

HUSKER HISTORY: 1978 VS. NO. 1 OKLAHOMA

As Nebraska hosts Oklahoma today, we look back at the 1978 meeting between the fourth-ranked Huskers and top-ranked Sooners at Memorial Stadium. NU was able to squeak past turnover-prone OU 17-14 to give Husker Head Coach Tom Osborne his first victory over Oklahoma.

The Big Eight Conference title was on the line that afternoon in front of an ABC national television audience, as both teams entered the contest with perfect 5-0 league records. Nebraska came into the game with an 8-1 overall record while Oklahoma was 9-0. The matchup also pitted the nation's top two offenses against each other, with Nebraska ranking first nationally and Oklahoma second.

The Sooners' vaunted wishbone attack was leading the nation in rushing with an average of 417 yards per game. Against Nebraska, Oklahoma ran the ball on 61 of its 63 plays. The Sooners ran for 339 yards against the Huskers, but OU was 0-for-2 in the passing game.

Nebraska meanwhile ran for 250 yards and threw for 111 more. But the big story of the game was turnovers. The Huskers threw one interception and lost one fumble, while the Sooners fumbled nine times, losing six of the them.

After both teams went three-and-out on their first possession, Oklahoma struck first on its second possession. Billy Sims opened the scoring with a 44-yard touchdown run seven minutes into the first quarter. Nebraska evened the score in the second quarter when Rick Berns scored from five yards out with 10:06 remaining in the half.

Tied at 7-7 at the half, each team added a touchdown in the third quarter. Nebraska took its first lead at 14-7 with 9:25 to play in the quarter after an I.M. Hipp eight-yard touchdown run. The Sooners answered back just 1:38 later on a 30-yard touchdown run by Sims.

In the fourth quarter, Nebraska kicked what proved to be the game-winning field goal with 11:51 to play. Billy Todd, who had missed a 21-yarder at the end of the first half, atoned for that miss with a 24-yard field goal to cap a 12-play Husker drive. Although the 17-14 lead held up, the Sooners continued to threaten.

After the go-ahead field goal, Oklahoma drove down to the Nebraska 22-yard line before a Sims fumble was recovered by the Huskers. The Nebraska offense then went three-and-out and gave the ball back to Oklahoma at the NU 47 with six minutes remaining. The Sooners converted a 4th-and-2 from the NU 39 to keep the drive alive before another fumble ended OU's last hope for a comeback.

With the ball on the 20-yard line, Sims took an option pitch and rumbled inside the 10 before losing the ball, and Nebraska recovered at its own 3-yard line with 3:27 left on the clock. Oklahoma appeared poised to get the ball back with a little more than a minute remaining before a personal-foul penalty on 3rd-and-8 gave the Huskers a first down, and NU ran out the clock.

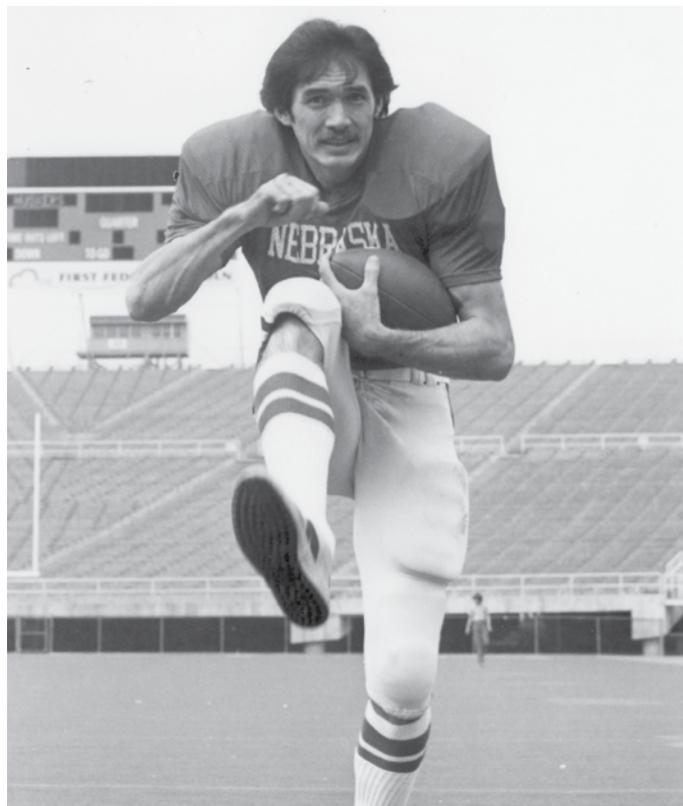
Berns led NU with 25 carries for 113 yards, while Hipp added 62 yards on 14 carries. Sims rushed for 153 yards and two touchdowns on 25 carries, but his two late fumbles put a damper on his big day.

The victory was Osborne's first over the Sooners in six tries, while it also clinched a share of the Big Eight title for the Huskers. But coming off the huge victory, Nebraska fell to Missouri the next weekend, 35-31. The Sooners and Huskers shared the Big Eight crown and the Orange Bowl Committee selected Oklahoma and Nebraska for a rematch. In the 1979 Orange Bowl, the fourth-ranked Sooners won the rematch, defeating the sixth-ranked Huskers 31-24. Nebraska finished the season 9-3, while Oklahoma went 11-1.

No. 4 Nebraska 17 No. 1 Oklahoma 14

Nov. 11, 1978 - Lincoln, Neb.
Memorial Stadium - 76,015
Consecutive Sellout No. 97

	NU	OU
First Downs	18	13
Rushing Yardage	250	339
Rushing Attempts	62	61
Passing Yardage	111	0
Att.-Comp.-Int.	8-20-1	0-2-0
Total Offense	361	339
Average Per Play	4.4	5.4
Fumbles-Lost	2-1	9-6
Penalties-Yards	5-35	5-41



Rick Berns ran for 113 yards and one touchdown in the Huskers' 17-14 upset of unbeaten and top-ranked Oklahoma on Nov. 11, 1978.

This Date in Husker History - Nov. 7

The Huskers are 13-5 all-time on Nov. 7, including a 5-1 mark in Lincoln. Memorable games on this date include an 11-8 win over Iowa State in a 1908 contest played in Omaha, a 7-0 home win over Iowa in 1931 and a 49-7 victory over 13th-ranked Kansas inside Memorial Stadium in 1992. Overall, Nebraska has played 444 all-time games in the month of November, compiling a 283-146-15 record, good for a .654 winning percentage. Nebraska has posted a perfect November record 28 times, not including four seasons where the Huskers were unbeaten but had at least one tie.

