

Miraculous Marv Stuns Huskers

November 14, 1992

Iowa State 19, No. 7 Nebraska 10

When the score of this game was flashed around the country on college football postgame shows, the general feeling was this had to be a mistake. How could the mighty Nebraska football team, the Big Red Machine in all of its glory, lose to Iowa State? When considering all of the circumstances surrounding the game, how could you think otherwise? The Huskers brought in a 7-1 record and a No. 7 national ranking when it arrived in Ames for the game on a crisp November afternoon. NU was one of the hottest teams in the country. In back-to-back games before Iowa State, the Huskers trounced No. 8 Colorado 52-7 and No. 13 Kansas 49-7. Featuring the explosive tailback combination of Derek Brown and Calvin Jones and the exploits of freshman quarterback Tommie Frazier, the Huskers outrushed the Buffaloes and Jayhawks 724-136 combined. Nebraska was just as powerful on the defensive side of the ball, allowing just 208 yards of total offense in its last two games. All of this added up to former Nebraska coach and athletics director Bob Devaney proclaiming that the 1992 Cornhuskers were better than the 1971 Nebraska team that won the national championship.

Iowa State, at kickoff, was on the opposite end of the spectrum. The Cyclones, owning a 3-6 mark, fell at Kansas State (22-13) the week before and was going through a quarterback carousel. Bobby Utter started the first seven games of the season until suffering his second concussion at the Oklahoma State game, which ended his season. Marv Seiler, a seldom-used fifth-year senior, and Donnie Smith, a first-year junior college transfer, split quarterback duties in the next two games.

In the week leading up to the Nebraska game, ISU head coach Jim Walden selected Seiler as the starter. It was the final home game of the season for the Cyclones and Seiler, so it was fitting that the senior would get the starting nod. Seiler was a 5-11, 190-pound native of Joliet, Ill., who had only seen action as a reserve in 14 games in his Cyclone career prior to the Nebraska start. Not blessed with speed, quickness or an overpowering arm, Seiler kept himself in the mix thanks to his correct reads and decisions in ISU's triple-option offense. He had confidence in the schemes, earning team MVP honors and all-conference kudos at Joliet Township West running the triple-offense.

"He had a great handle on his limitations as a quarterback," Walden said. "But the one thing Marv had going for him was that he was a great decision-maker. He couldn't pass, but we didn't want to pass. I don't think we'd have won with anybody else that day."

Iowa State put the first points on the board with a Ty



Stewart field goal at 9:46 in the first quarter. He ended up drilling three more field goals in the first half to give ISU an improbable 12-10 lead at intermission. It was especially sweet for Stewart, a native of Omaha, Neb., who grew up dreaming of playing for the Huskers.

With the Cyclones clinging to a two-point lead at the half, it became evident that this ISU team was gaining momentum and confidence by the minute. ISU's defense was nothing short of phenomenal to that point, halting the vaunted Cornhusker attack to 165 yards at the half. The second half was no different as ISU controlled the clock and forced NU into three-and-outs and poor field position. The Cyclones forced Nebraska into four three-and-outs in its seven possessions of the second half, mustering only five first downs and 81 second-half yards. The spirited Cyclone defense, led by linebacker Malcom Goodwin with 11 tackles, stymied the Cornhusker rushing attack to a measly 42 yards on 21 carries in the second half. NU finished the game with a grand total of 246 yards of total offense, 192 yards less than its season average (438).

"They shut us down on all circuits," NU quarterback Tommie Frazier said. "They took our option away, they took our inside running away and they took our passing game away."

While the Iowa State defense was holding strong, the Cyclone offense continued to amaze. The Seiler-led Cyclones methodically pieced together time-consuming possessions that controlled the clock and field position. Iowa State led 12-10 after a scoreless third quarter until the "run

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heard around the world” happened. Husker punter Mike Stigge boomed a punt 61 yards that went into the endzone for a touchback, giving ISU a first and 10 at its own 20-yard line in its second possession of the fourth quarter (11:08 remaining). On the first play, Seiler optioned right, then cut up field and found himself wide open in the Nebraska secondary. He scampered 78 yards to the Nebraska 2-yard line before getting run down with his hands clutching the ball. ISU scored on the next play with Chris Ulrich going over the top to push the Cyclone lead to 19-10.

“When I broke the run, I kept wondering why somebody was not catching me,” Seiler said. “I knew Nebraska had players faster than me, but I like to think I had game

speed. I run a lot faster when people are chasing me.”

Despite a 19-10 lead, ISU still had plenty of business to take care of before sealing one of college football’s greatest upsets in the 1990s. ISU’s defense stopped NU on its last two possessions and Seiler’s leadership kept the ball away from the dangerous Nebraska offense. On its last possession, Iowa State took control of the ball with 5:14 left in the game. The Cyclones converted on a third-and-three, a third-and-six and a fourth-and-five while chewing up the remainder of the clock and securing the most improbable of upsets, a 19-10 win over No. 7 Nebraska.

The loss was Nebraska’s only conference setback in its 1992 Big Eight championship season. The Huskers were the national leader in rushing yards per game (328) in 1992, but were held to just 192 while ISU racked up 373 yards on the ground. *Sports Illustrated* awarded Seiler its

player of the week award and called ISU’s win “the upset of the season.”

“Our goal entering the game was that we wanted Nebraska to play us,” Seiler said. “We had our pride and we wanted them to realize they were in a game. You always dream about something like this, but this was almost an unbelievable story. I am just glad it happened to me.”