback will be the starter."

Clayton played well the first half," Coach Tom Osborne said. "Steve Taylor played well for a freshman. Other than a couple of turnovers, the quarterbacks played well."

Clayton, a sophomore, led the Huskers to a 14-3 halftime lead Wednesday. He finished with 68 yards on 14 carries (4.9 average), and completed four of six passes (67 percent) for 51 yards and a touchdown. He lost two third-quarter fumbles.

Taylor, a freshman, ran for 76 yards on 10 carries (7.6 average), including one touchdown. He completed two of nine passes (22 percent) for 15 yards, with one interception.

Clayton played well the first half," Coach Tom Osborne said. "Steve Taylor played well for a freshman. Other than a couple of turnovers, the quarterbacks played well."

Michigan Coach Bo Schembechler

said: "Their quarterbacks were very, very quick."

Clayton, who became the starting quarterback in the second game of the season, said one of the fumbles resulted from his concentrating "too much on the pitch instead of holding on to the ball."

Michigan won because it scored 24 points in the third quarter.

"I don't know what happened in the second half," Clayton said. "We were ready to play, but Michigan seemed hungry."

Clayton's final play was a third-down pass to Todd Frain at the NU 17: Os-

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How the Top 20s Fared

AP/UPI	Bowl
1/ 1 — Penn State (11-1) lost to Oklahoma 25-10	Orange
2/ 4 — Miami, Fla. (10-2) lost to Tennessee 35-7	Sugar
3/ 2 — Oklahoma (11-1) defeated Penn State 25-10	Orange
4/ 3 — Iowa (10-2) lost to UCLA 45-28	Rose
5/ 5 — Michigan (10-1-1) defeated Nebraska 27-23	Fiesta
6/ — Florida (9-1-1)	Ineligible for bowl
7/ 6 — Nebraska (9-3) lost to Michigan 27-23	Fiesta
8/ 8 — Tennessee (9-1-2) defeated Miami 35-7	Sugar
9/ 9 — Brigham Young (11-3) lost to Ohio State 10-7	Florida Citrus
10/ 7 — Air Force (12-1) defeated Texas 24-16	Bluebonnet
11/ 11 — Texas A&M (10-2) defeated Auburn 36-16	Cotton
12/ 10 — Louisiana State (9-2-1) lost to Baylor 21-7	Liberty
13/ 13 — UCLA (9-2-1) defeated Iowa 45-28	Rose
14/ 12 — Arkansas (10-2) defeated Arizona St. 18-17	Holiday
15/ 14 — Alabama (9-2-1) defeated Southern California 24-3	Aloha
16/ 15 — Auburn (8-4) lost to Texas A&M 36-16	Cotton
17/ 17 — Ohio State (9-3) defeated Brigham Young 10-7	Florida Citrus
18/ 16 — Florida State (9-3) defeated Oklahoma State 34-23	Gator
19/ 19 — Oklahoma State (8-4) lost to Florida State 34-23	Gator
20/ — Bowling Green (11-1) lost to Fresno St. 51-7	California
20/ — Maryland (9-3) defeated Syracuse 35-18	Cherry
1/ 18 — Fresno St. (11-0-1) defeated Bowling Green 51-7	California
1/ 20 — Arizona (8-3-1) tied Georgia 13-13	Sun

Vols' Pressure
Ends Miami Bid
For Top Rating

New Orleans (AP) — As the Miami Hurricanes forget about the national championship, they will remember Tennessee.

The eighth-ranked Volunteers from the Southeastern Conference ruined Miami's hopes of a second national crown in three years Wednesday night, rolling to a 35-7 victory in the 52nd Sugar Bowl behind a swarming defense that sacked Vinny Testaverde seven times and intercepted him three times.

That left No. 3 Oklahoma, a 25-10 winner over top-ranked Penn State in the Orange Bowl, to claim No. 1 in the final Associated Press college football poll to be released at 5:30 p.m. CST today.

Miami was looking for that prize itself after giving Oklahoma its only loss of the season. Instead, the Hurricanes found a whole lot of misery.

"I thought they felt they could just walk away with it and we weren't going to let them do that," said Tennessee linebacker Dale Jones, who with Mark Hovanic and Richard Brown put incredible pressure on Testaverde.

Testaverde, who had passed for more than 300 yards per game, was held to 217, and much of that came against a prevent defense in the final quarter.

Miami netted only 269 yards and was never in the game after Tennessee assumed command by scoring two



Jim Bumett/World-Herald

Iowa's David Hudson goes over a group of UCLA defenders that includes Steve Jarecki, No. 99, for a first-quarter score... The 1-yard run put Iowa ahead 7-0.

Championship Hopes,
Ball Escape Hawkeyes

By Steve Pivovar

World-Herald Staff Writer

Pasadena, Calif. — Iowa's national championship hopes slipped away in the Rose Bowl Wednesday because the Hawkeyes couldn't hang onto the ball.

Iowa might have been able to overcome losing four fumbles, but the Hawkeyes couldn't handle the damaging blow administered by Eric Ball in UCLA's 45-28 victory.

Ball ran through an Iowa defense that was ranked fifth nationally for 227 yards — 20 shy of the Rose Bowl record — and four touchdowns, which tied the record set by USC's Sam "Bam" Cunningham against Ohio State in 1973.

"Eric Ball is a phenomenal athlete," said UCLA quarterback Matt Stevens, who also played a "giant role in the Bruins' upset of the Hawkeyes, ranked third by United Press International and fourth by The Associated Press coming into Wednesday's game."

'Size, Strength, Speed'

"He has size, strength and speed," Stevens said. "Everyone on the team knew that Eric was capable of having a day like he had. Fortunately for him, it came on New Year's Day."

Unfortunately, for the Iowa fans in the crowd of 103,292, it came against the Hawkeyes.

Ball wasn't a one-man wrecking crew

of Iowa's dream season. Stevens, the Bruins' No. 2 quarterback who was forced to start when a leg injury put David Norrie on the sidelines, completed 16 of 26 passes for 189 yards and one touchdown. He turned in what UCLA offensive coordinator Homer Smith called a "magnificent performance."

Ten UCLA players contributed to the Bruins' 299-yard rushing total. Gaston Green, who suffered a hamstring pull that forced UCLA to use Ball more than in past games, had 46 yards. Fullback Mel Farr tackled on 42.

And UCLA's defense pitched in by forcing the four fumbles and intercepting Iowa quarterback Chuck Long once.

'Complete Annihilation'

"You just witnessed a complete annihilation of the Iowa football team," Iowa Coach Hayden Fry said. "I think UCLA did as fine a job of blocking us, tackling us and moving the football against our defense as any team in the nation."

"We had a good defense going into the game, but I believe I could have run through some of those holes out there today. And we must have missed 20 or 30 tackles. We were in a position to make those tackles, but their speed was

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