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^No. 1 Nebraska 62, No. 2 Florida 24<

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TEMPE, Ariz. (AP) _ Tom Osborne spent much of the season defending his Nebraska team. On Tuesday night, the Huskers left no doubt about defending their national championship.

Tackle-busting runs by Lawrence Phillips and Tommie Frazier and a smothering defense helped the top-ranked Huskers demolish No. 2 Florida 62-24 in the Fiesta Bowl, making them the first repeat champions in 16 years and the first team to win consecutive titles with perfect records in nearly four decades.

Nebraska dominated the showdown between the nation's only undefeated, untied teams, scoring 29 straight points in the second quarter and taking the zip out of Florida's 'Fun 'N Gun' aerial attack by pounding quarterback Danny Wuerffel with seven sacks and picking him off three times.

'Nebraska's just way better than us,' Florida coach Steve Spurrier said. 'They outcoached us and outplayed us. We got smashed up front ... Tommie Frazier made us look like we weren't trying at times.'

Phillips, considered a Heisman Trophy contender before serving a six-game suspension for assaulting a former girlfriend, carried 25 times for 165 yards and scored three touchdowns in his first start since returning to the team in late October. He caught a 16-yard touchdown pass in the first quarter, scored on a juking 42-yard run in the second quarter and added a 15-yard TD run in the final period.

The only beating the Huskers took all year was from critics who portrayed them as outlaws after Phillips and three of his teammates were arrested during a three-month period. Osborne came under fire for allowing Phillips back on the team and permitting two players charged in shootings to continue playing.

'I'm glad the season is over,' Osborne joked to reporters. 'I hope all you guys concentrate on basketball now. I need a vacation.'

Frazier, whose career was nearly ended by blood clots last season, ran 16 times for a career-high 199 yards and two touchdowns, including a Fiesta-record 75-yard scamper in which he broke six tackles by four different players.

'Frazier is a great football player. We think the option still has a place in football. He showed that tonight,' Osborne said.

The senior also completed 6-of-14 for 105 yards and one TD.

'I had a great career at Nebraska. There's no better way to end it,' Frazier said.

Wuerffel, who threw 35 TD passes and set an NCAA record for passing efficiency in the regular season, was harassed into his worst performance of the year. He was 17-of-31 for 255 yards with three interceptions and only one TD pass.

Nebraska was so dominating that it did not have to punt until the fourth quarter, and it piled up 524 yards rushing while holding Florida to minus-28 yards on the ground.

'We had trouble tackling anyone who was carrying the ball for Nebraska,' Spurrier said. 'I don't know how many of our guys played their hearts out tonight.'

The victory capped a remarkable three-year, 36-1 run by the Huskers, who became the first modern team to win 36 games in that span. Only a last-minute, two-point loss to Florida State in the 1994 Orange Bowl prevented Nebraska from winning an unprecedented three straight titles.

'We weren't as emotional as we were last year,' Osborne said. 'The players were expecting to win it. It wasn't 'ho hum,' but it was more matter-of-fact.'

At least for one night, the Huskers' off-the-field problems were overshadowed by their brilliant play on the field.

The Huskers (12-0) were simply too strong, fast and efficient for the Gators (12-1), who seemed out of their element in their first national championship game.

An offensive machine that averaged 440 points and 534 yards during the regular season, Florida looked feeble against Nebraska's swarming, in-your-face defense. After Wuerffel's 1-yard TD sneak put the Gators ahead 10-6 with 1:17 left in the first quarter, Florida was held to no yards and no points in the second period as Nebraska turned a 10-6 deficit into a 35-10 halftime lead.

"I guess we wore them down," Phillips said. "Our defense wore them down, too. They got tired of getting blocked and a lot of big holes opened up."

The Huskers are the first champions to repeat since Bear Bryant's Alabama teams in 1978-79 and the first to do it with perfect records since Bud Wilkinson's Oklahoma squads in 1955-56. Nebraska also won two consecutive championships under Bob Devaney in 1970-71.

It was the second-worst rout in 30 meetings between the nation's top two teams, trailing only Army's 48-0 win over Notre Dame in 1945. The game, sponsored by Tostitos, was the first national championship contest put together by the Fiesta-Orange-Sugar bowl alliance.

"We're not used to being on the end of a score like this," Florida receiver Chris Doering said. "It's always tough to lose, and especially in a game like this is very disappointing."

Phillips triggered Nebraska's second-quarter explosion when he caught a crossfield pass from Frazier in the clear and somersaulted into the end zone. Kris Brown's low extra point kick was blocked but, with exception of two errant passes by Frazier that were picked off, it was nothing but good times for Nebraska the rest of the way.

After Phillips' long TD run put Nebraska ahead 13-10, the Huskers piled it on with a safety, a 1-yard TD run by freshman Ahman Green, a 42-yard interception return by Michael Booker and a pair of field goals by Brown to blow it open by halftime.

"I want to thank all our fans for supporting us. We're bringing it back to Lincoln for you," Booker said.

Frazier tacked on a 35-yard touchdown run in the third period on a quarterback draw before Florida finally ended its scoring drought on Wuerffel's 35-yard pass to Ike Hilliard and a 2-point pass to Reidel Anthony with 52 seconds left in the quarter.

Nebraska scored on a 1-yard plunge by backup quarterback Brook Berringer with 4:44 remaining, and Florida closed out the scoring when Anthony returned the ensuing kickoff 93 yards.

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