

# Ottawa Cyclones set Topside records

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Other Eagles in double figures were Dustin Chartier, 15; and Reece Bowman, 13 points.

Ottawa set records for total team points in the tournament and for the highest winning score. The team total of 281 points breaks the old record set by Goodland in 1993, and the 107 points Ottawa scored against Burlington in the opening round was the highest score ever.

On the boys side, Ottawa finished third defeating Holyoke, 97-71; Burlington was fifth defeating the Cowboys, 66-52; and Yuma was seventh, defeating Morrill, Neb., 60-41.

Holyoke won the free throw plaque, hitting 64.6 percent of their shots.

Named to the Topside All-Tournament boys team were Jake Ellerd, Wray; Donald Raymer, Goodland; Clayton Gaunt, McCook; Chris Herwreck, Ottawa; Dusty Sprague, Holyoke; Justin Tomes, Burlington; Reece Bowman, Wray; Ross Thompson, Ottawa; Krae Dutoit, McCook; and Brandon Schoal, Burlington.

The all-tournament teams are voted on by judges who watch all the games of the Topside Tipoff, and their votes are tabulated at the end.

On the girls side, Ottawa's Lady Cyclones were the champs, defeating the Cowgirls 56-46; McCook's Lady Bison finished third, defeating Morrill, 27-23; Wray's Lady Eagles were fifth defeating Holyoke, 36-25; and Burlington was seventh defeating Yuma, 54-53.

The girls All-tournament team included Kara Ferguson, Morrill; Gabby Smith, McCook; Jayme Vance, Ottawa; Theresa Lenz, Wray; Jayci Stone, Goodland; Liz Burks, Ottawa; Jessi Weber, Burlington; Lindsey Dietrich, Ottawa; Danae DeVaughn, McCook; and Anny McCoy, Goodland.



Justin Randolph of McCook won the 3-point shooting contest with 16 of 25, and had six in the championship game against Wray.

The Goodland cheerleaders were awarded the tournament Spirit Award.

# Husker wins Heisman

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Eric Crouch expected the worst. Instead, the Nebraska quarterback is coming home with the Heisman Trophy and a chance to lead the Cornhuskers to a national title.

"It's something I never thought could happen," Crouch said Sunday from New York. "It's been a real fun ride."

The wild ride continued Saturday night and Sunday, with Nebraska sneaking back into the national championship game.

LSU's 31-20 upset of then-No. 2 Tennessee in the Southeast Conference title game knocked the Volunteers from the Rose Bowl and jumbled the Bowl Championship Series for the third straight week.

When the computers were done sorting out the poll averages, eight computer ratings, strength of schedule, wins and losses and bonus points for big wins, Nebraska ended up second in Sunday's final BCS standings.

The Huskers (11-1) will play top-ranked Miami (11-0) for the national title Jan. 3 in the Rose Bowl.

"Coming out here and being able to win a Heisman Trophy and now playing in the national championship is like a dream come true. It really is," Crouch said after Sunday's BCS announcement.

Crouch's Heisman and title hopes looked bleak three weeks ago when Colorado humbled Nebraska with a 62-36 win. But in the weeks that followed, none of the other contenders stood out.

Crouch, Florida's Rex Grossman, Joey Harrington of Oregon and Miami's Ken Dorsey were the finalists and nobody was quite sure of the front-runner.

Crouch said before he left for New York that he wasn't getting his hopes up. But after an hour-long introduction ceremony, Crouch finally was announced as the winner.

"The anticipation up to the announcement was just a feeling that's almost unexplainable," Crouch said. "Your heart's beating out of your chest, just waiting to hear the name that they call."

When they called my name it was almost a sense of relief that it was all over with now and I had finally won."

Crouch joins Johnny Rodgers (1972) and Mike Rozier ('83) as the Cornhuskers' only Heisman winners. Although the ceremony wasn't at the Downtown Athletic Club, which was damaged in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, pictures of previous winners were displayed in the banquet room. Rodgers and Rozier were among the former winners who attended Saturday.

"It means a great deal to me. It's a huge honor to be associated with the type of players that have received this

award in the past," Crouch said. "You could feel the magnitude and how much it really meant just sitting in that room. The atmosphere was great."

# Struggling Raiders slip by Chiefs, 28-26

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — The stumbling, struggling Oakland Raiders barely survived Sunday with two surprising defensive stands and the return of a familiar punt returner.

Tim Brown ran 88 yards for a touchdown on his first punt return in three years, and Regan Upshaw forced Trent Green's fumble on a 2-point conversion with 1:38 left as the Raiders beat

the Kansas City Chiefs 28-26. With the big plays, the Raiders survived a series of blunders to keep moving toward the playoffs.

Leading 28-20, Oakland stopped the Chiefs at the 4 with 3:03 to play when Charles Woodson broke up a fade pass to Derrick Alexander in the end zone.

Rich Gannon, one of the game's least mistake-prone quarterbacks, fumbled with 1:49 left while stretching for a first down that would have allowed the Raiders to run out the clock.

Trent Green, who passed for 253 yards and two scores, hit Tony Gonzalez for a 24-yard TD 11 seconds later. But Upshaw beat Kansas City's line around the left side and put a big hit on Green, causing a fumble that sealed a nail-biter for Oakland.

In the Rothman ratings, for example, Colorado would have moved up one place and into the Rose Bowl if it had beaten Oklahoma State by 17 points instead of 22-19 on Oct. 27. "It's been an extraordinary year, with upsets and unexpected turns," Swofford said. "A great thing for college football. It's brought added interest to the BCS bowl games. Five teams had opportunities to win a game to put themselves into the national championship game. None were able to do so."

# Win keeps Broncos alive in playoff hunt

DENVER (AP) — With their starting quarterback sidelined by injury, the Denver Broncos rode the Gus Bus to a crucial win.

Gus Frerotte, replacing Brian Griese early in the second half, drove the Broncos to two third-quarter scores, and Denver prevailed 20-7 over the Seattle Seahawks on Sunday night.

Denver (7-6) sacked Matt Hasselbeck five times and held the Seahawks' running game in check, even with the return of Ricky Watters after missing eight games with a shoulder injury.

Frerotte, seeing his first significant

action since last season's AFC wild-card playoff game, completed 10 of 20 passes for 77 yards and a touchdown.

Terrell Davis, starting his second straight game in an injury-plagued season, ran for 109 yards. Rod Smith, playing on a sprained left ankle, had eight catches for 66 yards.

Hasselbeck was 17-for-37 for 243 yards with one TD and two interceptions.

Things started shakily for Frerotte. Griese took a blow to the head on the first play in the second half when linebacker Levon Kirkland landed on him



McCook's Marcus Kulhmann shot over the outstretched hands of Wray's Justin Dodsworth during the Topside Tipoff championship the Bison won, 83-71. It was the Bison's fourth straight tournament championship.

Photos by Tom Betz / The Goodland Daily News

# Huskers slips into Rose Bowl

By Richard Rosenblatt

AP Football Writer

With no playoff in place, college football almost always comes up with a wacky way to end the season. It came up with a doozy on Sunday.

Nebraska will play undefeated Miami in the Rose Bowl for the national championship on Jan. 3, thanks to an amazing series of upsets during the last two weeks that lifted the Huskers (11-1) in the final Bowl Championship Series standings.

Not even a last-game 62-36 loss to Colorado could keep Nebraska out of the BCS' title game.

Miami (11-0) finished first in the final standings, and the Huskers beat out the Buffaloes for second place by a scant five hundredths of a point.

"We think the formula is fair," BCS chairman John Swofford said. "Controversy doesn't affect credibility."

Don't tell that to Colorado coach Gary Barnett, whose Buffaloes (10-2) will play Oregon (10-1) in the Fiesta Bowl on Jan. 1.

"This sort of takes a little luster off my support for the BCS," Barnett said. "I think I put a lot of trust in the system working, and it did work. It just didn't work in our favor."

"How you're playing at this point — seems to me that should be thought of," he said.

Added Florida coach Steve Spurrier: "As we all know, college football is not the most fair thing without a playoff system."

Thanks to LSU's 31-20 upset of Tennessee in Saturday night's Southeastern Conference title game, Nebraska found itself packing for Pasadena in what turned into a glorious weekend for the HuskerNation. On Saturday night, quarterback Eric Crouch won the Heisman Trophy.

In the final BCS standings, Miami had 2.62 points, Nebraska 7.23 points, Colorado 7.28 and Oregon was fourth with 8.67 points.

Nebraska was No. 4 in the AP media poll and the USA Today/ESPN coaches poll on Sunday, but held a sizable edge over No. 2 Oregon and No. 3 Colorado in the computer portion of the BCS formula.

"Colorado and Oregon are great teams," Nebraska coach Frank Solich said. "Anytime you don't have two clear-cut, undefeated teams, you're going to have controversy."

The final margin was so close that if the Buffaloes were one spot higher in any of the computer ratings they would have been off to the Rose Bowl instead of the Huskers.

In the Rothman ratings, for example, Colorado would have moved up one place and into the Rose Bowl if it had beaten Oklahoma State by 17 points instead of 22-19 on Oct. 27.

"It's been an extraordinary year, with upsets and unexpected turns," Swofford said. "A great thing for college football. It's brought added interest to the BCS bowl games. Five teams had opportunities to win a game to put themselves into the national championship game. None were able to do so."

After Nebraska lost to Colorado on Nov. 23, Oklahoma blew its title chance with a 16-13 loss to Oklahoma State the next day. On Dec. 1, Tennessee knocked Florida out of contention, 34-32, and later that night Texas was eliminated by Colorado, 39-27. On Saturday, it was LSU's turn to throw the BCS into chaos.

Even though the Vols (10-2) were knocked down to the Citrus Bowl against Michigan, coach Phillip Fulmer is OK with the current setup.

"If you're not going to have a playoff, this is a real good system," Fulmer said. They'll continue to tweak it to be as good as it can be. We've been benefactors of the system, winning it in 1998, and putting ourselves back in the picture in 1999. I see it as a plus — if you're not going to have a playoff."

The BCS standings were devised by SEC commissioner Roy Kramer in 1998 in hopes of ensuring that the top two teams play for a national title. The rankings use a formula that incorporates the AP media and the coaches polls, eight computers, strength of schedule, won-lost record and bonus points for big wins.

Nebraska will go to the Rose Bowl as an at-large team, the first time that's happened in the BCS's four-year history. The winner of that game is automatically crowned the coaches' champion.

But there's also a possibility of splitting national champions with the Fiesta Bowl winner claiming the No. 1 ranking in the final AP poll.

AP voters will turn in their ballots immediately after the Rose Bowl, and all teams are eligible for the title.

"I think controversy comes into play when the final BCS standing differs from the AP poll and the coaches' poll," Swofford said.

The Ducks and Buffaloes seem to have legitimate gripes about being left out of the Rose.

—Oregon won the Pac-10 Conference title and finished No. 2 in the polls, part of the BCS' complex method for determining its top teams.

—Colorado took the Big 12 with a 39-37 upset of Texas on Dec. 1, a week after beating Nebraska, and finished No. 3 in the polls.

The Orange Bowl chose Florida (9-2) — 34-32 losers to the Vols on Dec. 1 — to play Atlantic Coast Conference champion Maryland (10-1) on Jan. 2.

The Sugar Bowl will match SEC champion LSU (9-3) against Big Ten champion Illinois (10-1).

Problems arise in the BCS when only one team finishes with a perfect record. Oklahoma was the only unbeaten team last year, and the BCS computer picked a one-loss Florida State team to play the Sooners over Miami, which also had one loss, even though the Hurricanes beat the Seminoles during the season.

The BCS then tweaked the formula to give a team a bonus points-deduction for a quality wins. The Buffs, despite their big wins over Nebraska and Texas, could not overcome two losses and an unfriendly computer or two.

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