

Nebraska Postgame Notes vs. Texas A&M, Big 12 Championship, Dec. 6, 1997

The Huskers won their first-ever Big 12 Championship with a 54-15 win over the No. 14 Texas A&M Aggies. NU will likely be the highest pick in the Alliance and is expecting to play in the Orange Bowl (Nebraska's current ticket allotment is sold out). It is Nebraska's 42nd conference crown, the 13th under Osborne. The win is Nebraska's 13th straight; NU's 59th in the last 62 games and fifth straight against Texas A&M. Nebraska improves to a perfect 12-0, marking the 14th time overall, and the seventh time in the Devaney/Osborne era that NU has entered the bowl game undefeated and untied (fifth under Osborne, fourth in last five years), and the fifth 12-win season under Osborne.

The Huskers scored on their first seven possessions to open up a 37-3 halftime lead. Meanwhile, the Husker Blackshirts held A&M to three and out on its first five possessions of the first half and intercepted Brandon Stewart once. Ahman Green had his 11th straight 100-yard game before intermission, as he totaled 104 yards on 18 carries and two TDs in the first half. Frost was 10-11 for 181 yards passing and another 40 rushing in the first half. A&M did not score again until the fourth quarter. In the game, Frost passed for more than 200, A&M was held to 13 yards rushing, and Green totaled 179 rushing yards and three TDs.

* **Ahman Green** had his 11th straight 100-yard rushing game as he totaled 179 yards on a career-high 34 carries including three TDs (previous high 30 vs. Missouri, 1997). Green scored twice in the second quarter on runs of 25 yards and one yard and had 104 at halftime. Green scored his third TD with 11:13 remaining in the fourth quarter on a six-yard run. Green is second all-time with 3,380 career yards and passed Lawrence Phillips' 1,722 (in 1994) to rank second on the Husker season rushing list. This year, Green has 278 carries for 1,877 yards and 22 TDs. He ranks second all-time at NU in rushing TDs' with 42 (passing Calvin Jones' 40). He also moved up from a tie for fifth to a tie for third in points scored with 270.

* **Scott Frost** had a banner day. He completed 12 of 18 passes for a season-high 201 yards (10-11 in first half for 181 yards), no interceptions, no TD passes. Frost also rushed 15 times for 79 yards and had two TD runs, the game opener on a 6-yard run, and a 2-yard run to give NU a 37-3 edge at halftime. It is Frost's second 200-yard passing game with a career-best 254 vs. Kansas in 1996. Frost has rushed for 50 yards or more in every game this year and more than 70 in 10 games, including the last four. Frost's 2-yard run was set up by a 51-yard pass to true freshman **Matt Davison**. The 51-yarder was a season high and tied his career best. Frost finished the season with 19 rushing TDs, a Nebraska position record. It ties the old NCAA record of 19, which was broken by Navy's Chris McCoy this season (20). Frost, although picked as the second and third-team quarterback by the AP and coaches, respectively, is just the 10th quarterback all time (for the 11th time) to rush (1,095) and pass (1,237) for 1,000 yards in a season. Frost was named the Chevrolet/ABC Player-of-the-Game for the fourth time this season. In his career, Frost ranks seventh in passing with 2,677 yards. In total offense, Frost ranks seventh with 4,210 yards.

* **Kris Brown** hit three-straight field goals in the first quarter and four in the game. After NU scored on its first possession, Brown hit on field goals of 27 yards, 26 yards and 31 yards. The four made extended his school record of consecutive field goals made to 16. It marked the second time this year (also vs. Texas Tech) that Kris has had three-or-more field goals in a game and the sixth time in his career. His fourth was a 44-yarder in the third quarter, marking the second time in his career he has hit on four. Brown was 4-5 vs. Kansas State in 1996. Brown is 4-5 on field goals of 40 or more yards this year, 6-11 in his career. Last year in the Big 12 game, Brown hit on two field goals, including a career-best 51-yarder.

* All-American **Defensive tackle Jason Peter** left the game with 8:53 remaining in the second quarter with back spasms, but not before he set the tone for the defense. Peter had a sack on the Aggies' first play of the game, and helped the Huskers hold A&M to three on out (or better, interception on fourth drive) on their first five drives of the game. **Chad Kelsay** also had a nine-yard sack in the game. **Tony Ortiz** had a sack early in the fourth quarter as did **Joe Walker**, **Mike Rucker** and **Kyle Vanden Bosch**, giving NU a season-high six in the game. That marks the seventh consecutive game that the Husker Blackshirts have had at least three sacks in the game. All-American **Grant Wistrom** had two pass breakups.

* True Freshman **Bobby Newcombe** dazzled again. Newcome made a huge impact in the first half with a 25-yard run on a reverse, a 26-yard reception from Frost and a 40-yard punt return. All of which led to Husker scores. He totaled more than 100 yards in the first quarter and had 108 in the game.

* Turnovers...Nebraska 3, Texas A&M 2...Nebraska's **Ralph Brown** intercepted Brandon Stewart (rush by **Octavious McFarlin**) on A&M's fourth drive of the first half. It was Brown's second this season and sixth of his career. NU converted the turnover into a Kris Brown 31-yard field goal. **Mike Brown** recorded his second interception this season with 8:52 remaining in the third quarter. Kris Brown converted that turnover into a 44-yard field goal. A&M recovered a fumble at the NU 45 yard line in the third, and another at their own 48 late in the third, but did not convert on either one. A&M scored on a fumble return with 3:38 remaining.

* T.J. DeBates caught his first-ever reception, seven yards to the A&M 1-yard line. Green scored one play later to give NU a 30-3 lead. Wingback **Lance Brown** recorded his first pass breakup, when at the end of the third quarter, A&M faked a punt, Brown back on coverage, broke up the long bomb near the end zone. Brown also had a 27-yard reception and a kickoff return on an onside kick.

* Totals...Nebraska rushed for 300 or more yards in every game this year and had 335 (season low) today. NU totaled more than 500 yards (536 today) in seven games this season. NU held A&M to 13 yards, a best by the NU defense this year and marked the 10th opponent this year to be held to less than 100 yards (fifth less than 50).

* Nebraska will have its prebowl press conference this week, most likely on Tuesday, but possibly on Wednesday, please call the SID at (402) 475-2462 on Monday for details.

TEXAS A&M POST-GAME NOTES

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Alamodome, San Antonio, Texas



- * #23 Jason Glenn returned a fumble 35 yards for a touchdown. This was the first fumble return for a touchdown in the Big 12 Championship game history.
- * #87 Derrick Spiller set a career long with his 63 yard reception. This is also a Big 12 Championship record for longest reception.
- * #3 Kyle Bryant has hit six of seven career field goals in the Alamodome.
- * #6 Shane Lechler punt of 67 yards is a Big 12 Championship record. He also set the mark with 7 punts and highest average at 47.6 yards per punt.
- * #9 Dat Nguyen with 11 tackles today marks his seventh game with 10 or more tackles this season and 20 in his career.
- * #7 Brandon Stewart had his string of 126 consecutive passes without an interception stopped by Nebraska's Ralph Brown in the first quarter. This also ended the A&M team streak of 173.

BIG 12 CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP NOTES

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- * Nebraska's 54 points is the most scored by a team in the Big 12 Championship game.
- * In the all-time series, Nebraska now leads 6-1.
- * 69 points is the most points scored by two teams in this series. Nebraska's 54 points is the most scored by one team.
- * Nebraska set a Big 12 Championship record scoring on 7 straight offensive possessions.
- * As a team, Nebraska set Big 12 Championship game records in:
 - scoring with 54 points
 - rushing yards gained with 351
 - total yards gained with 536 (351 rushing, 201 passing)
- * Today's attendance of 64,824 set a new Alamodome record football crowd. With that, the previous record of 64,597 was set in 1995 when Texas A&M played Michigan in the Builders Square Alamo Bowl.

TEXAS A&M POST-GAME QUOTES

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HEAD COACH R.C. SLOCUM

"I'm very disappointed in the way we played. Very impressed with Nebraska. They are what I thought they would be. They are strong and a well-coached team. I felt they beat us in every element of the game. Offensively, defensively, special teams, they were the superior team tonight."

(on preparation for the game): "Well you never know exactly what they will be like when you look at the tape. You see their schemes, we saw our offense and defense against our scout teams this week. It is very difficult to simulate their style of play with the scout team. It is hard to know how your team will react to the pressure in the game. I was not shocked. I knew that their pressure would be good. I was disappointed particularly with some of our pass plays in the first half and our lack of execution. Defensively in the first half, there were a couple of pass plays that we did not do a good job of covering. It is hard to defend them running the option, you get so wrapped up with the option that you overlook guys running down the field wide open. We are not the only team that that has happened to, but it was very disappointing when it happened to us."

(on Nebraska QB Scott Frost): "I don't want to take anything away from him, Scott Frost is a very good quarterback. He is a big strong guy that makes the right decisions. I was very impressed with the courage he shows when he plays, and I am very impressed with the way he plays. There are plays that we would like to do better from an assignment standpoint, but we have to give him a lot of credit for that."

(on getting down early): "We didn't want to get knocked out early, I don't think we got knocked out early, but we certainly had some bumps and bruises. I was disappointed with our offense because we didn't make it very hard for them. We played right into their hands by going 1, 2, 3, and out."

(halftime talk): "At halftime, I talked to the team about pride and going out in the second half and doing what it takes to get ourselves back into the game. I told them that playing with pride and courage and staying in the ballgame and saying you are not going to make us quit, you may be a better team and beat us bad but you are not going to make us lay down and quit. I'm very proud of our team. I didn't see any quit in our team. We came out and kept battling."

(on Nebraska being the best team in the country): "There is no way I can answer that question on whether they are the best team in the country. I don't think there is anybody that could answer that question. But I will say that there is not another team in the country that I would be more concerned about playing than Nebraska. Until someone else proves differently, they will have my vote for number one. They had my vote last week and every week through the season."

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QUARTERBACK BRANNDON STEWART:

"We shot ourselves in the foot a couple of times early in the game. I had some bad throws and were weren't able to run the ball effectively. When you play a team like Nebraska you have to take advantage of your opportunities and we just didn't do a very good job of that. Our guys are disappointed, no doubt about it. We experienced a lot of adversity last year and to a certain extent this year. I thought our team showed a lot of character and made this a good season for us. We earned the right to play in this game and in a bowl game. We'll bounce back from this loss. We felt like we were representing all the teams in the (Big 12) South and were a reflection of how strong the South is. I'm kind of embarrassed for the South. I don't think the way we played was indicative of the kind of team we are. Nebraska was the best team today. They are the best team we've played this year and also the most disciplined. They didn't make many mistakes on defense and their guys were always where they were supposed to be. They are a heck of a team and are very well coached."

OFFENSIVE LINEMAN CHRIS RUHMAN:

"This loss doesn't spoil our season but it hurts. We've still got another game to get ready for but this puts a bit of a damper on my senior season. Nebraska is a big-time team. We tried our best. They are just a great football team and I wish them the best. They are definitely a lot faster on the field than they looked on film. The holes were opening up and closing really fast. They threw a couple of blitzes at us that we haven't seen. But a lot of it was just a lack of execution on our part."

LINEBACKER DAT NGUYEN:

"We had great preparation but we lost a lot on big plays early in the game and that hurt us. We just dug ourselves into a hole. Defensively, it seemed like we always had our backs to the wall and we made a lot of mistakes that hurt us. We spotted them a lot of points. We came out in the second half and played with a lot of pride. I thought the team showed its character. Scott Frost is a such a great competitor and he's so smart. He knew where our weaknesses were every time they lined up."

DEFENSIVE LINEMAN MARCUS HEARD:

"Nebraska is a great team. They are very strong up front. We made a lot of mistakes on defense but if we keep working hard we'll be alright. It takes a lot of hard work and dedication to have a program like Nebraska's. They are one of the premier teams in the country and it took a lot of hard work for them to get to that level. We have to execute and play fundamental football."

NEBRASKA POST-GAME QUOTES

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HEAD COACH TOM OSBORNE:

"I was pleased with the play of today. The players came prepared to play. I was also pleased with the defense even at the end with the pressure and turnovers, they stayed with it. Jason Peters played only about one quarter which hurt us because he is such a good player. Our kicking game was solid, since that was all we seemed to be doing the first half. Offense did a good job, Scott threw well, ran well, and ran the offense well. A&M has a good football team. They were a team that got better at the end of the season. I was disappointed at our sloppy play at the end. It is hard to hold focus for sixty minutes, but I guess with a big lead that is what happens."

(on defense): "Defense played very well as I have said before throughout the game. Two or three times we put pressure on the defense and we turned the ball over late in the game, but they kept on answering. The only negative today was the turnover, as we had zero in the first half, but we had four in the second."

(on Championship game): "Initially, I voted against having them because outstanding teams often have to play out of the championship picture or the team that is on a roll has to come play someone they have played before. Last year against Texas, we didn't get that excited and looked ahead to the next game, and we goofed up. Reasons for championship games is for the money. They are okay, and it is a challenge for both teams. The tough thing is a team that is 8-0 in conference can play another team that is 5-3 in conference and the 5-3 team wins and they win the conference championship."

(on polls): "We don't talk much about it, we play the best we can. We played well against Washington and Kansas State, but I can't do anything to influence what the voters think. Michigan is a good team, but so is Nebraska."

(on DT Jason Peters): "He had back spasms today. Not sure on his condition. He probably needs two weeks off, then he will be ready to play in the bowl. He is a player that makes a difference."

(on QB Scott Frost): "Scott has played great in big plays, Kansas State, Washington, Missouri and against A&M today. Voters rank quarterbacks by raw stats versus productivity and winning football games. Scott has rushed for a 1000 yards, ran the team well, and played well this season. I always feel rushing yards are better than passing yards because 99% of the time, the rushing team wins the game. That is why we run the ball to win."

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PLAYER QUOTES

BOBBY NEWCOMB:

(On return) "I definitely though that was a big effect in the game. It was really fired up with that."

SCOTT FROST:

"I think the offense executed really well. We threw the ball well and had good day in our passing game. We were able to hit some plays on offense and I think any time you can make that many good plays on defense, it really lifts your spirits...(On change from last year's game) Last year's loss was a motivation. I don't think we were ready to play the game last year like we should have been. We came in this week and just ran everything better. We had been working all week defensively...(On emphasis on running vs. passing game) I don't think we expected to do much. I think it was just the situation we were in. When the situation calls for it, we throw the ball more...(On motivating factors) I said a hundred times that I'd trade a lot for a chance at the national championship...(On national title) All we can do from here on out is win our games because you can't control your destiny. We just going to go out and play good football."

GRANT WISTROM:

"When we were in the locker room at half time, and Coach said that was the best football he's seen us play all year. They're a great offense, we just played very well. We executed everything like I know we can. When we play like that, we could be one of the best defenses in the country...(On national champion status) The only thing we can do is to go out and win every football game. I've always heard that the journey's better in the end anyways. If it doesn't happen, it's not going to take away from the fun we've had all season...It all comes down to time management. If you can find the delicate balance in the game, things can pay off for you."