

Needed lift

NU rides mixture of better execution and ability to close

By SAM MCKEOWN
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

MINNEAPOLIS — Before a cathartic pick six triggered Big Red grins, high-fives and “Husker Power!” chants on one side of TCF Bank Stadium, Nebraska’s football team faced a long field and an opportunity to define itself.

“We had to get out of a deep, deep hole,” offensive coordinator Danny Langsdorf said, putting a bear hug on symbolism. He could have been talking about Nebraska starting a third-quarter drive at its own 1, or the first 2-4 start in more than 50 years.

The Huskers’ answer — a 10-play, 99-yard march through what had been one of the Big Ten’s top defenses — underlined NU’s 48-25 win over Minnesota. Maybe this game is an isolated oasis in a season that continues to be grim. But if Saturday’s win is the start of something — if it triggers a second-half surge — circle that drive in red ink.

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Suddenly, Huskers are a threat to others instead of themselves

MINNEAPOLIS — Sometimes you go shopping up here, you find a new team.

This was the Nebraska team you ordered back in August. This was the Nebraska coaching staff you hoped was in the package.

They arrived on a breathtaking autumn day at TCF Bank Stadium, an afternoon that couldn’t have been better for the Huskers — unless you were hoping for something to complain about.

The official ledger says NU is 3-4 and 1-2 in the Big Ten, but after a 48-25 win over Minnesota, it sure felt like 1-0 and 1-0. New season. New team.

This team came out of the gate strong and finished stronger. Scored from 69 yards on its third play of the game. Put the other guy away with an interception with 1:37 left.

This team had a quarterback who played like the offense was written with him in mind. Strong. Confident. Accurate.

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Nebraska's De'Mornay Pierson-El snags a 14-yard touchdown pass over the arms of Minnesota defender Briean Boddy-Calhoun early in the fourth quarter to put NU up 38-14. It was Boddy-Calhoun who had taken the ball away from Pierson-El for a goal-line interception to help seal Minnesota's win last year in Lincoln.

MATT MILLER/THE WORLD-HERALD

BUNGLE AT THE BIG HOUSE

Just when you thought Nebraska had cornered the market on weird ways to lose, Michigan pulled a doozy against Michigan State. Ten seconds remained and seemingly all the Wolverines had to do was execute a punt to secure a 23-21 victory. Instead, the punter’s bobbled snap led to an unthinkable Spartan touchdown. 3CF



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Omaha.com/bigred

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