

HUSKER HISTORY: LOOKING BACK AT SELLOUT NO. 1

As Nebraska celebrates its NCAA record 300th consecutive sellout tonight, we look back at the game that started it all, sellout No. 1 on Nov. 3, 1962. The game was Homecoming and featured the Huskers, under the direction of first-year Head Coach Bob Devaney, against the Missouri Tigers.

The Huskers entered the game with high hopes as Devaney had led the squad to a 6-0 start to the season, including a 3-0 mark in Big Eight play. While Nebraska had momentum entering the contest, history was not on the Huskers' side. Missouri had won the last five meetings and NU had been shut out four straight times by the Tigers.

Missouri struck first, as Johnny Roland scored with 1:06 left in the first quarter on a 46-yard reverse. Nebraska finally ended its scoreless streak against Missouri when Noel Martin intercepted a pass and returned it 88 yards for a touchdown to even the score at 7-7 heading into halftime. Although the Huskers held the Tigers to only 36 yards rushing in the second half, Missouri took the lead for good on a 45-yard field goal in the third quarter. The Tigers added a one-yard touchdown run 34 seconds into the fourth quarter to wrap up their 16-7 victory in front of 36,501 fans.

The Huskers were plagued by turnovers in the loss, as quarterback Dennis Claridge threw four interceptions and lost one fumble. The Husker offense crossed midfield but came up empty all four times.

NU rebounded from its first loss of the year by defeating Kansas, 40-16, the following week and then shutting out Oklahoma State 14-0 two weeks later. The Huskers ended the regular season with a 34-6 loss at 10th-ranked Oklahoma in the regular-season finale with a Big Eight title and a bid in the Orange Bowl at stake. NU finished the season with a 36-34 victory over Miami in the Gotham Bowl at Yankee Stadium.

Missouri - 16
Nebraska - 7

*Nov. 3, 1962 - Lincoln, Neb.
Memorial Stadium - 36,501
Consecutive Sellout No. 1*

Despite the loss to Missouri, the real story was the start of the streak we celebrate today. After drawing more than 36,000 fans for the Homecoming showdown with the Tigers, 34,329 came out to the home finale against Oklahoma State. The Huskers would draw just under 35,000 for the 1963 home opener but drew at least 35,000 fans from that game forward.

Memorial Stadium's capacity expanded to 44,829 in 1964 and moved up to 50,807 in 1965, 62,644 in 1966 and 64,170 in 1967. The Huskers' first home crowd to top 70,000 was the 1972 home opener against Texas A&M (sellout No. 54) when Memorial Stadium's capacity expanded to 73,650. The first crowd above 80,000 in Memorial Stadium history would not come for 34 more years until Nebraska defeated Louisiana Tech 49-10 on Sept. 2, 2006 (sellout No. 276).

Overall, the most attended game in Memorial Stadium history came last September, when 85,831 were on hand for the Huskers battle with the Virginia Tech Hokies (sellout No. 293).



The above photo is from one of the last non-sellout games at Memorial Stadium. The photo is from the 1962 season - Head Coach Bob Devaney's first at NU - and is believed to have been taken during the Huskers' 53-0 season-opening victory over South Dakota State. Four games later, the stadium was sold out for the tussle with the Tigers and it has been sold out every game since, reaching 300 consecutive games tonight.

This Date in Husker History - Sept. 26

The Huskers are 9-2-1 all-time on Sept. 26, including a 6-0-0 mark at Memorial Stadium. Memorable wins on this date include a 35-28 win at No. 12 Arizona State in 1987 and a 55-7 home win over ninth-ranked Washington in 1998 in the last game the Huskers played on Sept. 26. The losses came at Iowa (27-0 in 1942) and No. 3 Penn State (30-24 in 1981), while the tie came at Illinois in 1953 (21-21). Overall, Nebraska has played 191 all-time games in the month of September, compiling a 148-37-6 record, good for a .792 winning percentage. Nebraska has gone undefeated in the month 42 times.