

WEEK THREE
NORTHERN ILLINOIS at NEBRASKA

Nebraska puts away Northern Illinois early in a 44-8 win

LINCOLN, Neb. -- Nebraska took out some frustration on Northern Illinois after letting a win slip away last week.

Adrian Martinez threw for two touchdowns and ran for another and Dedrick Mills rushed for 116 yards in the Cornhuskers' 44-8 win Saturday night.

The Cornhuskers (2-1) bounced back from blowing a 17-point lead in an overtime loss at Colorado. NIU (1-2) won 21-17 in Lincoln two years ago but was no match this time.

Nebraska had 525 yards of total offense and posted its largest margin of victory over a Football Bowl Subdivision opponent since a 39-point win over South Alabama in 2015.

"The offense wanted to prove something, and in the second half we wanted to finish the game," Martinez said. "That's half the battle. Our guys approached it the right way today."

Martinez threw for 257 yards and had 301 yards of total offense, the ninth time in 14 career starts he's gone over 300.

"Adrian is going to keep getting better, too," Frost said. "There are still some things he needs to learn. But he's still a true sophomore. He's a really good player and he's going to make whatever plays we need him to." Maurice Washington scored the Huskers' first two touchdowns on their way to a 30-5 lead at half. He took a short forward pitch from Martinez to the end zone right after Austin Allen recovered punter Matt Ference's fumbled snap at the NIU 21.

Three series later, Washington ran left and beat safety Trequan Smith to the corner. Safety Marshe Terry had an angle on him, but Washington zoomed past him for a 60-yard run, the longest of his career.

"What's made us good as a staff is always keeping a foot on the gas," Nebraska coach Scott Frost said. "I want our guys to play like that all the time."

Mills, who averaged under 3 yards per carry in the first two games, raised that to an eye-popping 10.5 against NIU.

"It feels amazing," Mills said. "First couple of weeks I was rushing the run instead of being patient and finding the holes. This week in practice I emphasized slowing down and making the right cuts."

Mills, who broke a 61-yard run in the first quarter but fumbled on the next play, scored from 24 yards and Kanawai Noa caught a 27-yard TD pass just before half.

The Huskers mounted a goal-line stand early in the fourth quarter, with Eli Sullivan breaking up a pass on fourth down from the 1, and held the Huskies to 74 yards rushing.

"Obviously, not our best performance," NIU coach Thomas Hammock said. "We wanted to give ourselves a chance. We didn't do that early. Credit to Nebraska, they had some explosive plays, which we knew could happen."

THE TAKEAWAY

Northern Illinois: The Huskies were competitive for a half against 11th-ranked Utah last week. Against Nebraska, they couldn't establish a ground game and Ross Bowers, who threw for 248 yards, didn't find his rhythm until his team was down four touchdowns.

Nebraska: The Huskers did what they needed to do before they open Big Ten play. They took a couple hits to their health, though. Safety Cam Taylor-Britt left with what appeared to be a shoulder injury in the second quarter and left tackle Brenden Jaimes had to be helped off the field in the fourth.

HUSKIE GIVEN HEAVE-HO

NIU safety Trayshon Foster was ejected for targeting in the first quarter. He led with his helmet when he hit receiver JD Spielman above the shoulders on an incomplete pass along the sideline.

DICEY KICKING SITUATION

Both teams struggled in the kicking game.

Isaac Armstrong, whose miss from 48 yards ended the Huskers' overtime loss at Colorado, had plenty of leg on a 36-yard field goal to open the scoring. But he had an extra point and 37- and 32-yard tries blocked. Armstrong, the starting punter, has been filling in as kicker for the injured Barret Pickering. Lane McCallum, an Air Force transfer listed as a safety, kicked two extra points in the second half.

Punting and kickoffs were adventures for NIU. Ference fumbled a snap and had a punt blocked. Instead of tempting fate, the Huskies lined up as if they were going for it on fourth down twice in the second quarter and had Bowers pooch punt out of the shotgun. The Huskies also had two kickoffs go out of bounds.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
NIU	0	5	3	0	8
NEB	10	20	7	7	44

Scoring Summary

	NIU	NEB
FIRST QUARTER		
NEB FG 12:31 Isaac Armstrong 36 Yd Field Goal	0	3
8 plays, 58 yards, 2:29		
NEB TD 6:22 Maurice Washington 21 Yd pass from Adrian Martinez (Isaac Armstrong Kick)	0	10
1 play, 21 yards, 0:07		
SECOND QUARTER		
NEB TD 12:20 Maurice Washington 60 Yd Run (Isaac Armstrong PAT blocked)	0	16
4 plays, 83 yards, 1:11		
NIU FG 7:58 John Richardson 45 Yd Field Goal	3	16
8 plays, 48 yards, 4:22		
NEB TD 7:19 Dedrick Mills 24 Yd Run (Isaac Armstrong Kick)	3	23
4 plays, 50 yards, 0:39		
NIU SF 1:49 Jordan Cole Safety	5	23
1 play, -4 yards, 0:06		
NEB TD 0:05 Kanawai Noa 27 Yd pass from Adrian Martinez (Lane McCallum Kick)	5	30
5 plays, 87 yards, 0:39		
THIRD QUARTER		
NIU FG 9:47 John Richardson 27 Yd Field Goal	8	30
12 plays, 66 yards, 5:13		
NEB TD 3:00 Adrian Martinez 10 Yd Run (Lane McCallum Kick)	8	37
7 plays, 48 yards, 2:42		
FOURTH QUARTER		
NEB TD 4:04 Noah Vedral 3 Yd Run (Lane McCallum Kick)	8	44
9 plays, 42 yards, 2:28		
Team Stats		
First Downs	20	22
Passes for First	15	12
Rushes for First	4	9
Penalties for First	1	1
Third Down Efficiency	5-20	6-13
Fourth Down Efficiency	2-6	1-1
Total Yards	350	525
Total Plays	81	65
Avg Gain Per Play	4.3	8.1
Net Yards Rushing	74	238
Rushes	32	33
Yards Per Rush	2.3	7.2
Net Yards Passing	276	287
Comp-Att	28-49	19-32
Yards Per Pass	5.6	9.0
Times Sacked	2	0
Yds Lost To Sacks	-16	0
Interceptions	1	0
Punts	7	3
Punt Average	38.6	45.3
Penalties	4	1
Penalty Yards	40	15
Fumbles	1	2
Fumbles Lost	1	1
Time of Poss	37:58	22:02

Individual Stats

RUSHING							
NORTHERN ILLINOIS	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Jordan Nettles	9	43	4.8	0	22		
Tre Harbison	12	30	2.5	0	7		
Rahveon Valentine	2	9	4.5	0	7		
Spencer Tears	1	6	6.0	0	6		
Marcus Childers	2	4	2.0	0	3		
Matt Ference	2	-7	-3.5	0	2		
Ross Bowers	4	-11	-2.8	0	5		
NEBRASKA							
Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG			
Dedrick Mills	11	116	10.5	1	61		
Maurice Washington	4	63	15.8	1	60		
Adrian Martinez	11	44	4.0	1	11		
Rahmir Johnson	3	9	3.0	0	5		
Noah Vedral	1	3	3.0	1	3		
Wyatt Mazour	1	3	3.0	0	3		
Wan'Dale Robinson	2	0	0.0	0	1		
PASSING							
NORTHERN ILLINOIS	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Ross Bowers	25/44	248	5.6	0	1	22.3	
Marcus Childers	3/5	28	5.6	0	0	27.3	
NEBRASKA							
Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat	
Adrian Martinez	16/27	257	9.5	2	0	73.0	
Noah Vedral	3/5	30	6.0	0	0	96.4	

RECEIVING						
NORTHERN ILLINOIS	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG	
Daniel Crawford	5	71	14.2	0	28	
Cole Tucker	5	50	10.0	0	16	
Spencer Tears	3	32	10.7	0	17	
Tyrice Richie	3	31	10.3	0	16	
Corey Lersch	1	26	26.0	0	26	
Mitchell Brinkman	3	25	8.3	0	13	
Marcus Jones	2	18	9.0	0	14	
Jordan Nettles	1	10	10.0	0	10	
Dennis Robinson	2	8	4.0	0	5	
Tre Harbison	1	3	3.0	0	3	
Rahveon Valentine	1	3	3.0	0	3	
Michael Love	1	-1	-1.0	0	0	
NEBRASKA						
Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
JD Spielman	4	76	19.0	0	41	
Kanawai Noa	3	51	17.0	1	27	
Wan'Dale Robinson	3	48	16.0	0	30	
Jack Stoll	2	38	19.0	0	27	
Mike Williams	1	26	26.0	0	26	
Maurice Washington	3	18	6.0	1	21	
Darien Chase	1	13	13.0	0	13	
Kurt Rafdal	1	9	9.0	0	9	
Jaevon McQuitty	1	8	8.0	0	8	