



Tropical depression

Listless start, late mistake spoil stirring NU rally

By SAM MCKEOWN
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. — Tommy Armstrong pounded the sideline turf three times, hard, with both hands, furious with himself and demanding some other outcome than this. The quarterback had again dragged Nebraska out of its own self-imposed, stooped-shouldered, slovenly brand of football with a 23-point fourth-quarter comeback, the kind out of which they mint memories, only to throw that ill-advised pass in overtime, to that Miami cornerback, after four hours of Husker football that looked so much like the past four years of Huskers football.

Not long after the Hurricanes' 36-33 overtime win — which sent Nebraska to 1-2 for the first time since 1981 — a stone-faced Armstrong insisted this Saturday night bore no resemblance to those night losses last year against Michigan State and USC, where NU frittered away the evening before awakening and nearly punching its way to a knockout. This, Armstrong said, was not that.

"Different year, different coaching staff, different team," Armstrong said in a low growl.

All true. But only the calendar and coaches have changed. On this night, Nebraska had the same team identity. Same old script.

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ARM-STRONG FINISH

Tommy Armstrong completed just over one-third of his passes in the game's first 48 minutes. But when his team fell into a 33-10 hole, Armstrong flourished after the 11:14 mark in the fourth quarter.

FIRST 48:46

Comp.	Att.	Pct.	Yards	TD	Int.
10	26	38	125	1	2

REST OF GAME *

11	19	58	184	3	1
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*Plus two 2-point passes



PHOTOS BY MATT MILLER/THE WORLD-HERALD
Quarterback Tommy Armstrong brought Nebraska back from 23 points down to send the game to overtime, then threw an interception to Miami cornerback Corn Elder, No. 29 in the top picture. Armstrong was trying to hit Taariq Allen deep in the end zone. "I underthrew it," Armstrong said, "and it cost us the game."

TOM SHATEL



COLUMNIST

Heart and guts won't win without better execution

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. — We know Nice Guy Mike Riley. Likes to smile. Helps old ladies across the street. Has been a blast of air freshener.

If there's a Tough Guy Mike Riley, maybe a guy who makes a face or knows how to growl, this would be the time for him to introduce himself.

Nebraska lost another game on the last play Saturday, the second broken heart in three weeks.

But this time Husker Heart-break had more to do with how the game started.

Miami won the game 36-33 in overtime. And it was easy to get caught up in the breathless finish, with Nebraska storming back from 23 down, quarterback Tommy Armstrong heaving lightning bolts and 2-point conversions everywhere and folks conjuring up the ghosts of Nebraska-Miami past.

Certainly, the mood back home flipped in the span of a quarter, and the Huskers will feel the back slaps this week for having heart and guts, and all of that is deserved. Well deserved.

And someone, somewhere will repeat what Riley himself told the dejected team after this latest gut punch.

"Coach Riley told us we are literally one minute away from being a perfect 3-0," said punter Sam Foltz.

But even Riley knows that wouldn't be perfect. Far from it.

There's a lot to like here.

There's a lot more to work on.

So says Nice Mike, who emerged from the locker room with a suit and red tie and a vow.

Now is not the time to look for crossed stars, he said. Now is

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CHATELAIN: IT'S A TUG OF WAR FOR HUSKER HEARTS: OVERTIME LOSS IS THE LATEST IN NEBRASKA HOPE VS. HOPELESSNESS SAGA. **8CF**



BARFKNECHT: FERENTZ, IOWA SHOW FANS A 'FUN' TIME — AND A LOOK AT A POSSIBLE CONTENDER IN THE BIG TEN WEST RACE. **4CF**



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