

# College Football

**Tom Shatel**



## 1-2 Punch Decks Iowa

### QB Issue Not Fading

Iowa City, Iowa — Congratulations are certainly in order to Coach Frank Solich, the Nebraska Huskers, Gary Java and Jim Rose.

The Huskers went out and spanked the Iowa Hawkeyes 42-7 Saturday at Kinnick Stadium. But the really big winners were Java and Rose. Those guys are sports-talk hosts in Nebraska, and, boy, have they got it made.

All they have to do this week is show up, turn on the lights, push a couple of buttons and make sure the phone works. Their topic of the day looks like a topic for the week, and quite honestly there might just be enough fuel in this tank to go the long haul.

### Two Topics

Make that two topics: Bobby Newcombe. Eric Crouch. Whom do you like?

Who runs better? Who passes better? Who should start the game? Who should finish? Who should play more in the first half? Who should start the second half? Who's a better leader? Whom does the line block harder for? Whom would you want your daughter to date? Or would you want one guy to pick her up and have the other one drop her off?

Pardon me for a minute. I'm starting to get a little dizzy.

You were looking for some mystical, definitive statement about the Huskers in this opener. You were looking for Newcombe and I-back DeAngelo Evans to return to form. You wanted the offensive line to punish and push and the Blackshirts to smother. They did and didn't.

### Script Changed

The offense sputtered, but it was the first game. The Huskers had turnovers, they had big plays. They are going to be pretty good, maybe very good. But they weren't playing Texas A&M or Kansas State. There was really only one sure thing on the day.

Nebraska has two quarterbacks this season.

Solich said last week that he had considered using a two-quarterback system but succumbed to the wishes of his quarterbacks, who wanted the No. 1 guy to get the most snaps. After Saturday, Solich might want to rethink that philosophy.

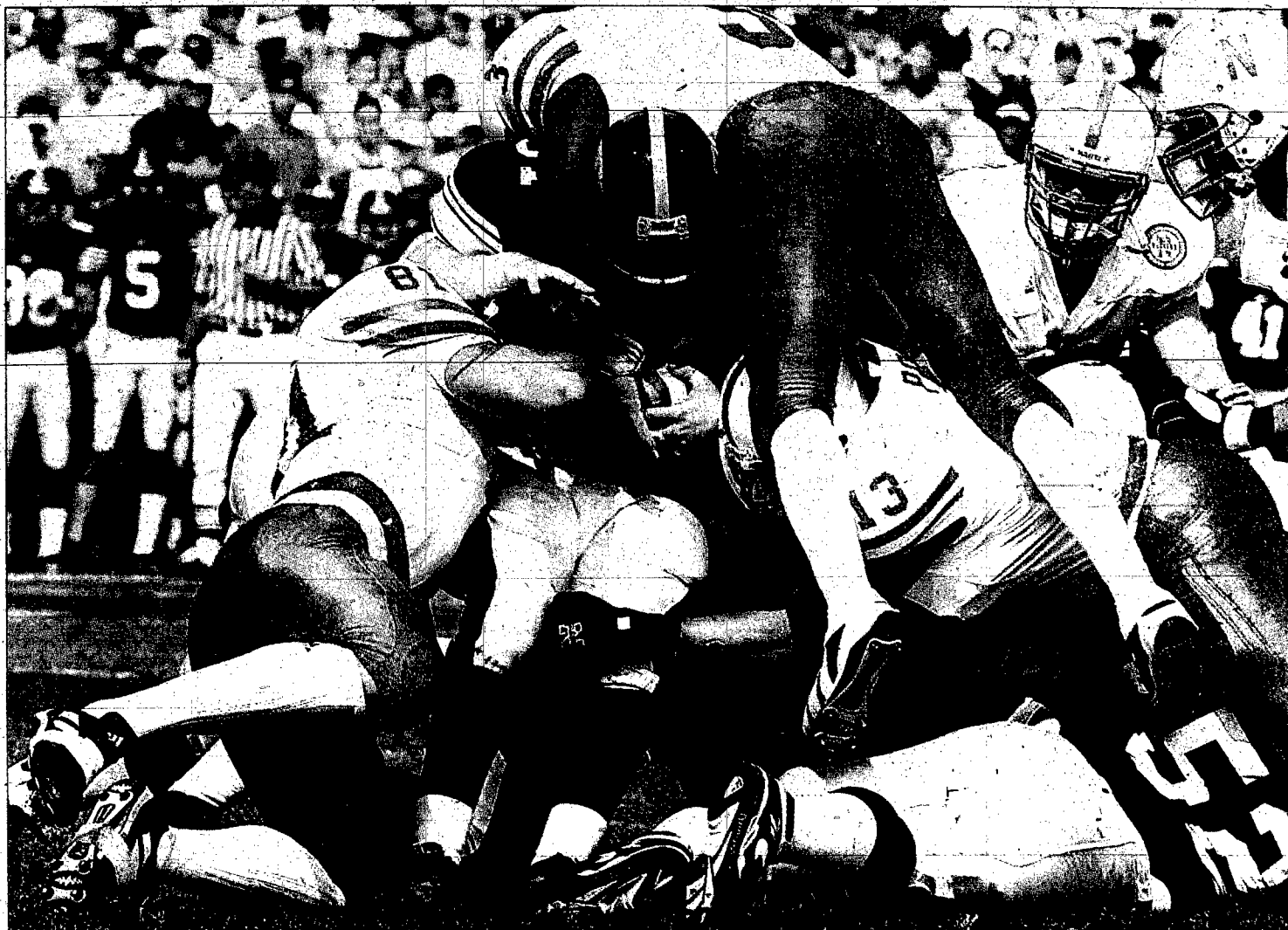
A nice and neat quarterback package became a controversy, if that's what you want to call it, and many will think this week. The script called for Newcombe to come out smoking, show everyone he was the clear No. 1 and have Crouch look good in his smaller, undefined role but not threaten Newcombe's standing. There were only two problems.

### Slow Start

Newcombe didn't exactly wow in his second "debut" as starter. He couldn't get in the end zone until the second half. He had two turnovers. And while Newcombe struggled, Crouch looked super with the meter running. In his first drive, which began at the Iowa 47 midway through the second quarter, Crouch led NU on a four-play scoring drive, punctuated by his stunning 28-yard touchdown on an option that included a freeze-frame pitch-fake.

But if you thought Solich would come out in the second half with

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HIGH, LOW, IN BETWEEN: Huskers Keyuo Craver, top, Aaron Wills, left, and Carlos Polk (13) wrap up Iowa's Rob Thein. Iowa finished with just 57 yards rushing.

### Bobby Newcombe

#### RUSHING

Carries: 15  
 Yards: 35  
 Average: 2.3  
 Touchdowns: 2

#### PASSING

Comp-Att: 7-10  
 Interceptions: 1  
 Yards: 128  
 Touchdowns: 1

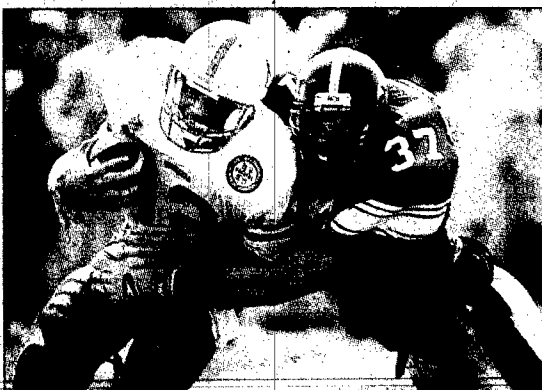
### Eric Crouch

#### RUSHING

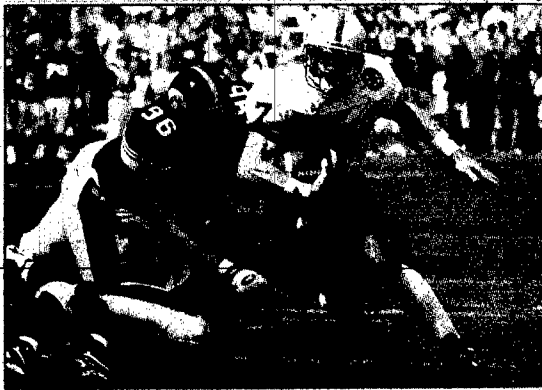
Carries: 5  
 Yards: 92  
 Average: 18.4  
 Touchdowns: 3

#### PASSING

Comp-Att: 3-5  
 Interceptions: 0  
 Yards: 68  
 Touchdowns: 0



PHOTOS BY JEFFREY Z. CARNEY/THE WORLD-HERALD



## Husker QBs Produce Six TDs in 42-7 Win

BY STEVEN PIVOVAR

Iowa City, Iowa — Nebraska found luxury Saturday in the controversy some see in its quarterback situation.

With starter Bobby Newcombe producing 163 yards and three touchdowns and backup Eric Crouch getting 160 yards and three more scores, the fifth- and sixth-ranked Huskers rolled to a 42-7 victory before 70,397 at Kinnick Stadium. After some early offensive sputtering, Nebraska scored 35 second-half points and piled up 543 yards in winning its 14th straight season opener.

The performances of Newcombe and Crouch probably will do little to silence the ongoing debate outside the Husker camp about who should lead the Nebraska offense. But in Coach Frank Solich's mind, Saturday's effort underscored the advantages of having two players the caliber of Crouch and Newcombe.

"I thought both of them played well, and I expected that to be the case," Solich said. "We have two outstanding quarterbacks, and we're fortunate in that regard. Any time you're able to have fresh quarterbacks on the field in our style of offense, you probably have yourself something."

What Nebraska had Saturday in ad-

dition to Crouch and Newcombe was a defense that lived up to preseason expectations. In posting its 25th win in 40 meetings with the Hawkeyes, Nebraska limited Iowa to eight first downs, 57 yards rushing, 169 total yards and an average of 3.0 yards per snap.

Iowa's offense got no closer than 33 yards to Nebraska's goal line, but the Hawkeyes averted a shutout when Tim Dodge returned a blocked punt 40 yards for a score with 2:30 left in the game.

"That hurt bad, because our defense had worked hard to get that goose-egg," Husker cornerback Ralph Brown said. "It hurt for that to happen on special teams because we weren't out there and there wasn't anything we could do about it. It shows on the scoreboard, and a lot of people are going to think that came against our defense."

Aside from losing the shutout, the defense had little to frown about after 60 minutes of making life miserable for sophomore quarterback Kyle McCann and the rest of the Iowa offense.

"We had a lot of fun out there today," Brown said. "We came out and made a little statement about how hungry we are. We don't want to leave anything about last year in people's

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## Watts' Record Night Lights Up Mavs' Win

BY RICH KAIPUST

UNO outlasted the NCAA Division II defending national champion and a 15-minute power outage Saturday night by coming up with its own 225 Watts.

Junior quarterback Kwanz Watts came off the bench to run for 225 yards and score three touchdowns as the Mavericks shocked Northwest Missouri State 40-17 at Caniglia Field. Watts needed just 11 carries to tie the University of Nebraska at Omaha's rushing record for a quarterback.

"Kwanz is electric," UNO tailback Adam Wright said. "He came into the game and made a lot of people miss tackles. When he got in, it just changed the whole atmosphere."

The 225 yards from Watts and 144 from tailback Jess Holland helped ninth-ranked UNO pound Northwest Missouri for 440 yards on the ground. It was an unexpected beating for the Bearcats, who were riding a 16-game winning streak, including a 28-14 win over UNO in last year's playoffs.

"I think we played better than what we expected," UNO linebacker Terrell Spears said. "We played up to Maverick football standards. We've beaten No. 1 teams before, so we knew we could do it again."

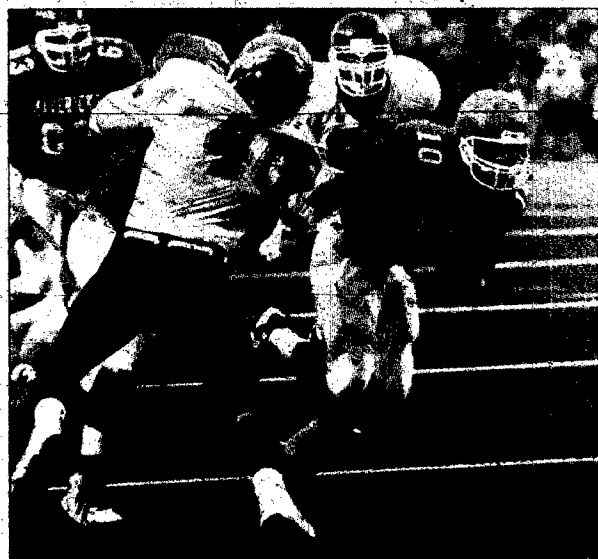
The Mavs opened the season with their third victory over a No. 1-ranked team in the last four years. It was much appreciated by a Caniglia Field crowd of 11,500 — the third largest in school history — which sat through the black-

out early in the third quarter and a steady second-half rain.

Watts made it all worthwhile. UNO went with senior Curtis Miller to start the game after a tight battle at quarterback through spring practice and fall camp. Watts, a junior-college transfer, came on for the Mavs' fourth offensive series, and UNO was suddenly taking a scoreless game and making it into a 24-7 halftime lead.

"I was kind of comfortable from the start," Watts said. "Seeing their defense and watching a lot of offense, I was feeling comfortable with our field and our offensive line. It makes it easy to be back there."

Not so easy for Northwest Missouri, though. When Watts got free, the Bear-



ELECTRIFYING DEBUT: University of Nebraska at Omaha quarterback Kwanz Watts scampers free on a first-half run against Northwest Missouri.

## Colorado St. Pulls Shocker Over Buffs

BY LEE BAREKNECHT

Denver — The riot-riddled "Rocky Mountain Showdown" never lived up to its billing Saturday night because one team didn't show up.

The surprise, though, was that the no-show was 14th- and 17th-ranked Colorado.

The two-touchdown-favorite Buffaloes, looking for a return to their glory days under new Coach Gary Barnett, stumbled and bumbled throughout a 41-14 loss to unranked Colorado State in the season opener for both before 75,438 fans at Mile High Stadium.

The margin of defeat was Colorado's biggest since a 52-7 thrashing from Nebraska in 1992.

Even uglier than the game was the confrontation at the end between fans

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