

Husker Football History

By Mike Babcock, Freelance Journalist

Fans celebrated by waving banners of old gold. "The score stood 10 to nothing in the state university's favor and great and loud were the yells that filled the atmosphere," a newspaper account said.

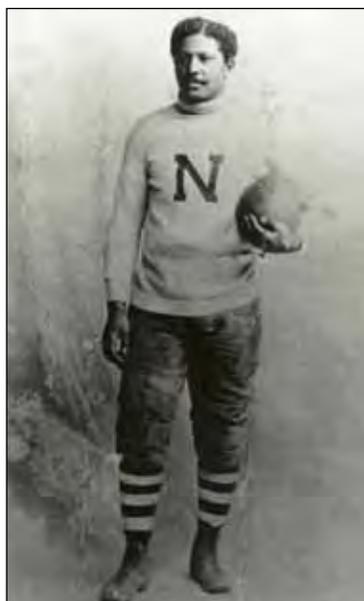
The date was Nov. 27, 1890. The state university was Nebraska, which had just defeated a team representing the Omaha YMCA. The game, composed of a 35-minute first half and a 43-minute second half, was played in Omaha. So began Nebraska's rich football tradition.

It was an abbreviated opening "season." Nebraska's first football team played only one other game, in February of 1891, an 18-0 victory against Doane College in Crete, Neb. Whether or not Dr. Langdon Frothingham, the team's "coach," was still at Nebraska when the team traveled to Crete is unclear. Frothingham, a new faculty member from Harvard, was made the coach primarily because he had brought a football with him. He returned to Boston in 1891, probably before that second game.

Nebraska didn't actually have a football coach until 1893, when Frank Crawford was hired for an amount reported to have been between \$300 and \$500. His salary included room and board. Crawford also played quarterback in at least one game during his brief tenure as coach.

Nebraska's first game against an opponent from outside the state was in 1891, when Iowa won a game played in Omaha, 22-0. The first victory against an out-of-state opponent came in 1892, when George Flippin led Nebraska past Illinois at Lincoln. The score was 6-0.

Flippin was the first African-American athlete at Nebraska and only



George Flippin, 1891-94

the fifth black athlete at a predominantly white university. Because of Flippin's presence on the roster, Missouri refused to play a scheduled game with Nebraska at Omaha in 1892. The result was a 1-0 forfeit.

In the early years, Nebraska's football team had several nicknames, including Tree-planters, Rattlesnake Boys, Antelopes, Old Gold Knights (which didn't work well after the school colors were made scarlet and cream around 1900) and Bugeaters. The team was first called Cornhuskers in 1899. Charles "Cy" Sherman, sports editor of the Nebraska State Journal at the time, assigned the nickname.

Sherman, who later gained national prominence as the sports editor of The Lincoln Star, was known as the "father of the Cornhuskers" and was made an honorary member of the Nebraska letterman's club.

Nebraska was an independent football power in the Midwest by then, under the direction of Coach Walter C. "Bummy" Booth.

"Nebraska occupies a unique position in western football," a newspaper account in 1903 said. "Too strong to find fearful competitors, the Cornhuskers can almost weep with Alexander the Great because they have no more teams to conquer."

Booth coached Nebraska from 1900 to 1905, with his teams compiling a 46-8-1

record. In 1902, a team featuring Johnny Bender and Charles Borg went undefeated, untied and unscored upon. Booth's teams produced a 24-game winning streak - 27 counting exhibition victories against Lincoln High School. The 24-game winning streak stood as a school record until the 1995 season, when a 62-24 victory against Florida in the Fiesta Bowl game extended a Cornhusker winning streak to 25.

The streak reached 26 before ending at Arizona State in 1996.

Booth, a Princeton graduate, "raised Nebraska from a second-rate team among those



The 1905 Nebraska Cornhuskers.

of the Missouri Valley to a position where even the leaders of the Conference look upon her as an opponent to be feared," according to the university's student newspaper in 1905.

Booth's coaching success was soon overshadowed when Ewald O. "Jumbo" Stiehm was hired as coach in 1911. Stiehm's teams, the "Stiehm Rollers," were a combined 35-2-3 in five seasons. He remains the winningest football coach by percentage (.913) in school history.

The "Stiehm Rollers" won five Missouri Valley Conference championships and had a school-record 34-game unbeaten streak. In 1914, they were 7-0-1 and argued that they were deserving of a mythical national title. In 1915, they were even better, going 8-0 and again claiming the right to be called national champions. The Cornhuskers were considered to play in the Rose Bowl game after the 1915 season, but the university's athletic board voted to turn down any such invitation.

During Stiehm's tenure as coach, Nebraska produced its first official All-America players - Vic Halligan and Guy Chamberlin, "The Champ." Chamberlin, who came from Blue Springs, Neb., played two years at Nebraska Wesleyan before being enticed to transfer to Nebraska.

Stiehm left NU after the 1915 season because the university turned down his demand that he be paid an annual salary of \$4,250 to serve as football coach and athletic director - he also coached the basketball team. The Cornhuskers quickly overcame his departure and continued to enjoy national respect. After Coach Fred Dawson's first team defeated Pittsburgh (coached by Pop Warner) 10-0 in 1921, an Eastern newspaper described the mighty Cornhuskers as "Mankilling Mastodons."

As with everything else in this country, Cornhusker football felt the profound effects of World War I. But the end of the war ushered in the Roaring '20s, a time not only of prohibition, flappers and Model T Fords but one in which Nebraska and Notre Dame regularly played football against each other. An 11-game series involving the schools began with a 20-19 Cornhusker victory in Lincoln in 1915 and ended with Nebraska's 17-0 victory at Memorial Stadium in 1925.

The Cornhuskers' only loss in 1921 was against the Fighting Irish, 7-0 at Lincoln. NU handed Notre Dame its only defeat in 1922, winning at South Bend, 14-6, and setting

Milestone Games

1

Nov. 27, 1890
NU 10
Omaha YMCA 0
Omaha, Neb.

100

Oct. 17, 1903
NU 16
Haskell 0
Lincoln, Neb.

200

Oct. 31, 1914
NU 20
Iowa St. 7
Lincoln, Neb.

300

Oct. 15, 1927
NU 58
Grinnell 0
Lincoln, Neb.

400

Oct. 29, 1938
Missouri 13
NU 10
Lincoln, Neb.

500

Oct. 22, 1949
Oklahoma 48
NU 0
Lincoln, Neb.

600

Oct. 24, 1959
Missouri 9
NU 0
Columbia, Mo.

the stage for what was probably the greatest drama of Cornhusker football during the Roaring '20s. On Nov. 10, 1923, before what one newspaper called "the greatest crowd ever assembled in the Missouri Valley to witness a football game" at Memorial Stadium, Nebraska defeated Knute Rockne's "wonder team." The score was 14-7, and the Cornhusker star was Ed Weir, a sophomore from Superior, Neb., who would earn All-America recognition in both 1924 and 1925. Weir led the way to a similarly impressive 14-0 victory against Illinois and Red Grange in the 1925 season-opener at Champaign, Ill.

On Oct. 13, 1923, Nebraska played its first game in Memorial Stadium, which replaced a field that ran east and west just to the south of Memorial Stadium. The Nebraska Athletic Field had been used since 1909. It could accommodate, at most, approximately 10,000 fans, which wasn't enough, given the growing popularity of Nebraska football. The Cornhuskers defeated Oklahoma 24-0 that day in 1923. It would have been an appropriate way to dedicate the stadium. The problem was, the Cornhuskers' new home wasn't officially dedicated until a week later, with a scoreless tie against Kansas. A newspaper account attributed the tie to a "stadium dedication jinx." A year earlier, Nebraska had spoiled the dedication of a new stadium at Kansas by defeating the Jayhawks 28-0.

Dawson, whose teams won three Missouri Valley Conference titles, was succeeded as coach by E.E. Bearg in 1925. Four years later, D.X. Bible arrived.

Bible, who came from Texas A&M, wasn't Nebraska's first choice to replace Bearg. Nebraska tried to lure Rockne from Notre Dame. He declined and suggested the Cornhuskers approach Bible, who had turned A&M into a Southwest Conference powerhouse.

Bible coached the Cornhuskers from 1929 to 1936. His teams won six Big Six titles and featured a number of All-Americans, among them Ray Richards, Hugh Rhea, Lawrence Ely, George Sauer and Sam Francis. Bible's best team probably was the one in 1933, the year Sauer earned All-America recognition. The Cornhuskers finished 8-1, their only loss coming at Pittsburgh.

After the 1936 season, in which Nebraska ranked No. 9 in the first Associated Press poll, Bible left in the same direction from which he had come, accepting a job at Texas. Bible was quickly replaced by Major Lawrence McCeney "Biff" Jones, who had coached at Army, LSU and Oklahoma.

Cornhusker football was important to the state in the late 1930s. With the Great Depression coming to an end, it gave Nebraskans something in which to take pride. Bowl games are taken for granted by Nebraska fans now. The Cornhuskers made an NCAA-record 35 consecutive bowl trips from 1962 to 2003. But Nebraska had never been to a postseason bowl when Jones' fourth team accepted an invitation to play in the Rose Bowl game on Jan. 1, 1941.

The celebration that followed the acceptance of the school's first bowl bid lasted 24 hours in Lincoln, according to newspaper reports. University classes were canceled, and students stormed the state capitol, demanding that the governor lead the singing of the school song, "There Is No Place Like Nebraska."

The 1940 team featured All-Americans Warren Alfson and Forrest Behm. Though it lost, 21-13, to a Stanford team that featured quarterback Frankie Albert and the innovative T-formation offense, it retains a special place in Cornhusker history. Hall of Fame Coach Bob Devaney used to joke that he'd been in the state several years before he found out the Cornhuskers had lost the 1941 Rose Bowl game.

Jones left for military service after a 4-5 season in 1941, the first in a string of losing seasons that didn't end until 1950. After Jones' departure, Nebraska had six head coaches in the next eight years. Among the six was A.J. Lewandowski, a four-sport Cornhusker letterman who, at one time, served not only as head football coach but also head basketball coach, athletic director and athletic department business manager. One of the few bright spots, during an otherwise glum period, was Tom "Train Wreck" Novak, who earned All-America recognition as a senior on a 4-5 team in 1949. Novak's jersey number (60) was the first to be retired by Nebraska.

The 1949 team was the first to be coached by Bill Glassford, who produced three winning seasons in his seven years. Glassford's best team was the one in 1950, which featured Bobby Reynolds, a sophomore from Grand Island, Neb., who rushed for 1,342

yards and scored 157 points. The 1950 Cornhuskers were 6-2-1 and finished second in the Big Seven Conference.

Reynolds was hampered by injuries as a junior and senior and couldn't duplicate the offensive statistics that earned him national recognition and the nickname "Mr. Touchdown" as a sophomore.

Glassford's 1954 team also finished second in the conference and earned a trip to the Orange Bowl because Big Seven champion Oklahoma, in the midst of an NCAA-record 47-game winning streak, wasn't allowed to make a return trip to the bowl under a "no-repeat" rule. Nebraska, which had lost to Coach Bud Wilkinson's Sooners 55-7, didn't fare much better in Miami, losing to Duke 34-7.

Glassford resigned, after considerable controversy and a player revolt, following the 1955 season. Six losing seasons, the last five under Coach Bill Jennings, followed. Jennings was a popular assistant under Pete Elliott, who spent only one season as head coach.

Though Jennings' teams never produced winning records, they had a knack for dramatic upsets, the most notable being a 25-21 Homecoming victory against Oklahoma on Halloween in 1959. The victory ended the Sooners' record of 74 consecutive conference games without defeat. They had won 44 consecutive conference games.

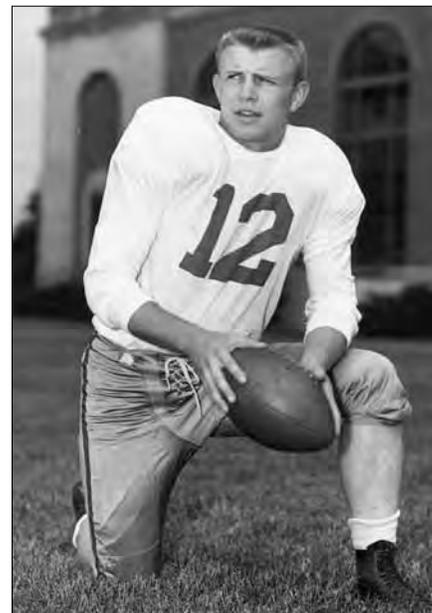
The Cornhuskers opened the 1960 season by defeating fourth-ranked Texas in Austin, 14-13. But such upsets couldn't salvage Jennings' job, and he resigned after a 3-6-1 record in 1961.

Devaney was hired by Athletic Director William H. "Tippy" Dye after a search based on Dye's stated goals of Nebraska's being No. 1 in the nation in football and getting the best football coach in the country, regardless of who he was or where he was. Both goals were achieved.

Jennings was an excellent recruiter, and Devaney inherited talented players when he arrived from Wyoming in 1962. That was apparent from the beginning as Devaney turned the program around immediately. Despite a 47-8-0 record and five bowl appearances in his first five seasons at Nebraska, Devaney had detractors following 6-4 records in 1967 and 1968. The Cornhuskers' recruiting efforts fell off, and some boosters wanted Devaney and his staff fired.

In 1969, the offense was redesigned. The Cornhuskers went to an I-formation with a balanced line, at the suggestion of then-assistant coach Tom Osborne, and recruiting picked up because of the change in offensive philosophy. Nebraska began an NCAA-record streak of nine-win seasons in 1969 (which reached 33 before ending in 2002) and set the stage for back-to-back national championships in 1970 and 1971.

The Cornhuskers won their final seven games in 1969, including a victory against Georgia in the Sun Bowl, to initiate a 32-game unbeaten streak that didn't end until the first game of the 1972 season, Devaney's last year as head coach. He had planned to retire as coach after the 1971 season but was convinced to stay one more year to try to win an unprecedented third consecutive national title.



All-America halfback Bobby Reynolds.

700

Sept. 20, 1969
USC 31
NU 21
Lincoln, Neb.

800

Oct. 1, 1977
NU 31
Indiana 13
Lincoln, Neb.

900

Oct. 19, 1985
NU 28
Missouri 20
Columbia, Mo.

1,000

Nov. 6, 1993
NU 21
Kansas 20
Lawrence, Kan.

1,100

Oct. 20, 2001
NU 41
Texas Tech 31
Lincoln, Neb.

1,200

Oct. 17, 2009
Texas Tech 31
NU 10
Lincoln, Neb.

1,235

Jan. 2, 2012
South Carolina 30
Nebraska 13
Orlando, Fla.

The first championship season, in 1970, came on the heels of a 17-12 victory against Louisiana State in the Orange Bowl. Nebraska went into the game ranked No. 3 in the Associated Press poll, but both teams ahead of the Cornhuskers lost that day. There was no such suspense in 1971. Nebraska began the season ranked No. 2 by the Associated Press and moved up to No. 1 after a 34-7 victory in its opener against Oregon. The Cornhuskers remained atop the AP poll all season, as they defeated second-ranked Oklahoma in what was, and still is, called the "Game of the Century" on Thanksgiving Day in Norman, Okla., and wrapped up the title by defeating second-ranked Alabama 38-6 in the Orange Bowl game on New Year's night.

Big Eight Conference teams finished an unprecedented first (Nebraska), second (Oklahoma) and third (Colorado) in the final AP poll for the 1971 season. The Cornhuskers' Larry Jacobson was voted the Outland Trophy winner. The 1971 Nebraska team is widely regarded as being among the best in college football history.

Cornhusker All-Americans became commonplace during Devaney's tenure as coach. Among the 18 who received such recognition were Johnny Rodgers, who won the Heisman Trophy in 1972, and Rich Glover, who won the Outland Trophy and Lombardi Award that same season.

Devaney, who succeeded Dye as athletic director, picked his own successor as coach - Osborne. And the success continued, uninterrupted. Under Osborne, the Cornhuskers won or shared 13 conference championships and won national championships in 1994, 1995 and 1997.

The 1994 season began in late August at the Kickoff Classic and concluded with a dramatic, come-from-behind, 24-17 victory against Miami in the Orange Bowl game to clinch Osborne's first national championship. The season was full of memorable moments, including a much-publicized quarterback situation, with three different quarterbacks

starting games during the season. At the start of the year, Tommie Frazier led the Huskers. But he was sidelined in midseason by a blood clot problem in his leg. In Frazier's absence, Brook Berringer became the starter. Berringer had problems of his own, suffering a partially collapsed lung, which led to walk-on Matt Turman taking his turn as the starter. Through it all, a dominating offensive line led by Outland Trophy winner Zach Wiegert, and a punishing defense carried the Cornhuskers and allowed them to claim the school's first national championship in 23 seasons.

In 1995, Nebraska became only the ninth major program to win back-to-back national championships since the Associated Press established its rankings in 1936. The Cornhuskers overwhelmed every opponent, including No. 2 Florida in the Fiesta Bowl game, with an offense

that averaged 399.8 rushing yards per game and an aggressive and opportunistic defense.

According to the computer rankings of Jeff Sagarin, published regularly in USA Today, the 1995 Nebraska team was the best in modern collegiate history (post-1956). The 1971 Cornhuskers were a close second in Sagarin's rankings, and the 1972 team, despite finishing 9-2-1, was 10th.

The 1995 national championship might have been an unprecedented third in a row for Nebraska if Byron Bennett's 45-yard field goal attempt with one second remaining in the 1994 Orange Bowl game had been successful. The kick sailed wide left and heavily favored Florida State escaped with an 18-16 victory against a Cornhusker team that had gone through the regular season undefeated and untied.

A restructured defense, which included Butkus Award-winning outside linebacker Trev Alberts, helped put Nebraska in a position to play for the 1993 season's national championship.

The last time an Osborne-coached team had been in a position to win a national title was in 1983, when the Huskers began the season in the first Kickoff Classic ranked No. 1. After 12 consecutive victories, a missed two-point conversion at the end of the Orange Bowl game against Miami cost Nebraska the national title, 31-30. But Osborne's decision to go for two points, instead of settling for an almost-certain tie, earned him national respect. The 1983 team, nicknamed "The Scoring Explosion," featured a backfield that included the "Triplets" - Turner Gill, Mike Rozier and Irving Fryar.

Rozier set the school record for rushing yards in a season, gaining 2,148 to lead the nation, and was awarded the second Heisman Trophy in Cornhusker history. Offensive guard Dean Steinkuhler became Nebraska's third winner of both the Outland Trophy and Lombardi Award in 1983. Dave Rimington won both awards (the Outland was his second) in 1982, playing for a team that probably was more balanced, overall, than the 1983 team. The 1982 Cornhuskers also finished with a 12-1 record, but their loss came early in the season, 27-24 to Penn State at State College, Pa. That Nebraska team was ranked No. 3 in the final national polls of both major wire services.

Nebraska won three consecutive Big Eight championships from 1981 to 1983 and shared the title with Oklahoma in 1984. The Cornhuskers entered the Big 12 as winners of the last five Big Eight titles and reached the first Big 12 Championship Game in St. Louis. Had they not been upset by Texas, they would have played for yet another national championship in the 1997 Sugar Bowl game.

Nebraska returned to the Big 12 playoff in 1997 and defeated Texas A&M for its first title in the new conference on the way to becoming only the second major college program since national rankings were established by the Associated Press to win three national titles in four seasons. Notre Dame won national championships in 1946, 1947 and 1949.

A 27-14 victory at Washington, which was ranked No. 2 or No. 3 in the nation depending on the poll, certified the Cornhuskers as national championship contenders.



Hall of Fame Coach Bob Devaney.

All-Time Sagarin Rankings

All-time college football rankings according to the Jeff Sagarin computer poll. The following are the all-time highest-rated teams since 1956.

	Year	Rating	W-L-T
1. Nebraska	1995	117.05	12-0-0
2. Nebraska	1971	116.47	13-0-0
3. Mississippi	1959	109.74	10-1-0
4. Oklahoma	1971	109.68	11-1-0
5. Ohio State	1973	109.51	10-0-1
6. Washington	1991	109.47	12-0-0
7. Oklahoma	1973	109.40	10-0-1
8. Oklahoma	1974	108.19	11-0-0
9. USC	1972	107.66	12-0-0
10. Nebraska	1972	106.96	9-2-1
11. Oklahoma	1972	106.50	11-1-0
12. Florida State	1987	106.44	11-1-0
13. Miami	2001	106.36	12-0-0
14. Oklahoma	1986	106.33	11-1-0
15. Notre Dame	1966	106.32	9-0-1
16. Notre Dame	1970	106.09	10-1-0
17. Penn State	1994	105.82	12-0-0
18. Florida State	1993	105.28	12-1-0
19. Nebraska	1997	104.99	13-0-0
20. Alabama	1971	104.61	11-1-0
21. Miami	1988	104.33	11-1-0
22. Texas	1970	104.22	10-1-0
23. Alabama	2011	104.17	12-1-0
24. Syracuse	1959	104.13	11-0-0
25. Notre Dame	1988	103.86	12-0-0
26. Miami	1987	103.79	12-0-0
27. Nebraska	1970	103.58	11-0-1

Milestone Victories

1

Nov. 27, 1890
NU 10
Omaha YMCA 0
Lincoln, Neb.

100

Nov. 16, 1907
NU 63
Denver 0
Denver, Colo.

200

Oct. 31, 1925
NU 12
Oklahoma 0
Lincoln, Neb.

250

Nov. 25, 1933
NU 7
Iowa 6
Lincoln, Neb.

300

Oct. 24, 1942
NU 7
Oklahoma 0
Norman, Okla.

400

Oct. 23, 1965
NU 38
Colorado 13
Lincoln, Neb.

500

Oct. 16, 1976
NU 51
Kansas St. 0
Lincoln, Neb.



Hall of Fame Coach Tom Osborne.

A 45-38 overtime victory at Missouri kept their title hopes alive. And a 42-17 victory against No. 3 Tennessee in the Orange Bowl boosted them to the top of the USA Today/ESPN coaches' poll.

The Missouri game was the most memorable. The Cornhuskers trailed 38-31 with 1:02 remaining, no timeouts and a first down at their own 33-yard line. Quarterback Scott Frost took them down the field in seven plays, all passes, the last deflected by Shevin Wiggins and caught by Matt Davison.

Davison's cradling of the ball in the end zone, with no time remaining, immediately went down among the greatest plays in Nebraska football history, along with Rodgers' punt return for a touchdown in the 1971 "Game of the Century" and Jerry Tagge's stretch for a touchdown in the fourth quarter of the 1971 Orange Bowl game to give the Cornhuskers their first national championship.

But the 1997 season's most significant event occurred on Dec. 10, when Osborne announced he would step aside after the bowl game, to be replaced by long-time assistant Frank Solich, a three-year Cornhusker letterman as a fullback for Devaney and a co-captain as a senior in 1965.

Osborne was head coach for 25 years, the longest tenure in school history. He was Nebraska's 25th head coach, not counting Frothingham, who was probably the "coach" of the 1890 team in name only. Under Osborne's direction, the program achieved remarkable success, exceeding any in its rich history. The Cornhuskers were 255-49-3 under Osborne, a winning percentage of .836. The 255 victories are the sixth-most all-time among major college football coaches. The winning percentage ranks fifth all-time. His achievements are such that the National Football Foundation waived its three-year waiting period so that he could be inducted into its Hall of Fame in December of 1998.

In Osborne's final five seasons, Nebraska was a combined 60-3.

"I want to make sure when I leave this program I leave it in the best shape I possibly can," Osborne said. "So I'm very anxious that anybody who is thinking about going to the University of Nebraska understands that there probably isn't a whole lot (that's) going to change. One guy's moving out. But in terms of the overall program, in terms of stability, in terms of our ability to get the job done, not much is going to change."

To that end, Osborne, with Athletic Director Bill Byrne's sanction, picked long-time assistant and former Cornhusker fullback Frank Solich as his replacement. Despite being beset by injuries, Solich's first team won nine games in 1998 to claim Nebraska's 30th consecutive bowl trip. His second team went 12-1, avenging its only loss to Texas

in the Big 12 Championship Game and defeating Tennessee in the Fiesta Bowl game to finish No. 2 (ESPN/Coaches) and No. 3 (AP) in the national rankings.

The 1999 team may have been Solich's best, even though the 2001 team, led by NU's third Heisman Trophy winner Eric Crouch, played for the BCS national title in the Rose Bowl against a Miami team laden with NFL talent. The trip to Pasadena for the "granddaddy" of all bowl games was Nebraska's first since its first-ever bowl trip, following the 1940 season.

Defining plays in Crouch's Heisman Trophy dash included a 95-yard touchdown run against Missouri and a 63-yard scoring catch in a 20-10 upset of No. 2 Oklahoma.

Solich coached for two more seasons, making dramatic changes on his staff following a 7-7 record in 2002. His 2003 team went 9-3 in the regular season, before adding an Alamo Bowl win.

Despite going 58-19 (.753 winning percentage) in his six seasons at the helm of the Huskers, Solich was removed by first-year Athletic Director Steve Pederson following Nebraska's 31-22 win at Colorado on Nov. 28, 2003.

With Solich's departure, defensive coordinator Bo Pelini took the reins of the NU program for the Huskers' 2003 Alamo Bowl battle against Michigan State. Pelini's defense, which tied a school record by forcing 47 turnovers, including a school-record and nation-leading 32 interceptions and a nation-leading plus-23 turnover margin in 2003, silenced a high-powered Spartan passing attack in a 17-3 Husker victory.

Pelini's first stint as Nebraska's head coach lasted just one game. Pederson hired Bill Callahan, who had led the NFL's Oakland Raiders to Super Bowl XXXVII following the 2002 season.

Callahan was announced as NU's 27th head coach 41 days after Solich's removal. He brought the West Coast Offense to Nebraska, and after a 5-6 record in his first season in 2004, led NU to an 8-4 mark and a 32-28 win over Michigan in the 2005 Alamo Bowl. NU won the Big 12 North Division title under Callahan in 2006, finishing with a 9-5 record after a loss to No. 10 Auburn in the 2007 Cotton Bowl.

The Huskers continued to rewrite NU's passing records with quarterbacks Sam Keller and Joe Ganz, but Nebraska's historically dominant Blackshirt defense struggled in 2007. The Huskers lost six of their final seven games to finish 5-7. Pederson was removed as NU's athletic director in October, and Chancellor Harvey Perlman brought Osborne back as the Huskers' new athletic director. Osborne replaced Callahan, who had led NU to its first two losing seasons in more than 45 years, with a familiar face. Just eight days after Callahan was removed and just nine days after NU's season-ending 65-51 loss to Colorado, Pelini and his hard-hitting defensive style returned to Nebraska.

Osborne officially introduced Pelini as NU's head coach on Dec. 2, 2007, a day after Pelini's LSU defense helped the Tigers to the SEC title. Five weeks later, Pelini guided a swarming LSU squad to a win in the BCS National Championship Game.

"We were looking for someone who can inspire confidence and get players to play with great effort," Osborne said. "We also wanted our new head coach to understand our traditions, including the importance of our walk-on program and the importance of football in this state."

A new page in Nebraska history was turned with Pelini's hiring. The first chapter in that history resulted in a 9-4 season in 2008, that included a Gator Bowl victory over Clemson. Pelini's Huskers, powered by a stifling defense led by Outland, Lombardi, Nagurski and Bednarik award-winning defensive tackle Ndamukong Suh, won the Big 12 North in 2009. Along the way, the Huskers celebrated the NCAA-record 300th consecutive sellout at Memorial Stadium with a 55-0 shutout of Louisiana-Lafayette on Sept. 26, 2009. Nebraska also capped a 10-win season with a 33-0 win over Arizona in the Holiday Bowl. NU added a 10-win season and a Big 12 North title in 2010, after announcing it would be Nebraska's last season in the Big 12. Nebraska moved to the Big Ten Conference in 2011 and notched a fourth straight nine-win campaign. The Huskers finished 9-4 overall and played in the Capital One Bowl in Florida Citrus Bowl Stadium on Jan. 2.

With 122 years and 1,235 games in its storied past, Nebraska hopes to continue to grow a lasting tradition of success in the Big Ten Conference in 2012.

Consecutive Sellout Games

600

Oct. 18, 1986
NU 48
Missouri 17
Lincoln, Neb.

700

Oct. 5, 1996
NU 39
Kansas St. 3
Manhattan, Kan.

800

Oct. 14, 2006
NU 21
Kansas St. 3
Manhattan, Kan.

1

Nov. 3, 1962
Missouri 16
NU 7

100

Sept. 29, 1979
NU 42
Penn St. 17

200

Oct. 29, 1994
NU 24
Colorado 7

300

Sept. 26, 2009
NU 55
Louisiana-Lafayette 0

1970 National Champions – 11-0-1

Early in the 1970 season, Jerry Murtaugh predicted Nebraska would win the national championship. Murtaugh was a senior linebacker and co-captain who, in just three seasons, set the Cornhusker career record for tackles. It took more than 30 years before Murtaugh's mark was finally surpassed by Barrett Ruud.

It was obvious that Murtaugh was capable of backing up whatever he said, and Murtaugh and the Huskers provided plenty of support for his statement on the field. Nebraska had been 9-2 the previous season, winning its final seven games, including a decisive 45-6 victory against Georgia in the Sun Bowl.

After the Sun Bowl game, Georgia coach Vince Dooley said the Cornhuskers hadn't belonged in El Paso, Texas. They deserved better competition than his team could provide.

Still, 1970 was a new season. And though Nebraska had several starters returning on offense, Murtaugh was one of only three defensive starters returning. Dave Walline and Jim Anderson were the others.

Besides, winning a national championship wasn't something

over which a team had complete control. It would depend not only on being successful, but also on the votes of writers and broadcasters in the Associated Press poll or of selected coaches in the United Press International poll.

Two games into the season, Murtaugh's brash prediction became a longshot, at best. After opening with a 36-12 victory against Wake Forest, the ninth-ranked Cornhuskers played Southern California to a 21-21 tie at the LA Coliseum. The Trojans tied the score with 8:16 remaining, after a failed 21-yard field goal attempt, resulting from a poor center snap, kept Nebraska from putting the game away.

"We should have won the game," Johnny Rodgers said years later. Rodgers was a sophomore in 1970, his first varsity season.

A tie at USC was certainly no disgrace. Coach John McKay's team was ranked No. 3. Nebraska even moved up in the next week's Associated Press poll. But No. 8 was still a long way from No. 1.

And the Cornhuskers' record had a blemish, no matter how slight. Nebraska returned to Memorial Stadium to defeat Army 28-0 the next week, beginning what would be a 23-game winning streak and include not one but two national championships.

The Cornhuskers rolled through the Big Eight, moving up to No. 3 in the AP rankings after a 51-13 victory against No. 20 Kansas State in the next-to-last game of the regular season. Nebraska intercepted Wildcat quarterback Lynn Dickey a school-record seven times, and Cornhusker I-back Joe Orduna rushed for 105 yards and four touchdowns against what had been the conference's best defense.

Orduna, a senior who sat out the 1969 season as a medical redshirt, led Nebraska in rushing in 1970.

A week later, the Cornhuskers won the Big Eight championship outright by defeating Oklahoma 28-21 at Memorial Stadium. Though unranked, the young Sooners could have earned a share of the conference title with a victory. Nebraska had to come from behind twice during the game. Junior quarterback Jerry Tagge scored the winning touchdown, capping a 53-yard drive, with 7:42 remaining.

Nebraska finished 10-0-1, its first undefeated regular season since 1965, and ranked No. 3 in both wire service polls, behind two unbeaten and untied teams: No. 1 Texas and No. 2 Ohio State. The UPI didn't conduct a poll after bowl games, so Texas was its national champion for 1970.

The Cornhuskers were matched against No. 5 LSU in the Orange Bowl game on New Year's night. Texas played Notre Dame, which had been No. 1 until a late-season loss

to USC, in a rematch of the previous year's Cotton Bowl. And Ohio State drew Stanford in the Rose Bowl.

Nebraska's hopes of earning the AP version of the national championship were slim. Both Texas and Ohio State would have to lose, and the Cornhuskers would have to win. But it happened.

Notre Dame upset Texas 24-11, and Stanford staged a fourth-quarter comeback to defeat Ohio State 27-17. Nebraska learned of the latter result during the Orange Bowl's pregame warmups.

The Cornhuskers appeared ready to seize their opportunity, jumping ahead of LSU 10-0 in the first 13 minutes of the Orange Bowl. But the Tigers controlled the ball during the second and third quarters, scoring on a 31-yard pass on the final play of the third quarter to take a 12-10 lead.

Nebraska responded by driving 67 yards for the winning touchdown, scored by Tagge from one yard away with 8:50 remaining. Junior linebacker Bob Terrio, a junior college transfer who had arrived at Nebraska as a fullback, preserved the victory by intercepting a Bert Jones pass with 45 seconds left.

Notre Dame Coach Ara Parseghian argued that his team should be the AP champion because it had defeated No. 1 Texas. But NU was a decisive No. 1 in the final AP poll. "I was afraid Ara's comments might influence the voters, but I guess the writers are too smart to take some coach's word," Cornhusker Coach Bob Devaney said. "The writers knew who was best."

Nebraska also received an endorsement from President Richard Nixon, who proclaimed NU No. 1, to the delight of 8,000 fans at the NU Coliseum, on Jan. 14, 1971. Murtaugh and fullback Dan Schneiss, NU's co-captains, joined Devaney with Nixon.

It was just as Murtaugh had predicted.

1970 National Champions (11-0-1)

Head Coach: Bob Devaney

Captains: Dan Schneiss and Jerry Murtaugh

Date	Opponent	Result
S 12	Wake Forest	W, 36-12
S 19	at USC	T, 21-21
S 26	Army	W, 28-0
O 3	at Minnesota	W, 35-10
O 10	Missouri	W, 21-7
O 17	at Kansas	W, 41-20
O 24	Oklahoma State	W, 65-31
O 31	at Colorado	W, 29-13
N 7	at Iowa State	W, 54-29
N 14	Kansas State	W, 51-13
N 21	Oklahoma	W, 28-21
	Orange Bowl	
J 1	Louisiana State	W, 17-12



Husker quarterback Jerry Tagge stretches the ball over the goal line for the winning touchdown in the Orange Bowl victory over Louisiana State.

1971 National Champions – 13-0

Nebraska's 1971 season came down to a single game at Owen Field in Norman, Okla., on Thanksgiving Day. At least, that's how it is most often remembered. The top-ranked Cornhuskers played No. 2 Oklahoma in what still is regularly regarded as college football's "Game of the Century."

1971 National Champions (13-0)

Head Coach: Bob Devaney
Captains: Jerry Tagge and Jim Anderson

Date	Opponent	Result
S 11	Oregon	W, 34-7
S 18	Minnesota	W, 35-7
S 25	Texas A&M	W, 34-7
O 2	Utah State	W, 42-6
O 9	at Missouri	W, 36-0
O 16	Kansas	W, 55-0
O 23	at Oklahoma State	W, 41-13
O 30	Colorado	W, 31-7
N 6	Iowa State	W, 37-0
N 13	at Kansas State	W, 44-17
N 25	at Oklahoma	W, 35-31
D 4	at Hawaii	W, 45-3
Orange Bowl		
J 1	Alabama	W, 38-6

The teams were undefeated and untied, and they included 17 of 22 first-team All-Big Eight players. Nebraska had the nation's top-ranked defense. Oklahoma had its most productive offense.

The cover of Sports Illustrated (Nov. 22, 1971) published the week of the game included photographs of Nebraska linebacker Bob Terrio and Oklahoma running back Greg Pruitt, nose-to-nose, beneath the headline: "Irresistible Oklahoma Meets Immovable Nebraska."

The game was equal to its buildup. Johnny Rodgers opened the scoring less than four minutes into the first quarter with a 72-yard punt return, and Rich Sanger finished it by kicking an extra point with 1:38 remaining,

following a dramatic, 74-yard drive capped by Jeff Kinney's two-yard run.

Rodgers' punt return is among the most memorable moments of the game. But he also made a key play to keep the winning touchdown drive alive, improvising on a pass route to get open on third-and-eight, then making a diving catch of a Jerry Tagge pass for a 12-yard gain and a first down.

Cornhusker middle guard Rich Glover, who made 22 tackles that afternoon, put the finishing touches on Nebraska's 35-31 victory, deflecting a Jack Mildren fourth-down pass with barely a minute left.

Except for the Oklahoma game, Nebraska was never seriously challenged in its quest to repeat as national champion. The Cornhuskers overwhelmed 12 other opponents, including Alabama in the Orange Bowl, to earn a place among the best teams in college football history.

Coach Bear Bryant's Crimson Tide went to Miami undefeated, untied and ranked No. 2. The Tide left a 38-6 loser, providing proper payback for Nebraska's 39-28 and 34-7 bowl losses to Alabama following the 1965 and 1966 seasons. The first of those losses, in the 1966 Orange Bowl game, cost Coach Bob Devaney's Cornhuskers a perfect season and probably a national championship.

Although Nebraska averaged what was then a school-record 437.7 yards on offense, including a Big Eight-leading 179.3 yards passing, and ranked third nationally in scoring, averaging 39.1 points per game, it was defense that set apart the Cornhuskers - as the Sports Illustrated headline pointed out.

Nebraska ranked second in the nation in rushing defense (85.9 ypg), third in scoring defense (8.2 ppg) and fifth in total defense (202.9 ypg). The Blackshirts included seven first-team All-Big Eight selections, four players who would earn consensus All-America recognition during their careers and two Outland Trophy winners: Glover and tackle Larry Jacobson. Glover would win both the Outland and Lombardi awards in 1972. They were joined in the starting lineup by junior end Willie Harper, like Glover, a two-time All-American. John Dutton, an All-American in 1973, was a sophomore backup.

Besides Glover, Jacobson and Harper, the other first-team all-conference defenders were Terrio, Jim Anderson, Bill Kosch and Joe Blahak. Anderson, Kosch and Blahak played in the secondary.

Anderson and Tagge, one of five Cornhuskers on the All-Big Eight first-team offense, were the captains. Both were from West High School in Green Bay, Wis., as was starting monster back Dave Mason, a junior who had sat out the 1970 season as a medical redshirt.

The other first-team offensive players were Rodgers, Kinney, Carl Johnson and Dick Rupert.

The Cornhusker defense was opportunistic as well as immovable, contributing to a school-record plus-26 turnovers. Nebraska recovered 20 opponent fumbles and intercepted 27 passes.

Nebraska was No. 2 in the Associated Press preseason rankings but moved to No. 1 after opening with a 34-7 victory against Oregon at Memorial Stadium. Bobby Moore, now known as Ahmad Rashad, scored the Ducks' lone touchdown with just over three minutes remaining in the game.

Only three opponents scored more than one touchdown against the Cornhuskers. Oklahoma State and Kansas State each managed two touchdowns, and Oklahoma, of course, scored four. The only time all season that Nebraska even trailed during a game was against the Sooners.

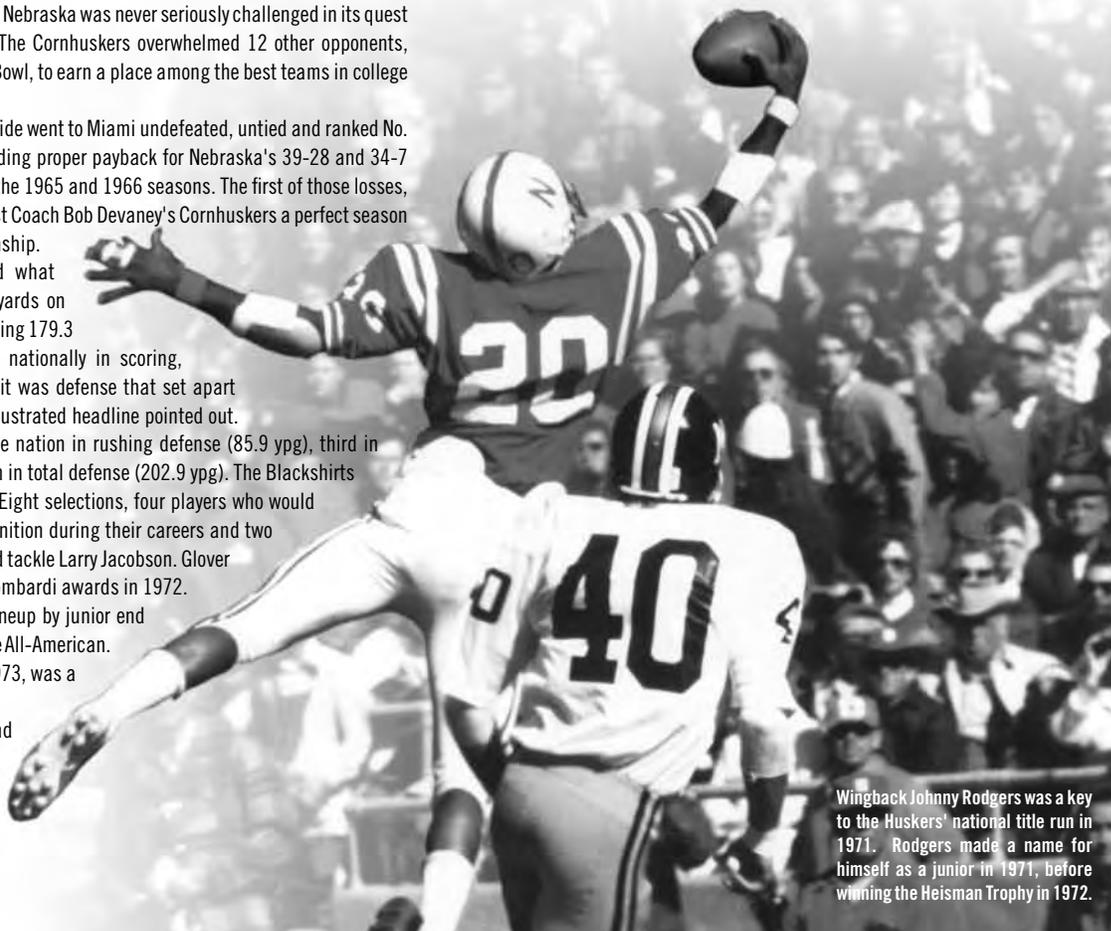
The Cornhuskers opened conference play with back-to-back shutouts against Missouri (36-0) and Kansas (55-0), during a stretch in which they posted 12 consecutive scoreless quarters.

In addition to everything else, the Cornhuskers almost always had good field position because of the punt and kickoff returns of Rodgers, a key to their success, according to Tom Osborne, an assistant who designed and coordinated the offense.

"As great as that team was, take Johnny Rodgers out of there on kickoff and punt returns, and it probably wouldn't have gone 13-0," Osborne said.

Nebraska extended its winning streak to 23 games and its unbeaten streak to 32 games in 1971. Repeating as national champions "wasn't automatic," Rodgers said.

But going into the season, "we were pretty doggone confident."



Wingback Johnny Rodgers was a key to the Huskers' national title run in 1971. Rodgers made a name for himself as a junior in 1971, before winning the Heisman Trophy in 1972.

1994 National Champions – 13-0

Byron Bennett's 45-yard field goal attempt sailed wide left in the final second of Nebraska's 18-16 loss to Florida State in the 1994 Orange Bowl game. With that miss, an 11-game Cornhusker winning streak ended. And the run to Coach Tom Osborne's first national championship began.

1994 National Champions (13-0)

Head Coach: Tom Osborne

Captains: Terry Connealy, Ed Stewart, Zach Wiegert, and Rob Zatechka

Date	Opponent	Result
A 28	West Virginia	W, 31-0
S 8	at Texas Tech	W, 42-16
S 17	UCLA	W, 49-21
S 24	Pacific	W, 70-21
O 1	Wyoming	W, 42-32
O 8	Oklahoma State	W, 32-3
O 15	at Kansas State	W, 17-6
O 22	at Missouri	W, 42-7
O 29	Colorado	W, 24-7
N 5	Kansas	W, 45-17
N 12	at Iowa State	W, 28-12
N 25	at Oklahoma	W, 13-3
	Orange Bowl	
J 1	Miami	W, 24-17

Nebraska's focus for the 1994 season was finishing the business that had been left incomplete on the night of Jan. 1, 1994, in Miami. The actual process started with a 31-0 victory against West Virginia in the Kickoff Classic in late August, and it concluded with a come-from-behind, 24-17 victory against Miami, on the Hurricanes' home field, in the 1995 Orange Bowl game. To a degree, that game characterized the season.

An important subplot of 1994 involved the Cornhusker quarterbacks. Junior Tommie Frazier, a two-year starter, opened the season as if he might run away with the Heisman Trophy before being sidelined by blood

In many ways, Minter was to the defense what Frazier was to the offense. His loss was significant, a fact underscored during an unexpectedly close 42-32 victory against pass-happy Wyoming.

The Cornhuskers dropped to No. 3 in the AP poll after the Kansas State victory, before finally moving to No. 1 following the Colorado game. The Buffaloes came to Lincoln undefeated, untied and ranked No. 2 by the AP and No. 3 by USA Today/CNN. Nebraska was No. 2 according to the coaches. The Cornhuskers remained No. 2 in the USA Today/CNN rankings another week, before ascending to the top spot on the strength of a 45-17 victory over Kansas, despite a Penn State victory against Indiana.

Nebraska earned the voters' respect with an offense that featured one of the best lines in school history and a new 4-3 defense that allowed only 55 points in conference play. Led by linebacker Ed Stewart, a consensus All-American, the Cornhuskers ranked second in the nation in scoring defense, fourth in total defense and rushing defense and 10th in pass defense.

The offensive line included Outland Trophy winner Zach Wiegert at tackle. Along with winning the Outland, Wiegert was a consensus first-team All-American. His linemate Brenden Stai earned All-America honors of his own at guard.

Rob Zatechka, the other tackle, was a four-time academic All-Big Eight selection who graduated with a perfect 4.0 grade-point average in biological sciences. Along with Joel Wilks, the other guard, and center Aaron Graham, the only non-senior among the starters, the group was nicknamed the "Pipeline."

Nebraska led the nation in rushing, with sophomore Lawrence Phillips gaining 1,722 yards, the third-highest single-season total in Cornhusker history. He finished eighth in the Heisman Trophy voting.

Phillips, Graham, Wiegert and Stai all earned first-team all-conference honors on offense.

Stewart, Troy Dumas, Donta Jones, Barron Miles and Tyrone Williams represented the defense on the All-Big Eight first team. Stewart, Wiegert, Zatechka and Terry Connealy were the Husker captains.

A crowd estimated at 14,000 to 15,000 stood in line and braved frigid temperatures for an opportunity to cheer the Cornhuskers at the Bob Devaney Sports Center on their return from Miami.

"We didn't just win this for ourselves, we won this for the whole state of Nebraska," Connealy said.

clot problems in his right knee after the fourth game.

Frazier's misfortune represented an opportunity for junior Brook Berringer, who came off the bench to lead Nebraska to the Big Eight championship and the Orange Bowl game. Berringer was 7-0 as a starter, passing for 1,295 yards and 10 touchdowns, in what amounted to only eight full games. He threw just three passes in the first three games.

When Berringer was slowed by a partially collapsed lung, a problem that occurred in back-to-back games, sophomore walk-on Matt Turman stepped up and directed the Cornhuskers. Although Berringer had been cleared to play, Turman gained a 7-6 lead against Kansas State at Manhattan that ended 17-6.

Turman had come on to replace Berringer the previous week, directing Nebraska to 23 second-half points in a 32-3 victory against Oklahoma State in the Cornhuskers' Big Eight opener.

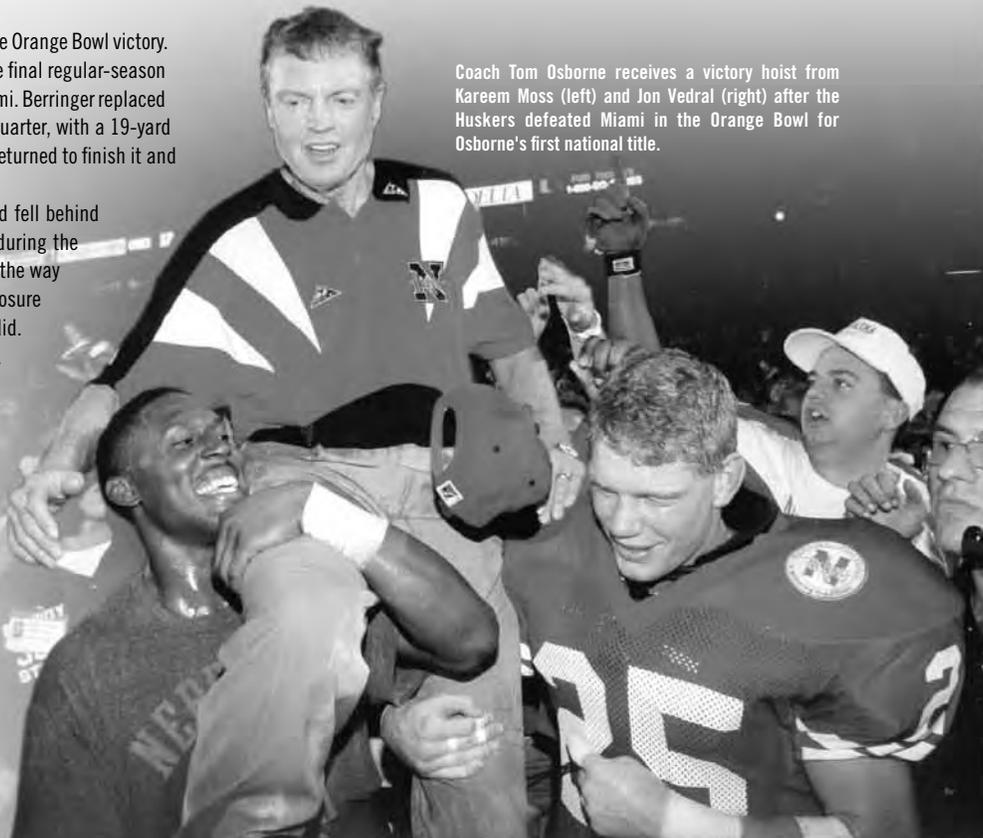
The quarterback sequence was somewhat similar in the Orange Bowl victory. Frazier, who had been included on the travel roster for the final regular-season game at Oklahoma (but did not play), started against Miami. Berringer replaced him and got Nebraska on the scoreboard in the second quarter, with a 19-yard touchdown pass to tight end Mark Gilman. Then Frazier returned to finish it and earn game MVP honors.

Nebraska trailed the Hurricanes 10-7 at halftime and fell behind 17-7 less than two minutes into the third quarter. But during the intermission, Osborne had described to the Cornhuskers the way the second half would go if they maintained their composure and continued to play smart physical Husker football. They did.

Afterward, Osborne's halftime speech was made public. It was eerily prophetic.

Even though Nebraska finished its business by going 13-0, it remained for voters in the Associated Press and USA Today/CNN polls to certify the Cornhuskers as national champions. Penn State also went through the season undefeated and untied at 12-0. The Nittany Lions argued to no avail.

Nebraska began the season ranked No. 4 by the Associated Press, moved to No. 1 after the Kickoff Classic, then inexplicably dropped to No. 2 following a 42-16 victory at Texas Tech. Sophomore safety Mike Minter suffered a season-ending knee injury during the game televised by ESPN.



Coach Tom Osborne receives a victory hoist from Kareem Moss (left) and Jon Vedral (right) after the Huskers defeated Miami in the Orange Bowl for Osborne's first national title.

1995 National Champions – 12-0

Tom Osborne's 23rd Nebraska team was arguably his best. The 1995 Cornhuskers were among the best in college football history.

Though such a sweeping assertion cannot be proven, it can be supported. Nebraska's 1995 national championship team was No. 1 on a list of the top major college teams since 1956. The list was compiled by computer analyst Jeff Sagarin, whose rankings are regularly published in USA Today.

The 1971 Cornhuskers were No. 2 according to Sagarin's power ratings. Both were well ahead of the other teams on the list, which also includes the 1997, 1972 and 1970 Huskers among the top 26.

Nebraska was never seriously challenged in 1995, as it extended a school-record winning streak to 25 games and repeated as national champion – something that has been accomplished only eight other times since the Associated Press initiated its national college football rankings in 1936.

The closest any opponent could come to the Cornhuskers was 14 points. But even that was deceptive.

1995 National Champions (12-0)		
Head Coach: Tom Osborne		
Captains: Phil Ellis, Mark Gilman, Aaron Graham, Christian Peter and Tony Veland.		
Date	Opponent	Result
A 31	at Oklahoma State	W, 64-21
S 9	at Michigan State	W, 50-10
S 16	Arizona State	W, 77-28
S 23	Pacific	W, 49-7
S 30	Washington State	W, 35-21
O 14	Missouri	W, 57-0
O 21	Kansas State	W, 49-25
O 28	at Colorado	W, 44-21
N 4	Iowa State	W, 73-14
N 11	at Kansas	W, 41-3
N 24	Oklahoma	W, 37-0
Fiesta Bowl		
J 2	Florida	W, 62-24

Washington State trailed Nebraska 28-7 after three quarters, in the fifth game of the season. The Cornhuskers scored 20 points in the second quarter to overcome a 7-0 first quarter deficit.

After that, the outcome was never in serious doubt. The final score was 35-21.

Nebraska, which began the season ranked No. 2 by the Associated Press, didn't move to No. 1 until back-to-back victories against No. 8 Kansas State (49-25) and No. 7 Colorado (44-21). After completing a third consecutive undefeated and untied regular season and winning a fifth consecutive Big Eight championship, including four in a row outright, the Cornhuskers eliminated any doubt about their claim to a second consecutive national title by overwhelming No. 2 Florida, 62-24, in the Fiesta Bowl.

Despite the Cornhuskers' success, the 1995 season was one of mixed emotions, resulting from much-publicized off-the-field problems.

"It was a terrible year, and it was a great year," Osborne said after the Fiesta Bowl. "It was taxing. On the other hand, it was very gratifying to work with a group of players who had the kind of focus and drive to carry them through. That was the redeeming factor.

"There were times I was running on empty. I take my spiritual life very seriously. I relied on my faith more than I ever have. I was grateful for the sustaining strength that was there."

The star-crossed nature of the 1995 team was further underscored in the spring, when Brook Berringer, a quarterback who had just completed his eligibility, died in the crash of a light plane.

Osborne again had to turn to his faith to handle the tragedy.

"The Brook I knew, there was nothing he could have done better," Osborne said. "The length (of his life) was not what you would have liked. But the quality couldn't have been better."

Berringer, who had stepped in for an injured Tommie Frazier during the 1994 national championship season, accepted his role without complaint and contributed as a proven backup in 1995.

Frazier, fully recovered from the blood clot problems that sidelined him much of his junior season, set the Husker career record for total offense (5,476)

and touchdowns produced (79), which were later broken by 2001 Heisman Trophy winner Eric Crouch. Frazier earned All-America recognition, finished second to Ohio State's Eddie George in balloting for the Heisman and received the most valuable player award in the Fiesta Bowl game.

Frazier, whose record in four years as a starter was 33-3, established himself among the best quarterbacks in Cornhusker history.

"I would say if I were to choose one player who has had the most impact on the outcome of the greatest number of games over the longest period of time since I've been at Nebraska, it would be Tommie Frazier," said Osborne, who began as a graduate assistant in 1962.

Under Frazier's direction, Nebraska's offense was even more productive than that of the "Scoring Explosion" team in 1983. The Cornhuskers ranked No. 1 in the nation in both rushing (399.8) and scoring (52.4) and No. 2 in total offense (556.3). The 1983 team was slightly better rushing the ball, averaging a school-record 401.7 yards, but it averaged slightly fewer points (52.0) and total yards (546.7).

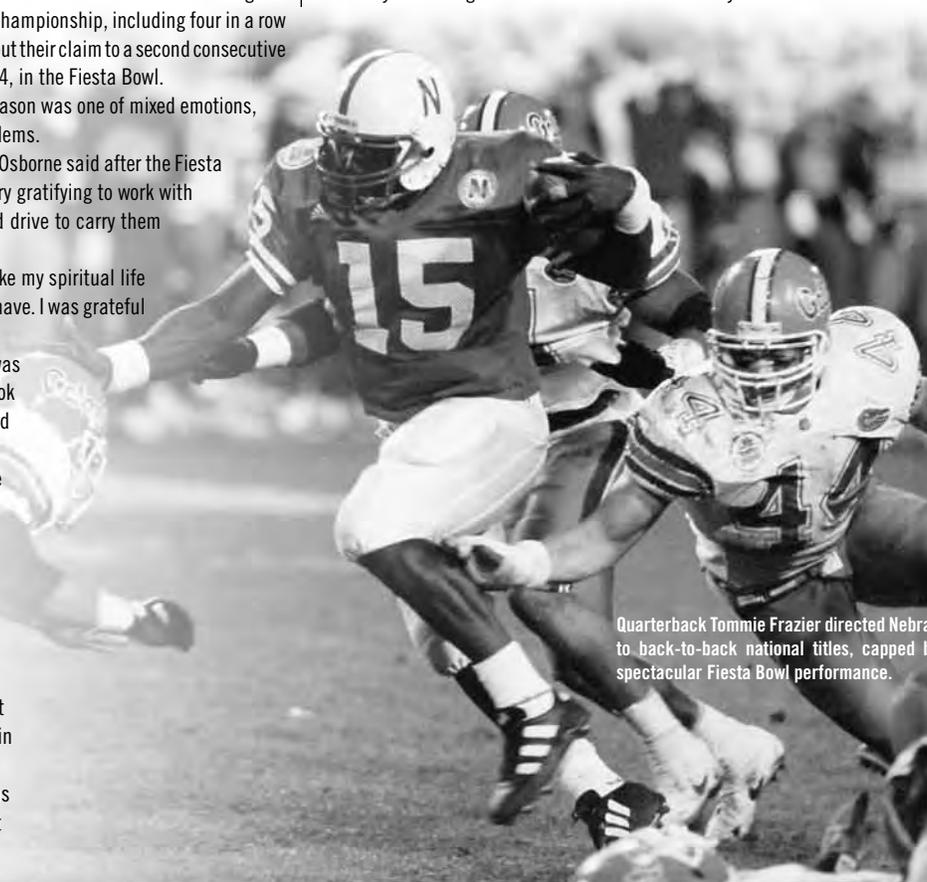
Ahman Green, who began fall camp down the list on the depth chart, became the starting I-back and broke the school rushing record for a freshman. He gained 1,086 yards and scored 12 touchdowns.

Green would have broken the school scoring record for a freshman were it not for Kris Brown, the place-kicker. Brown, like Green a true freshman, scored 97 points – a school record for kicking.

In addition to Frazier, center Aaron Graham and rush end Jared Tomich earned first-team All-America honors. Graham also was a Cornhusker co-captain, along with tight end Mark Gilman, defensive tackle Christian Peter, safety Tony Veland and linebacker Phil Ellis.

Tomich, a junior who originally walked on, was among five Blackshirts who received first-team all-conference recognition. The other defensive players were Peter, linebacker Terrell Farley, rush end Grant Wistrom and cornerback Tyrone Williams. Frazier and Graham were joined on the All-Big Eight first-team offense by Green, tackle Eric Anderson and guards Chris Dishman and Aaron Taylor.

Rarely has college football seen such a team. Maybe never.



Quarterback Tommie Frazier directed Nebraska to back-to-back national titles, capped by spectacular Fiesta Bowl performance.

1997 National Champions – 13-0

A pajama-clad Tom Osborne was packing for home in the early morning hours of Jan. 3, 1998, when he heard the news.

"By that time, I was wrung out enough that there wasn't much emotion left," he would say later that morning during a post-Orange Bowl game news conference.

1997 National Champions (13-0)		
Head Coach: Tom Osborne		
Captains: Vershan Jackson, Jason Peter, Aaron Taylor and Grant Wistrom		
Date	Opponent	Result
A 30	Akron	W, 59-14
S 13	Central Florida	W, 38-24
S 20	at Washington	W, 27-14
O 4	Kansas State	W, 56-26
O 11	Baylor	W, 49-21
O 18	Texas Tech	W, 29-0
O 25	at Kansas	W, 35-0
N 1	Oklahoma	W, 69-7
N 8	at Missouri	W, 45-38 (OT)
N 15	Iowa State	W, 77-14
N 28	at Colorado	W, 27-24
	Big 12 Championship	
D 6	Texas A&M	W, 54-15
	Orange Bowl	
J 2	Tennessee	W, 42-17

His response to the news was typically low-key.

"Naturally, I was very pleased, very gratified," he said.

The source of his pleasure had been the announcement on ESPN - the television set in his room at the Sheraton Bal Harbour on Miami Beach had been tuned to the network "by chance," he said - that his 25th and final team had been voted the USA Today/ESPN Coaches national champion.

The Huskers, No. 2 going into the Orange Bowl game, had squeezed ahead of Michigan in the coaches poll on the strength of a 42-17 victory against No. 3 Tennessee.

The Wolverines retained the top spot in the AP poll.

"Being a coach, I know a little bit

how they think," said Osborne, who was among those with a vote in the USA Today/ESPN poll. "They probably looked at the fact we were 13-0, and to be unrewarded in some way would be . . . I don't mean to say an injustice. But it wouldn't be a good thing."

No major college football team has gone 13-0 and been deprived of a national title. On the other hand, Michigan argued, no No. 1 team had ever won its bowl game and been dropped from the top.

The split title seemed a reasonable solution. That was Cornhusker quarterback Scott Frost's point immediately after the decisive victory against Tennessee.

"I can't see how any coach outside of the Big Ten or Pac-10 would vote for Michigan because if somebody from North Carolina, Florida State, wherever it might be, Notre Dame, coaches from there, if they were undefeated and won the Alliance bowl game, they would expect to share the national title," the senior from Wood River, Neb., said on the field, in front of CBS television cameras.

"It's been split before. It's OK to split it. It should be split."

Frost was well-versed on national championship history. The title had been split nine times previously since the coaches poll was established in 1950, most recently in 1990 and 1991.

Nebraska's first national championship in 1970 was split with Texas.

Cornhusker defensive tackle Jason Peter was less sharing than Frost.

"If you ask me, I don't think it should be a split title," he said after the Orange Bowl game. "I mean, we proved today that we're the best team in the country, without a doubt."

There probably wouldn't have been much doubt in anyone's mind had it not been for Nebraska's dramatic 45-38 overtime victory at Missouri in early November. The Cornhuskers traveled to Columbia with the No. 1 ranking in both polls but returned to Lincoln ranked No. 4.

That same weekend, Michigan went from No. 4 to No. 1 on the strength of a 34-8 victory against No. 2 Penn State, and Florida State, which subsequently lost to Florida, went from No. 3 to No. 2.

Michigan might have slammed the door on Nebraska's national championship aspirations with a more decisive victory against Washington State in the Rose Bowl game, but the door was open "at least a crack," Osborne told his team after it watched the Wolverines win 21-16 on New Year's Day.

Coaching the Cornhuskers to a third national championship in four seasons was a fitting conclusion to Osborne's Hall of Fame career. The National Football Foundation waived its three-year waiting period for induction, allowing Osborne to be enshrined alongside the game's greatest coaches without delay.

Nebraska became only the second major college football program since the Associated Press began ranking teams in 1936 to earn three national titles in four seasons. Notre Dame won titles in 1946, 1947 and 1949.

Peter and rush end Grant Wistrom, the Lombardi Award winner and two-time Big 12 Defensive Player of the Year, were the heart and soul of Nebraska's 1997 national champions.

"Those two guys, among some others, ramrodded that football team," Osborne said. "They decided a year ago they were going to come back and get the thing done. Their leadership was invaluable."

Peter and Wistrom earned All-America honors, as did offensive guard Aaron Taylor, the first Cornhusker to be named an All-American at two positions. He played center in 1996. Taylor was voted the Outland Trophy winner, with Peter being one of two runners-up.

Frost and I-back Ahman Green were among other key players on offense. Frost became only the 10th player in major college history to rush for 1,000 yards and pass for 1,000 yards in the same season, finishing with 1,095 and 1,237, respectively.

Frost's 2,332 yards of total offense were one short of the Nebraska's then-single-season record, set by Jerry Tagge in 1971.

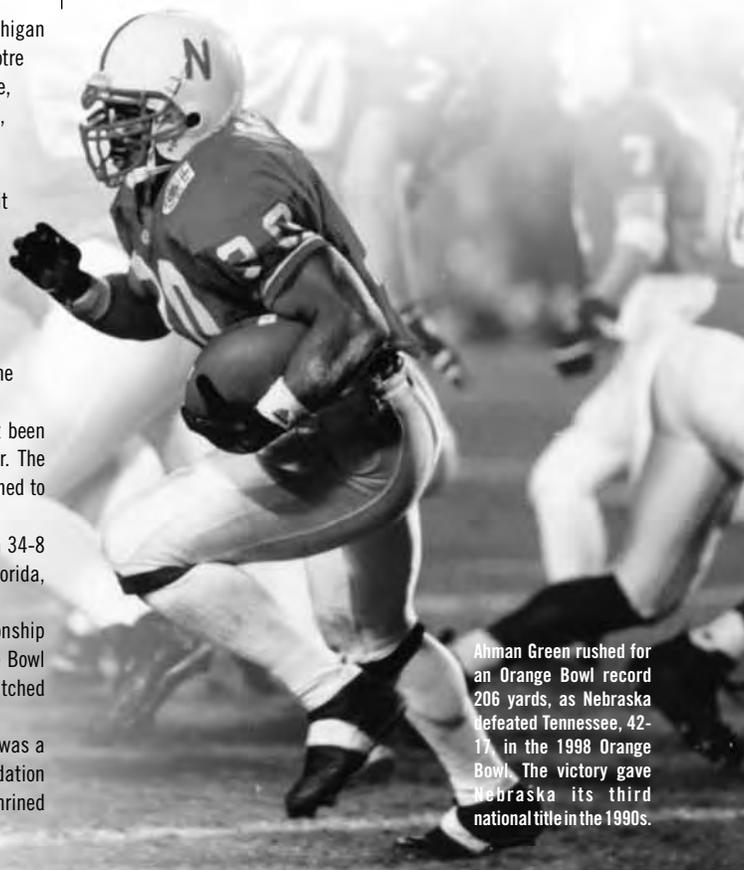
Green rushed for 1,877 yards, which ranked second in the nation. His yards also placed him second on the Cornhuskers' all-time single-season list, behind 1983 Heisman Trophy winner Mike Rozier's 2,148 yards.

Every Cornhusker, from freshman Matt Davison, whose touchdown catch of a deflected Frost pass on the final play of regulation against Missouri kept the title hopes alive, to scout team players such as senior Doug Seaman, contributed in varying degrees to Nebraska's fifth national title.

The 1997 national championship team was "somewhere in between" the 1994 and 1995 national championship teams, according to Osborne. It was "probably a little more talented than '94, certainly not near as controversial as '95. That was nice," he said. "So it was just kind of a nice way to go."

"Great leadership on the part of the players, and I didn't have to do much."

He was being overly modest, of course. The record will attest to that.



Ahman Green rushed for an Orange Bowl record 206 yards, as Nebraska defeated Tennessee, 42-17, in the 1998 Orange Bowl. The victory gave Nebraska its third national title in the 1990s.

Nebraska's Most Memorable Games

In 122 years and 1,235 games, it's hard to single out the most memorable contests in Nebraska football history.

From the Huskers' first game in a 10-0 win on Nov. 27, 1890, over Omaha YMCA to their 35th consecutive bowl appearance in 2003, every game has something to remember.

The battles with Oklahoma; the heartbreaking losses to Penn State, Miami and Florida State; the 100-point wins over Creighton (102-0 in 1905), Haskell (119-0 in 1910) and Kearney State (117-0 in 1911); the early battles with Pittsburgh, Minnesota and Notre Dame; and the yearly bowl game battles, all have been sifted through by some of the most knowledgeable Husker fans.

Husker football historians Mike Babcock, former Lincoln Journal Star football beat writer Ken Hambleton and Sports Information Director Emeritus Don "Fox" Bryant, each picked 15 to 20 games that will be remembered for the next 122 years.

Here is our top 20.

Note: The games are in chronological order beginning with the 1923 win over Notre Dame but are divided into regular-season and bowl contests.

Huskers Tame the Four Horsemen Again

► Nebraska 14, Notre Dame 7 (Nov. 10, 1923)

The Huskers handed the legendary "Four Horsemen" a loss for the second straight season, dominating the famed foursome in a 14-7 victory in Lincoln. The season before, the Huskers won 14-6.

From 1922 to 1924, the "Four Horsemen" owned a 27-2-1 record with their only losses coming to Nebraska.

Coached by the legendary Knute Rockne, the Irish did not have an answer for the Huskers.

Dave Noble ran for a touchdown and caught a pass from Rufus Dewitz for another score, as Nebraska led 14-0 before Notre Dame scored a late touchdown against the Husker reserves.



Defense Shackles All-World Red Grange

► Nebraska 14, Illinois 0 (Oct. 3, 1925)

Nebraska traveled to Illinois and shut down Red Grange, one of the all-time greatest backs in college football history, in a 14-0 win.

The Huskers held Grange scoreless in a home game for the only time in his career to shock the college football world. It was the second straight season Grange did not score against the Huskers.

Frank Dailey intercepted a first-quarter pass by Grange and returned it 45 yards for a touchdown.

Another interception in the fourth quarter helped set up the game-sealing score. The Huskers gained possession at the Illinois 40-yard line and three plays later, a 14-0 lead was theirs. On first down, John Rhodes ran for 36 yards and scored from one yard out a play later.



Huskers Beat Defending Champion Gophers

► Nebraska 14, Minnesota 9 (Oct. 2, 1937)

In Biff Jones' first game as head coach, the Huskers used a spirited rally to defeat defending national champion Minnesota, 14-9.

Minnesota had been the Huskers' nemesis, winning 14 of 18 contests while the two teams played to two ties. The year before, the Gophers returned a punt 85 yards for a touchdown in the game's final minutes to earn the win.

Nebraska trailed 7-0 and 9-7 before the Huskers rallied in the second half. Trailing 9-7 and without starter Eldon McClravy, who some feared dead after suffering a skull fracture, Harris Andrews threw a 25-yard touchdown pass to William Callihan to put the Huskers ahead 14-9.



Huskers End Sooner Conference Dominance

► Nebraska 25, Oklahoma 21 (Oct. 31, 1959)

A massive underdog to an Oklahoma Sooner team that had not lost in 74 consecutive conference games, the Huskers stunned the nation by beating Oklahoma, 25-21, at Memorial Stadium.

Nebraska, which had not defeated the Sooners in 17 years, held off a last-minute OU comeback attempt when Ron Meade intercepted a Bobby Boyd pass in the NU end zone.

The win touched off a wild celebration. The Homecoming crowd stormed the field and tore down the goal posts, which were paraded around town. Pieces ended up at fraternity houses and on the front lawn of the governor's mansion. Chancellor Clifford Hardin canceled classes on Monday so students could have an extra day to celebrate.



Devaney's First Major Win at Nebraska

► Nebraska 25, Michigan 13 (Sept. 29, 1962)

In Coach Bob Devaney's second game at the helm of the Huskers, Nebraska marched into Ann Arbor, Mich., and defeated the Wolverines, 25-13.

The Huskers trailed 7-0 after the first quarter before 70,287 fans, then the largest regular-season crowd to watch a Nebraska football game.

After the nerves wore off, the Huskers dominated the contest in the second half. Entering the fourth quarter, the Huskers held a commanding 19-7 lead before Michigan scored to cut the deficit to 19-13. But the Huskers answered back. On a fourth-and-eight play inside the Michigan 30, Dennis Claridge completed a pass to Dick Callahan for a first down. On the next play, Bill Thornton rumbled 16 yards for a touchdown.



Rivalry Resumes Day After Kennedy is Shot

► Nebraska 29, Oklahoma 20 (Nov. 23, 1963)

The Huskers beat the Sooners 29-20 the day after President John F. Kennedy was killed in Dallas.

Officials from both schools did not want to play the game, but after discussions with NCAA and Big Eight Conference representatives it was decided the game would be played because Oklahoma had one game remaining and the Orange Bowl needed a representative.

All pregame festivities were canceled and a moment of silence honored the nation's fallen leader. The Huskers dominated OU, taking a 17-0 lead in the fourth quarter. Leading 17-7, NU scored two touchdowns in a 1:32 span to take a 29-7 lead. OU scored twice in the game's final two minutes.



Huskers win Game of the Century at OU

► Nebraska 35, Oklahoma 31 (Nov. 25, 1971)

In one of the most memorable games in college football history, the top-ranked Huskers earned a come-from-behind, 35-31, win at No. 2 Oklahoma on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 25, 1971.

Trailing 31-28 after Oklahoma quarterback Jack Mildren completed a 16-yard touchdown strike to Jon Harrison with 7:10 left in the game, Jerry Tagge methodically marched the Nebraska offense on one of the most impressive drives in school history.

Nebraska converted on three third downs, the final one when Jeff Kinney capped a 12-play, 74-yard drive on a two-yard plunge with 1:38 remaining to take a 35-31 lead. Oklahoma turned the ball over on downs and Nebraska ran out the clock to preserve the win.



Osborne Defeats First Top-Five Team

► Nebraska 31, Alabama 24 (Sept. 17, 1977)

Coach Tom Osborne earned his first win over a top-five team, as the Huskers defeated Bear Bryant's Crimson Tide, 31-24, at Memorial Stadium.

With the contest tied, 24-24, following an early fourth-quarter touchdown by Tony Nathan, back-up quarterback Randy Garcia replaced Tom Sorley and drove the Huskers 80 yards for the winning score. Rick Berns' touchdown from one yard out gave the Huskers a 31-24 advantage with 7:12 remaining in the game.

Alabama's comeback chances ended with Jim Pillen intercepting two Jeff Rutledge passes to end Alabama drives in Husker territory in the final five minutes of the contest.



Huskers Beat No. 1 Oklahoma in Thriller

► Nebraska 17, Oklahoma 14 (Nov. 11, 1978)

Coach Tom Osborne picked up his first win over Oklahoma as the fourth-ranked Huskers defeated the No. 1 Sooners, 17-14, at Memorial Stadium.

The Huskers recovered six Sooner fumbles, including a Billy Sims mishandle on the Nebraska 3-yard line that Jim Pillen recovered with 3:27 remaining in the game to seal the upset win. It was the second time in as many possessions that Sims fumbled deep in Nebraska territory.

A field goal by Billy Todd with 11:51 left put the Huskers ahead 17-14. Rick Berns, who rushed for 113 yards and one touchdown, scored on a five-yard run in the second quarter, and I.M. Hipp scored on an eight-yard scamper in the third to provide the scoring for the Huskers.



Miraculous Catch Leads Huskers to Win

► Nebraska 45, Missouri 38, OT (Nov. 8, 1997)

A last-play miracle helped lead the Huskers to a win in the first overtime game in school history, as NU defeated Missouri, 45-38, in Columbia.

Trailing 38-31 with no timeouts, 1:02 left in regulation and 67 yards from a chance to force overtime, quarterback Scott Frost moved the Huskers down the field. On third down from the Missouri 12-yard line, Frost fired a pass that bounced out of wingback Shevin Wiggins' hands, deflected off Wiggins' foot past two Missouri defenders and was scooped up before it hit the ground by a diving Matt Davison as time expired.

In the overtime, the Huskers scored in three plays to take a 45-38 advantage. The Husker defense stuffed quarterback Corby Jones to end the game.



Sea of Red Invades Notre Dame Stadium

► Nebraska 27, Notre Dame 24, OT (Sept. 9, 2000)

The first regular-season meeting in more than 50 years of two of college football's most storied programs produced a game that Nebraska fans won't soon forget. Nearly 30,000 red-clad Husker fans made the migration east on Interstate 80 to South Bend and provided the visitor with unprecedented vocal support in the home of the Fighting Irish.

Nebraska jumped to a 21-7 advantage midway through the third quarter, but Notre Dame scored on a pair of long returns to forge a 21-21 tie and force an overtime session. The Blackshirt defense held Notre Dame to a field goal on its possession and quarterback Eric Crouch scored his third touchdown of the afternoon to send the throng of Husker fans home happy with a 27-24 victory.



Nebraska's Most Memorable Bowl Games

1941 Rose Bowl

► **Stanford 21, Nebraska 13 (Jan. 1, 1941)**

Nebraska headed west for the first bowl game in school history, battling No. 2 Stanford in the Rose Bowl. The Huskers fell 21-13 in front of 92,000 fans, the third-largest crowd ever to see a Nebraska football game.

It was the Huskers' first game in California and marked only the third time a Big Six team advanced to a bowl game. A mass following of Husker fans, as well as the players, traveled by train to see the spectacle.

Stanford's "T-formation" offensive style kept the Huskers unbalanced in the second half, as the Indians overcame 7-0 and 13-7 deficits. Nebraska scored first on a two-yard run by back Vike Francis. After the Indians tied the game, Allen Zikmund scored on a 33-yard pass from Herm Rohrig. Stanford took a 14-13 lead on a Hugh Gallarneau 41-yard touchdown catch. The Indians added a score in the third on a Pete Kmetovic punt return. For playing in the contest, the Huskers received \$140,916.



two-yard run to give NU a commanding 28-0 lead.

"I think Nebraska is one of the greatest, if not the greatest, college football team I've ever seen," Alabama Coach Bear Bryant said. "We were just soundly beaten by a better football team."

Alabama opened the game with a drive that ended when Joe Blahak intercepted a Terry Davis pass in the end zone. The Tide finally scored on a Davis three-yard run in the third quarter. Davis was knocked out of the game by the Husker defense in the fourth quarter.

For Devaney, the win marked his only triumph over Bryant in three tries. The Tide had defeated Nebraska 39-28 in the 1966 Orange Bowl and 34-7 in the 1967 Sugar Bowl.



1971 Orange Bowl

► **Nebraska 17, Louisiana State 12 (Jan. 1, 1971)**

The Huskers earned their first national title in school history with a heart-stopping 17-12 win over Louisiana State on Jan. 1, 1971, in the Orange Bowl.

LSU scored on a 31-yard pass from Buddy Lee to Al Coffee to cap a 75-yard drive as time expired in the third to give the Tigers a 12-10 lead heading into the final quarter.

The Huskers responded with a 67-yard, 13-play drive that ended when Tagge snuck in from the 1-yard line with 8:50 remaining in the game. The drive's big play came on a third-down-and-seven at the LSU 20 when Tagge completed a 15-yard pass to Jeff Kinney. Three plays later Tagge scored. On the ensuing possession, the Huskers partially blocked a Tiger punt and had a first down at the LSU 42, but after two first downs, Joe Orduna fumbled on the 12-yard line with 4:09 remaining to give the Tigers a final chance. Any comeback hopes temporarily ended when Willie Harper stole the ball from Bert Jones with 1:20 left. Nebraska lost the ball with 52 seconds remaining, but Bob Terrio intercepted a desperation pass to seal the Huskers' first title.

Nebraska was able to take over the top spot after No. 1 Texas and second-ranked Ohio State lost earlier in the day. Texas was voted No. 1 in the UPI poll, which was decided before the bowl game outcomes.

"The players were very elated that there was another door open," Coach Bob Devaney said. "Even the Pope would have to vote us No. 1."



1973 Orange Bowl

► **Nebraska 40, Notre Dame 6 (Jan. 1, 1973)**

In their final games as Huskers, Coach Bob Devaney left as a big winner and Johnny Rodgers scored four touchdowns and passed for another as NU beat Notre Dame in the 1973 Orange Bowl 40-6.

On the first play from scrimmage, Devaney threw a wrinkle at the Irish as Rodgers lined up as the I-back. He rushed for 81 yards on 15 carries, caught three passes for 71 yards and threw a 52-yard touchdown pass to Frosty Anderson.

The Huskers held a 20-0 halftime advantage before scoring 20 points in the third quarter to expand the lead to 40-0. Nebraska dominated the game with 560 yards of total offense. Notre Dame finished the game with only 207 yards.



1984 Orange Bowl

► **Miami 31, Nebraska 30 (Jan. 2, 1984)**

Instead of playing for a tie and an almost guaranteed national title, the Huskers went for the win, attempting a two-point conversion that failed in the final minute as Miami stunned one of the greatest Husker teams ever, 31-30, at the Orange Bowl on Jan. 2, 1984.

Trailing 31-17 entering the fourth quarter, the Huskers mounted a furious comeback without Heisman Trophy winner Mike Rozier, who left the game in the third quarter with a badly bruised ankle.

Rozier's replacement, Jeff Smith, scored on a one-yard touchdown run with 6:55 left in the game to trim the deficit to 31-24.

On the Huskers' final drive, Turner Gill completed clutch passes to Irving Fryar (29 yards) and Ricky Simmons (19 yards) to advance the Huskers into Hurricane territory. On a fourth-and-eight play from the Miami 24-yard line, Smith took an option pitch from Gill and scampered 24 yards to the end zone.

Trailing 31-30, the Huskers went for a two-point conversion attempt, but Ken Callhoun deflected a Gill pass intended for Smith to end the comeback threat.

"This was a championship game and (Osborne) went after it like a champion," Miami Coach Howard Schnellenberger said.

Nebraska trailed fourth-ranked Miami by 17 points in the first half before pulling within three at halftime.



1972 Orange Bowl

► **Nebraska 38, Alabama 6 (Jan. 1, 1972)**

In a battle between the nation's top two teams, the Huskers annihilated the Crimson Tide, 38-6, on Jan. 1, 1972, and earned their second consecutive Orange Bowl victory and first unanimous national title.

Nebraska scored two touchdowns in the final 2:01 of the first quarter to blow the game open. Jeff Kinney scored on a two-yard touchdown run before Johnny Rodgers returned a punt 77 yards for a score to give the Huskers a 14-0 lead at the end of the first quarter.

The Husker onslaught continued early in the second quarter when Jerry Tagge scored on a one-yard quarterback sneak. Less than four minutes later, Gary Dixon scored on a

1994 Orange Bowl

► Florida State 18, Nebraska 16 (Jan. 1, 1994)

In a wild last-minute ending, the top-ranked Huskers finished just shy of claiming Coach Tom Osborne's first national title in the Orange Bowl, losing to No. 2 Florida State, 18-16.

After Scott Bentley kicked a 22-yard field goal with 21 seconds remaining, the Huskers returned the Florida State kickoff to the NU 45 with 15 seconds left. Tommie Frazier fired a second-down pass to Trumane Bell who raced 29 yards to the FSU 28-yard line. Bell was tackled and called timeout with one second remaining; however, the clock expired and Florida State fans and players stormed the field to celebrate a then-premature national championship. One second was put back on the clock, but Byron Bennett's 45-yard field goal attempt was wide left.



1995 Federal Express Orange Bowl

► Nebraska 24, Miami 17 (Jan. 1, 1995)

After suffering three Orange Bowl defeats to Miami in the previous 10 years, the Huskers enacted big-time revenge against the Hurricanes in a 24-17 come-from-behind national championship win on Jan. 1, 1995.

Entering the game as the nation's top-ranked team, the Huskers fell behind No. 3 Miami, 10-0, after the first quarter. Nebraska finally scored on a 19-yard pass from quarterback Brook Berringer to tight end Mark Gilman to pull within 10-7 with 7:24 left before halftime.

Miami increased the lead to 10 points in the third when Jonathan Harris scored on a 44-yard pass from Frank Costa.

The Huskers pulled within 17-9 when Dwayne Harris drilled Costa in the Hurricane end zone for a safety.

Nebraska battled back to tie the game at 17 with a Cory Schlesinger 15-yard touchdown run and a completed two-point conversion pass from Tommie Frazier to Eric Alford.

On the ensuing possession, Nebraska started its drive to the national title at its own 42 with 6:28 left in the game. On a key third-and-four play, Frazier scrambled 25 yards to the Miami 27. Three plays later, Schlesinger rumbled 14 yards up the middle for the game-winning touchdown.

"I don't feel any different or any more vindicated than when we played here last year," Osborne said.

The Huskers lost 18-16 to Florida State in the Orange Bowl with a shot at the national title the year before.



1996 Tostitos Fiesta Bowl

► Nebraska 62, Florida 24 (Jan. 2, 1996)

In what was supposed to be a battle of the best two teams in college football, the Huskers hammered Florida, 62-24, to win their second consecutive national title.

Entering the contest, the Huskers and Gators were the nation's only unbeaten teams.

Florida jumped out to a 10-6 advantage after the first quarter, but in the second, the Huskers, who had the nation's best offensive attack, came alive.

Nebraska scored 29 points in the 15-minute frame. Thirty-two seconds into the quarter, Lawrence Phillips began the scoring barrage with a 42-yard run.

The Husker defense contributed to the 29-point outburst on two occasions. Jamel Williams sacked All-America quarterback Danny Wuerffel for a safety and Michael Booker returned an errant Wuerffel pass 42 yards for a touchdown. Kris Brown added two field goals and Ahman Green scored on a one-yard run to highlight the scoring explosion.

In the third quarter, Tommie Frazier scampered 35 yards for a touchdown and had a highlight reel 75-yard run where he escaped the grasp of eight would-be tacklers.

Phillips scored on a 15-yard run in the fourth, and Brook Berringer scored on a one-yard run to complete the 62-point offensive effort and deliver the Huskers their second straight national title.



1998 FedEx Orange Bowl

► Nebraska 42, Tennessee 17 (Jan. 2, 1998)

In Tom Osborne's finale, the Huskers manhandled No. 3 Tennessee, 42-17, and earned a share of the national title. For the third time in four seasons, Nebraska earned a piece of the national championship.

Although Michigan had defeated Washington State in the Rose Bowl a day earlier, the Huskers still had a chance to get a share of the national title.

The Huskers drew first blood on a one-yard run by Ahman Green late in the first quarter. After Green's score, Nebraska never trailed the Volunteers.

Leading 14-3 at halftime, the Huskers turned things up by scoring 21 points in the third quarter. Quarterback Scott Frost scored on a one-yard carry and six minutes later, he scored from 11 yards out putting the Huskers ahead 28-3. Tennessee scored its first touchdown of the game to trim the lead to 28-9 before Green scored his second touchdown of the game on a 22-yard run.

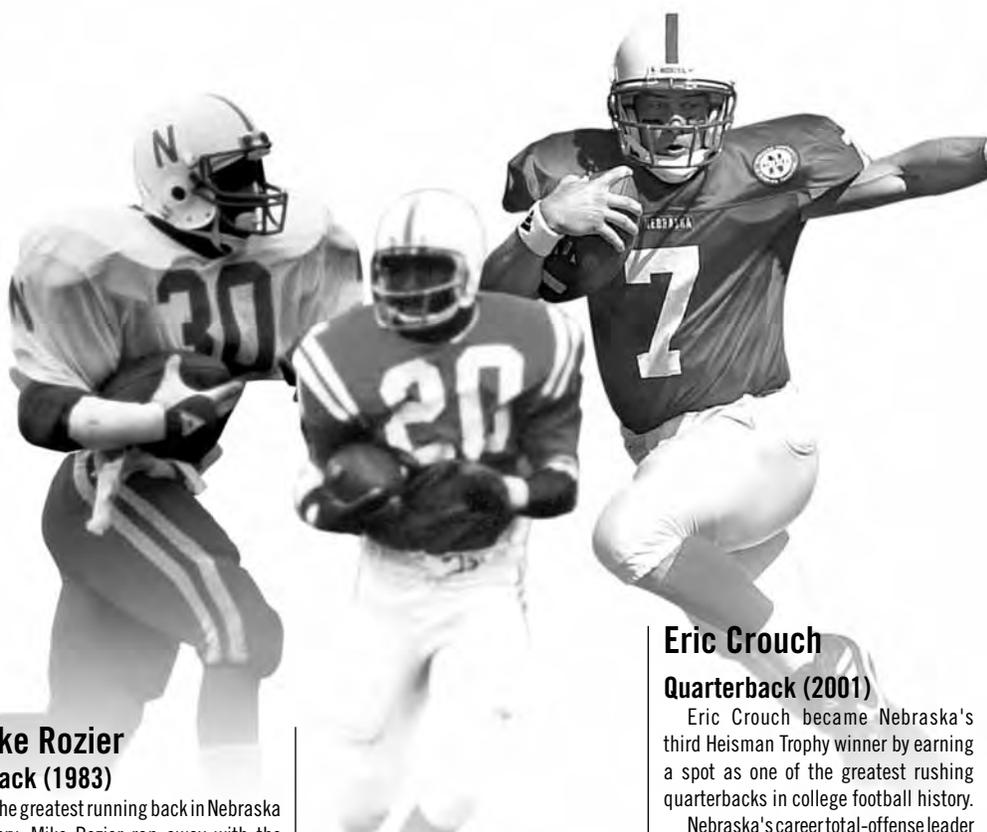
Green finished the game with an Orange Bowl record 206 yards on 29 carries.

In the fourth, Frost added his third touchdown of the game on a nine-yard option keeper with 4:24 remaining.

Following the game at the team hotel, the Huskers were informed at 2:30 a.m. they had moved from second to first in the coaches poll and earned a share of the national title with Michigan, who finished first in the Associated Press poll. Nebraska edged the Wolverines by four points in the coaches poll to earn its third national title in four seasons and sent Osborne out as a national champion.



Nebraska's Heisman Trophy History



Mike Rozier I-Back (1983)

The greatest running back in Nebraska history, Mike Rozier ran away with the 1983 Heisman Trophy. After finishing 10th in Heisman voting as a junior, Rozier brought home the award as a senior by setting a school record with 2,148 yards on 275 carries and a school-record 29 touchdowns.

Rozier averaged 179 yards per game, while tying an NCAA record by reeling off 11 straight 100-yard performances, including a career-best 285 yards on 31 carries against Kansas on Nov. 12, 1983. Rozier's effort against the Jayhawks was one of seven 200-yard games in his career.

Rozier helped the Huskers to the national title game in the 1984 Orange Bowl, losing to Miami, 31-30. Despite scoring 49 regular-season rushing touchdowns in his career, Rozier never ran for a score in three Nebraska bowl games. However, he did throw a 25-yard pass to Anthony Steels in the Huskers' 22-15 loss to national champion Clemson in the 1982 Orange Bowl and he hauled in an 11-yard touchdown reception from Turner Gill in NU's 21-20 win over LSU in the 1983 Orange Bowl.

The No. 1 pick of the USFL's Pittsburgh Maulers in the 1984 draft, Rozier was also the No. 1 pick of the Houston Oilers in the supplemental phase of the 1984 NFL Draft.

He was voted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 2006.

Johnny Rodgers Wingback (1972)

Johnny "The Jet" Rodgers helped the Huskers win the first two national titles in school history in 1970 and 1971, before becoming Nebraska's first Heisman winner in 1972.

Rodgers owns Nebraska records for receptions (143) and receiving yardage (2,479) to go along with his 26 career touchdown catches.

A two-time All-American as a wingback, Rodgers was one of the top punt returners in college football history, racing to 1,515 career punt return yards and seven regular-season touchdowns. He added 847 yards and one score as a kickoff returner, and 745 career rushing yards with 11 touchdowns.

After winning his Heisman Trophy, Rodgers put his all-around game on display in a 40-6 win over Notre Dame in the 1973 Orange Bowl. Rodgers had a hand in all five of Nebraska's touchdowns against the Fighting Irish, rushing for three touchdowns, while adding one touchdown reception. He pitched in a 52-yard pass to Frosty Anderson for another score.

Rodgers was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 2000.

Eric Crouch Quarterback (2001)

Eric Crouch became Nebraska's third Heisman Trophy winner by earning a spot as one of the greatest rushing quarterbacks in college football history.

Nebraska's career total-offense leader with 7,915 yards, Crouch smashed the school's career quarterback rushing mark with 3,434 yards on the ground in his four years as a starter. The only player in school history to lead the team in total offense four straight years, Crouch also passed for 4,481 yards to rank fifth in NU history.

As a senior, Crouch struck for a then-school record 2,625 total-offense yards, with 1,115 yards rushing and 1,510 yards passing, leading NU to the national title game in the 2002 Rose Bowl.

Crouch became just the third quarterback in NCAA history to rush for 3,000 yards and pass for 4,000 yards in his career. He also eclipsed the NCAA record for rushing touchdowns by a quarterback with 59, shattering fellow Heisman winner Mike Rozier's previous school record of 49 rushing touchdowns.

Crouch finished his career 35-7 as a starter, accounting for 88 total-offense touchdowns. In a win over California as a sophomore in 1999, Crouch tied an NCAA record by throwing for a touchdown, rushing for a touchdown and catching a touchdown pass in the same game.

Top 10 Heisman Finishes

Sam Francis, Fullback, 1936--2nd
Bobby Reynolds, Halfback, 1950--5th
Wayne Meylan, Middle Guard, 1967--9th
Jerry Tagge, Quarterback, 1971--7th
Johnny Rodgers, Wingback, 1972--1st
Rich Glover, Middle Guard, 1972--3rd
Dave Humm, Quarterback, 1974--5th
Jarvis Redwine, I-Back, 1980--8th
Dave Rimington, Center, 1982--5th
Mike Rozier, I-Back, 1982--10th/1983--1st
Turner Gill, Quarterback, 1983--4th
Lawrence Phillips, I-Back, 1994--8th
Zach Wiegert, Offensive Tackle, 1994--9th
Tommie Frazier, Quarterback, 1995--2nd
Eric Crouch, Quarterback, 2001--1st
Ndamukong Suh, Defensive Tackle, 2009--4th

Heismans vs. Huskers

1935—Jay Berwanger, HB

Nebraska 28, Chicago 7
Statistics Not Available

1941—Bruce Smith, HB

Minnesota 9, Nebraska 0
Rushing: 7-35-0

1947—John Lujack, QB

Notre Dame 31, Nebraska 0
Passing: 2-of-6, 38 yds., 1 INT

1952—Billy Vessels, HB

Oklahoma 34, Nebraska 13
Rushing: 20-96-3
Receiving: 2-28-0

1955—Howard Cassady, HB

Ohio State 28, Nebraska 20
Rushing: 21-170-3

1961—Ernie Davis, HB

Syracuse 28, Nebraska 6
Rushing: 22-120-0
Receiving: 1-10-0

1969—Steve Owens, HB

Nebraska 44, Oklahoma 14
Rushing: 21-71-0
Receiving: 1-9-0

1978—Billy Sims, HB

Nebraska 17, Oklahoma 14
Rushing: 25-153-2

1979 Orange Bowl
Oklahoma 31, Nebraska 24
Rushing: 25-132-2

1988—Barry Sanders, HB

Nebraska 63, Oklahoma State 42
Rushing: 35-189-4
Receiving: 1-(-4)
Punt Return: 1-0-0
Kickoff Returns: 5-73-0

1993—Charlie Ward, QB

1994 Orange Bowl
Florida State 18, Nebraska 16
Rushing: 8-(-3)
Passing: 24-of-43, 286 yds., 0 TD

1994—Rashaan Salaam, IB

Nebraska 24, Colorado 7
Rushing: 22-134-1
Receiving: 2-24-0

1998—Ricky Williams, RB

Texas 20, Nebraska 16
Rushing: 37-150-1
Receiving: 1-0-0

2008—Sam Bradford, QB

Oklahoma 62, Nebraska 28
Rushing: 2-14
Passing: 19-of-27, 311 yards, 5 TD, 1 INT

Major Award Winners



Nebraska leads all schools in Outland Trophy winners (9) and is second all time in Lombardi Award winners (5). Lombardi winners Rich Glover (far left) and Dave Rimington (far right) are joined by former offensive line coach Milt Tenopir, 1994 Outland Trophy winner Zach Wiegert and former Head Coach Tom Osborne.

Lombardi Award (5)

(Nation's top collegiate lineman)
 1972--Rich Glover, MG, Nebraska*
 1982--Dave Rimington, C, Nebraska*
 1983--Dean Steinkuhler, OG, Nebraska*
 1997--Grant Wistrom, RE, Nebraska
 2009--Ndamukong Suh, DT*

Other Husker Lombardi Finalists

1971--Rich Glover, DT
 1971--Larry Jacobson, DT
 1988--Broderick Thomas, DE
 1994--Zach Wiegert, OT
 1996--Jared Tomich, RE
 2000--Dominic Raiola, C

*honoree swept both the Outland Trophy and Lombardi Award for that year.

Outland Trophy (9)

(Nation's top collegiate interior lineman)
 1971--Larry Jacobson, DT, Nebraska
 1972--Rich Glover, MG, Nebraska*
 1981--Dave Rimington, C, Nebraska
 1982--Dave Rimington, C, Nebraska*
 1983--Dean Steinkuhler, OG, Nebraska*
 1992--Will Shields, OG, Nebraska
 1994--Zach Wiegert, OT, Nebraska
 1997--Aaron Taylor, OG, Nebraska
 2009--Ndamukong Suh, DT, Nebraska*

Other Husker Outland Finalists

1997--Jason Peter, DT
 2000--Dominic Raiola, C
 2001--Toniu Fonoti, OG

Maxwell Award (1)

(Nation's outstanding collegiate player)
 1983--Mike Rozier, IB, Nebraska

Walter Camp Award (3)

(Nation's outstanding collegiate player)
 1972--Johnny Rodgers, WB, Nebraska
 1983--Mike Rozier, IB, Nebraska
 2001--Eric Crouch, QB, Nebraska

Johnny Unitas

Golden Arm Award (1)

(Nation's top senior quarterback)
 1995--Tommie Frazier, Nebraska

Davey O'Brien Award (1)

(Nation's top quarterback)
 2001--Eric Crouch, Nebraska

Butkus Award (1)

(Nation's top collegiate linebacker)
 1993--Trev Alberts, Nebraska

Other Husker Butkus Finalists

1988--Broderick Thomas, 2nd
 1994--Ed Stewart, 3rd
 2011--Lavonte David, 5th

Rimington Trophy (1)

(Nation's top collegiate center)
 2000--Dominic Raiola, Nebraska

Nagurski Trophy (1)

(Nation's best defensive player)
 2009--Ndamukong Suh, DT, Nebraska

Bednarik Award (1)

(College football's defensive player of the year)

2009--Ndamukong Suh, DT, Nebraska



Tommie Frazier won the Johnny Unitas Golden Arm Award in 1995, while finishing second in Heisman Trophy balloting. Frazier led the Huskers to back-to-back national titles in 1994 and 1995.

All-Century Team

Nebraska's run of success in the 1990s capped a century of conference and national championships, award-winning players and Hall of Fame coaches in the Husker football program.

Hundreds of great players called Lincoln home in the 20th century, making the selection of a Husker All-Century team a difficult task. Nebraska fans did their best to identify the best of the best from the 1999 football season through April of 2000. The team was selected through an on-line poll at Huskers.com and nearly 10,000 Husker fans took part in the process.

The team is dominated by players from the Huskers' five national championship squads. Linebacker Tom Novak, Nebraska's only four-time all-conference selection, was the lone player chosen who played before the Devaney era. The overall top vote getter was Johnny Rodgers, who received a total of 14,467 votes at two positions (receiver and kick returner). The 1972 Heisman Trophy winner is joined by a star-studded offensive unit that features I-backs Mike Rozier and Roger Craig, fullbacks Joel Makovicka and Tom Rathman, wingback Irving Fryar and tight end Junior Miller. The offense is guided by quarterback Tommie Frazier, who led the Huskers to back-to-back national championships in 1994 and 1995. Frazier won the Johnny Unitas Award as the nation's top quarterback as a senior and had a career record of 33-3 as Nebraska's starting QB. The offensive line features five Outland Trophy winners, including two-time recipient Dave Rimington. Fellow Outland winners Will Shields, Aaron Taylor, Zach Wiegert and Dean Steinkuhler, along with All-American Bob Newton, join Rimington on the offensive front. Wiegert was the top vote-getter on offense, with nearly 8,000 votes.

The defense is led by a talent-laden front line, all of whom were first-round NFL Draft picks. Defensive tackles Jason Peter and Neil Smith and middle guard Rich Glover comprise the interior of the all-time Husker defense while pass rushing specialists Grant Wistrom, Trev Alberts and Broderick Thomas man the outside positions of the defensive line. A pair of run-stoppers join Novak on the linebacker corps, as Marc Munford and Ed Stewart were selected by Husker fans. Munford led Nebraska in tackles for three consecutive seasons (1984-86), while Stewart was a finalist for the Butkus Award in 1994. The secondary is made up of players from the 1990s, including 1999 All-Americans Mike Brown and Ralph Brown, the top vote getters at safety and cornerback, respectively. The duo is

All-Century Team

Offense

QB-Tommie Frazier (1992-95)
 IB-Mike Rozier (1981-83)
 IB-Roger Craig (1979-82)
 FB-Tom Rathman (1983-85)
 FB-Joel Makovicka (1995-98)
 WR-Irving Fryar (1981-83)
 WR-Johnny Rodgers (1970-72)
 TE-Junior Miller (1977-79)
 OT-Bob Newton (1969-70)
 OG-Will Shields (1989-92)
 C-Dave Rimington (1979-82)
 OG/C-Aaron Taylor (1994-97)
 OG-Dean Steinkuhler (1981-83)
 OT-Zach Wiegert (1991-94)

Defense

DE-Grant Wistrom (1994-97)
 DT-Jason Peter (1994-97)
 NT-Rich Glover (1970-72)
 DT-Neil Smith (1985-87)
 DE/OLB-Trev Alberts (1990-93)
 DE/OLB-Broderick Thomas (1985-88)
 LB-Marc Munford (1984-86)
 LB-Ed Stewart (1991-94)
 LB-Tom Novak (1946-49)
 CB-Michael Booker (1994-96)
 CB-Ralph Brown (1996-99)
 S-Mike Brown (1996-99)
 S-Mike Minter (1993-96)

Special Teams

PK-Kris Brown (1995-98)
 P-Jesse Kosch (1994-97)
 KR-Tyrone Hughes (1989-92)
 PR-Johnny Rodgers (1970-72)

Top Vote Getters (Votes):

Offense-Zach Wiegert (7,951)
 Defense-Grant Wistrom (6,990)
 Special Teams-Kris Brown (7,938)
 Overall-Johnny Rodgers (14,467)
 (7,109 - Returns and 7,358 - WR)

joined by cornerback Michael Booker and rover Mike Minter, a pair of defensive standouts on Nebraska's 1994 and 1995 national title teams. Wistrom was the top vote getter among defensive players with almost 7,000 votes cast.

Kris Brown was chosen as the starting kicker after he set the school record with 388 points from 1995 to 1998. Jesse Kosch earned the nod as NU's top punter, and the final member of the team is kick returner Tyrone Hughes.



College and Pro Football Hall of Famer Bob Brown became just the second Husker in history to have his number (64) retired. Brown, an All-America guard for Nebraska in 1963, had his jersey retired during the Colorado game in 2004.

Novak, Brown Honored with Retired Numbers

Following the 1949 season, the N Club voted to retire jersey No. 60 in honor of Tom "Train Wreck" Novak's stellar career with the Cornhuskers. Novak, the first Nebraska player to earn this honor, had been a four-time All-Big Seven choice and a 1949 All-American.

For 55 years, Novak was the only NU player to have the distinction of a retired number. In 2004, that finally changed as College and Pro Football Hall of Famer Bob Brown's No. 64 joined Novak's hallowed No. 60 among the permanently retired numbers at Nebraska. Brown, whose jersey retirement ceremony occurred during NU's game with Colorado in 2004, became the 16th player in Husker history to have his jersey retired.

All major national award winners at Nebraska automatically have their jerseys retired, but their numbers will still be available to active Huskers.

Nebraska's group of 17 players with retired jerseys certainly ranks among the most in the nation. Huskers who have earned the distinction of jersey retirement include three Heisman Trophy winners (Johnny Rodgers, Mike Rozier, Eric Crouch), eight Outland Trophy winners with nine awards (Larry Jacobson, Rich Glover, Dave Rimington (2), Dean Steinkuhler, Will Shields, Zach Wiegert, Aaron Taylor, Ndamukong Suh), five Lombardi Award winners (Rich Glover, Dave Rimington, Dean Steinkuhler, Grant Wistrom, Ndamukong Suh), one Johnny Unitas Golden Arm Award winner (Tommie Frazier), one Davey O'Brien Award winner (Eric Crouch), one Butkus Award winner (Trev Alberts), Rimington Trophy winner (Dominic Raiola), one Chuck Bednarik Award winner (Ndamukong Suh) and one Bronko Nagurski Trophy winner (Ndamukong Suh).

History of Retired Jerseys (17)

Year	Jersey	Player	Major Awards
1949	No. 60*	Tom Novak	Only Four-Time All-Conference
1972	No. 20	Johnny Rodgers	1972 Heisman/Walter Camp
1972	No. 79	Rich Glover	1972 Outland/Lombardi
1982	No. 50	Dave Rimington	1981, 1982 Outland 1982 Lombardi
1983	No. 30	Mike Rozier	1983 Heisman/Maxwell/Walter Camp
1983	No. 71	Dean Steinkuhler	1983 Outland/Lombardi
1994	No. 75	Larry Jacobson	1971 Outland
1994	No. 75	Will Shields	1992 Outland
1994	No. 34	Trev Alberts	1993 Butkus
1995	No. 72	Zach Wiegert	1994 Outland
1996	No. 15	Tommie Frazier	1995 Johnny Unitas
1998	No. 67	Aaron Taylor	1997 Outland
1998	No. 98	Grant Wistrom	1997 Lombardi
2002	No. 54	Dominic Raiola	2000 Rimington
2002	No. 7	Eric Crouch	2001 Heisman/Walter Camp/O'Brien
2004	No. 64*	Bob Brown	College and Pro Football Hall of Fame
2010	No. 93	Ndamukong Suh	2009 Outland/Lombardi/AP POY

*Jersey number is permanently retired at Nebraska