

Nebraska Post-Game Notes

Nebraska at Northwestern, Oct. 20, 2012, Evanston, Ill.

- ▶ Nebraska overcame a 12-point fourth-quarter deficit to rally for a 29-28 win. The comeback tied for the largest fourth quarter comeback in school history (also 12 points at Missouri in 2009 and in 1966 at Colorado). With the win, Nebraska snapped a four-game losing streak away from Lincoln and improved to 5-1 following a bye week under Bo Pelini. The Huskers' win also gave them a 4-2 lead in the all-time series with Northwestern.
- ▶ Nebraska rushed for 201 yards, marking the seventh straight game to open the season with at least 200 rushing yards. This marks the first time Nebraska has rushed for 200 or more yards in each of the first seven games of the season since 2000. The Huskers improved to 29-4 under Bo Pelini when rushing for 200 yards.
- ▶ Nebraska finished with 543 yards of total offense and has topped 400 yards in each of the first seven games of the season. The last time Nebraska topped 400 yards in seven straight games was a seven-game stretch during the 2008 season. This marks the first time Nebraska has topped 400 yards of offense in each of the first seven games of the season since the 1997 team reached that plateau in all 13 games.
- ▶ Nebraska was held to 29 points in today's game, ending a streak of six straight 30-point games to open the season. The six-game 30-point streak was Nebraska's longest to open a season since 1995. It was also NU's longest 30-point streak at any point since a seven-game stretch including the final three games of 2007 and the first four games in 2008.
- ▶ Junior quarterback **Taylor Martinez** passed for 342 yards in today's game, 12 shy of his career high set in the season opener against Southern Miss. It was Martinez's third career 300-yard passing game and second of the season. The 342 yards pushed his career passing total to 5,335 yards. Martinez is the fourth player in school history with 5,000 career passing yards and his total of 5,335 career passing yards moved him into second place on the Nebraska career passing list, moving past Dave Humm (5,035 yards) and Joe Ganz (5,125 yards) in today's game.
- ▶ Martinez became the 18th player in FBS history with 5,000 career passing yards and 2,000 career rushing yards and just the seventh player to reach that milestone before their senior season.
- ▶ Sophomore I-back **Ameer Abdullah** ran 19 times for 101 yards. The 101 yards marked Abdullah's third 100-yard rushing game of the season (also at UCLA and vs. Arkansas State).
- ▶ Sophomore receiver **Kenny Bell** had six receptions for 77 yards, including a 37-yard touchdown reception in the second quarter. With his 77 receiving yards today, Bell became the 20th player in school history to crack the 1,000-yard receiving mark. Bell reached the 1,000-yard plateau in his 20th career game, the second-fastest in school history trailing only 1972 Heisman Trophy winner Johnny Rodgers (16 games).
- ▶ Today marked Bell's 19th straight game with a reception, including three or more catches in 11 of those games. Bell's six receptions moved him up 11 spots into a tie for 24th place with Tracey Wistrom on the Nebraska career receptions list. Bell now has 58 career receptions, including 26 in 2012.
- ▶ Junior receiver **Quincy Enunwa** had six catches for 110 yards in the game, setting career highs in both categories. In the fourth quarter alone, Enunwa had four catches for 74 yards.
- ▶ Redshirt freshman receiver **Taariq Allen** caught his first career touchdown catch with 5:55 remaining in the game. His touchdown reception cut Northwestern's lead to 28-23.
- ▶ Senior punter **Brett Maher** downed four of his eight punts inside the Northwestern 20, including four punts inside the Wildcat 7-yard line. Maher had two punts of 50 yards or more, including a 58-yarder in the third quarter.
- ▶ Today's game captains were senior tight end **Kyler Reed**, sophomore defensive back **Corey Cooper**, senior safety **Courtney Osborne** and senior long snapper **P.J. Mangieri**.
- ▶ Nebraska returns home next Saturday for a Legends Division matchup against Michigan at Memorial Stadium. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m. in Lincoln, and the contest will mark Michigan's first visit to Nebraska since the 1911 season.

Nebraska Quotes

Head Coach Bo Pelini

General comments on today's game...

"Our defense played really well. The guys really understood the game; our preparation was complete. We had discipline and focus. Ciente Evans stood out, he was on [Kain] Colter most of the game and made good plays. There were a lot of positives, the guys really stepped up for injured players. The special thing is our fans. They travel, they make a big impact. For a second I thought I was watching a replay of last year's game. They [Northwestern] were real aggressive trying to stop our run game. But the passing game was available to us and we took advantage of it."

On his gesture to fans chanting his name after the game...

"I just really wanted to say thank you. I appreciated the fans' effort and what they did. What I really like about the fans was that they were in this, there was hope at the end of the game. We've got to keep working, we've got to keep getting better. Besides the turnovers, there were a bunch of third-and-shorts that we didn't convert. Those killed momentum and killed drives. Especially in those situations, I felt like we had a lack of awareness at times. And you look at the fourth-and-3. Should I have gone for it? I don't know."

On the two third-down back to back plays called back for penalties...

"Just ridiculous, careless penalties in that situation. I don't fault the referees for calling them, they warned us. They warned our tackles. And when that happens, shame on us. The referees did their job."

On WR Quincy (Enunwa)'s huge game...

"I'm proud of him. Quincy was very good. He had a bad back at one point. He was feeling some burning sensations and some things going on in his shoulder. Next thing I know I look up and he's back in the football game. That isn't easy to do. Not only did he suck it up, but he went out there and made some very big, great plays."

Nebraska Player Quotes

QB Taylor Martinez

On Nebraska's last two drives and touchdowns...

"Everyone knew we were going to score a touchdown. We could feel it in our guts and throughout the offense. We knew once we had the chance, we were going to score again."

On the frustration and fumbles of the first half...

"It was a weird first half, just like last year. We had early fumbles in the game and somehow we had to come back. We felt like this last year and luckily we actually made a comeback this time."

On how Nebraska can learn from this win...

"[We need to] just not turn over the ball. We're killing ourselves. We're the ones that are stopping ourselves and if we don't stop ourselves, no one in the country can beat us."

LB Will Compton

On Nebraska needing to cut down on turnovers...

"That's just what you have to do in practice; that was a big emphasis. When the ball hit the ground, we, as a team, would have to do up-downs or do something because it costs the whole team and we were good. It happened the first week of the bye week, one of those first days, and then after that they did well in practice. You just need to not put the ball on the ground."

On the defense's ability to respond to adversity...

"One thing we talked about defensively was that we can't worry about the outside stuff or what happens with the offense. We have to take pride in going out there another series and we get another opportunity to play team defense. One of the big things was when something goes wrong we have to keep our composure, we have to move on to the next play and have everybody take care of their responsibility. I think we did a good job with that tonight."

Northwestern vs. Nebraska
Ryan Field
Oct. 20, 2012
Postgame Quotes

Northwestern Head Coach Pat Fitzgerald

Opening statement...

"This was one heck of a Big Ten football game. We have to tip our hat to Bo [Pelini] and his young men and the way that they battled back. I thought we battled and gave ourselves the chance to win, but down the stretch, we just didn't make that one more play that we needed to make. There were two balls we had our hands on during their last couple of drives that led to the touchdown. We were moving the ball pretty well on our last drive at two minutes. It was a tough outcome.

"I'm very appreciative of our fan support. We're going to have to flush this one pretty quickly and get back at it. We've obviously got a big game here next weekend. We have big games left. That's the way you have to look at it. We gave ourselves every opportunity to win but we just didn't make plays down the stretch. Credit goes to Nebraska for doing that; we ended up on the short end. It's a tough pill to swallow but as a competitor, it's reality sometimes when we don't get our guys to make those plays. We'll take a look critically to see where we fell short, whether it was schematically, or did we lose position, things of that nature. It was a heck of a battle and we ended up one play short."

On his confidence in Jeff Budzien's field goal attempt to win the game...

"I had all the confidence in Jeff, especially because there wasn't any wind. Being at the 35 (yard line), it was towards the top of his range but I felt confident in his ability. It just went a little wide right but he had plenty of leg."

On the road blocks that played a factor in the loss...

"I don't think it has anything to do psychologically because a week ago we went on a two minute drill and our defense pushed the offense back three times. I just think we have to make some plays. It's the name of this game. It looked like we lost our leverage. There were four pass plays when we were in position for an outside leverage and it should have been an inside leverage. We have to look at the reasons why."

Northwestern Player Quotes

QB/WR Kain Colter

On trying to repeat his big performance from last year...

"I never really know what's going to happen during the week. I was sure their defense was going to change a little bit from last year to this year, so we're not going to have the exact same game plan. They are going to try to stop some things that worked last year, and they did a good job of that. I was in some different situations than I was last year, but we just didn't go out there and execute. We didn't make plays when we needed to make plays."

On the fourth-and-inches conversion that led to NU's fourth score...

"Simple quarterback sneak. My center, Brandon Vitabile, is going to tell me which way he is going, usually to the tightest nose guard. I tried to get it in there at first, and they stuffed it a little bit. I rolled off to the right, and ended up picking up the first down."

On moving on from this loss...

"Just flush it. You're going to have highs and lows in this game of football. It's not the first game we've lost. Obviously, the fashion we lost is disappointing, especially when we felt we had control most of the game. We just have to flush it, you know, we've got some big games coming up ahead of us. We still have all of our goals in front of us. We're not in control of that anymore -- some things have to happen -- but if we play the way we're capable we'll still be in the conversation for the champion of this league."

On trying to get in a rhythm while playing such a versatile role in the offense...

"It's tough, but you can't make excuses. A bunch of guys are playing different positions. As far as getting into a rhythm, I feel like it's just a momentum kind of thing. Once you get that first first down, the release is off of you. Now we can go play, and get into our tempo, and that could really help us against a defense. I feel like our tempo, and how fast we play, really hurts them and slows them down. When you can't get first downs, you can't do that, and that's kind of what happened today."

LB Damien Proby:

On the near-interception that both Proby and David Nwabuisi got their hands on...

"That play was just one of those freak things, two players breaking for the ball. We would like to have that ball, of course. I mean, if I could go back and change it I know that he would be there, but you can't leave anything in this game up to chance. We all have to fly to the ball, it's just something that happened on one play."

On the last two Nebraska scoring drives...

"The last two drives, they just made plays and we didn't. There is nothing more to be said. We were on top of every route, they just made plays and we didn't. We have to capitalize on that; we need to improve on that area of our defense."

On whether the near turnovers in the fourth quarter were demoralizing...

"I would never call being around the ball to make a play demoralizing. We just know that we are there; we know that those plays will lay up for us. If we keep focused and keep practicing the way we have been practicing, those balls will fall into our laps. You can't be mad that the person was on top of the ball at any given point in the game."