

Bowl Makes Mike Riley Believer In Power Of Run At Nebraska



JOHN GREEN/BAY AREA NEWS GROUP/TNS
Nebraska's Imani Cross (32) is stopped short of the goal line in the first quarter of their game with UCLA in the Foster Farms Bowl at Levi's Stadium on Saturday in Santa Clara, Calif. The run game helped Nebraska to a 37-29 victory over the Bruins.

BY ERIC OLSON
AP College Football Writer

The end of coach Mike Riley's first season at Nebraska has left him and the fan base excited about the possibilities for 2016.

Getting into a bowl game with five regular-season wins turned out to be the most fortuitous thing for the Cornhuskers (6-7). That's because their 37-29 Foster Farms Bowl win over UCLA on Saturday served as a trial run for the physical style of offense Riley said he wants his team to lean on next season.

It took until the bowl, which followed a disastrous passing game by Tommy Armstrong Jr. against Iowa, for Riley and offensive coordinator Danny Langsdorf to commit to the power running game old-school Big Red fans love.

Of course, the matchup against an undersized UCLA defense demanded that the Huskers run the ball. The season-high 326 rushing yards, the emergence of 225-pound freshman Devine Ozigbo and a game plan that complemented Armstrong's running ability offered a strong case for keeping the offense grounded.

"What we eventually want to do next year is be in the top three in the league in running the football, and when you can do that, then life goes better everywhere," Riley said. "We didn't necessarily have to wait until next

year to start with that idea."

Nebraska went into the bowl seventh in the Big Ten in rushing at 167.8 yards a game, the team's lowest average in six years. Armstrong had more than 40 pass attempts in four games, all losses, and his 402 for the season were the most since Joe Ganz threw 420 times in 2008.

Playing from behind in so many games inflated the pass attempts, but there was no evidence the staff had full confidence in the run game until the bowl. Though Armstrong completed a career-best 55.2 percent of his passes, his 16 interceptions were most since Joe Dailey's

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Leidner Leads Minnesota Over CMU 21-14

BY NOAH TRISTER
AP Sports Writer

DETROIT (AP) — For most of the game, Minnesota could rely on its defense. When the Golden Gophers briefly fell behind in the fourth quarter, quarterback Mitch Leidner responded.

Leidner ran 13 yards for a touchdown with 4:26 remaining, and the Golden Gophers held on for a 21-14 win over Central Michigan in the Quick Lane Bowl on Monday night.

Minnesota (6-7) ended a trying season on a positive note. Coach Jerry Kill retired in late October because of continued difficulty managing his epilepsy and his job. The Gophers were 5-7 after the regular season but were able to play on because not enough teams reached six wins to fill all the bowls.

All three teams that went to bowls at 5-7 — Minnesota, Nebraska and San Jose State — ended up winning them.

Central Michigan (7-6) took a 14-13 lead with 11:08 remaining on a 13-yard touchdown run by Romello Ross. Minnesota responded by driving 74 yards in 13 plays.

Leidner ran for the go-ahead touchdown, then threw to KJ Maye for a 2-point conversion.

CMU drove back into Minnesota territory, but Cooper Rush threw an ill-advised pass while being pulled down from behind, and his attempt to avoid a sack backfired when Brian Boddy-Calhoun intercepted the ball with 2:10 to play.

Both teams had to overcome plenty of adversity this season. Kill was replaced by Tracy Claeys after his retirement, and CMU coach John Bonamego was diagnosed with cancer in his left tonsil and underwent treatment before the season.

Kill was an honorary captain for the Gophers at the pregame coin toss Monday.

Rush ran for the game's first touchdown, scoring from 1 yard out to give CMU a 7-3 lead early in the second quarter. The Gophers took a 10-7 lead into halftime thanks to an 11-yard touchdown pass from Leidner to Maye.

It was 13-7 in the third when an onside kick by Minnesota was unsuccessful, giving the Chippewas the ball at midfield. CMU wasn't able to do anything with that field position, but after a failed fourth down by Minnesota early in the fourth, the Chippewas went 56 yards in four plays.

CMU took the lead on the run by Ross. Minnesota appeared to have him stopped at about the 3-yard line, but the Chippewas were able to push the pile into the end zone.

The announced attendance was 34,217 despite a winter storm that was passing through Michigan. Having a local team surely helped boost the number of fans. Last year's game between North Carolina and Rutgers drew 23,876.

Sturgis Leads Farrand Inv.

SIOUX FALLS — Sturgis holds a three-point lead on Sioux Falls Roosevelt entering the final day of the Floyd Farrand Invitational wrestling tournament, which began on Monday at Lincoln High School.

The Scoopers scored 100 points on the opening day, edging out Roosevelt (97) for midway honors. Brandon Valley ranked third at 77 points, followed by Vermillion (68.5) and Watertown (68).

Vermillion advanced Lucas Anglin (106), Ryne Whisler (113), Jacob Husby (120), Trey Hage (126), Carter Kratz (160) and Noah Westergaard (182) to semifinal action. Brett Culver (170), Hunter Christopherson (195) and Brody Surrell (220) remain alive in consolation action.

Defending Class B champion Parkston ranked seventh with 63.5 points. Logan Mahoney (120), Tyler Holzbauer (145), Blake Bietz (152), Lucas Bietz (160) and Austin Ripp (170) remain alive in championship action. Slayton Neugebauer (182) and Tucker Bigge (285) remain alive in consolation competition.

Wagner had 54 points on the opening day to sit in ninth in the 18-team field. Ben Soukup (120) and Truman Ashes (285) remain in the hunt for an individual title. Lance Soukup (106), Preston Nedved (113), Colton Frei (132), Cole Soulek (170) and Jace Johnson (220) remain alive in consolation action.

The tournament concludes today (Tuesday).

Notebook | Parkston Classic

Area Teams Searching For Early-Season Progress

BY JEREMY HOECK
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PARKSTON — Work in progress.

That was a popular phrase used by girls' basketball coaches at Monday's Parkston Classic.

Whether it's Wagner or Irene-Wakonda searching for a No. 3 scorer to complement a pair of standouts, or Gayville-Volin adjusting to a new offense, the annual tournament gave those area squads an early-season opportunity to work on some things against tough competition.

Mike Koupal calls his team's early-season progress the 'Big Three.'

As in, that's the goal.

Koupal's Wagner Red Raiders have a potent 1-2 punch in seniors Emily Brunasing and Ali Kuca (they both had double-doubles Monday), but the next key for the rest of the season is to find a third scorer.

"That's what we're looking for, that third scoring option," Koupal said after Monday's 57-53 win over Tri-Valley.

"A win is a win, but it's nice to have more than one or two people you can go to when you really need something."

Koupal has two big-time scorers, as was on display in the Class A showdown with Tri-Valley.

Brunasing scored 24 points and grabbed 14 rebounds, while Kuca — a Mount Marty College recruit — added 18 points and 15 rebounds.

From there, Janessa Picotte added five points and Abby Freier had four points.

Wagner is, however, fortunate in that it will at some point in the near future get two potential third scoring options back — senior Brooke Roth and junior Bethany Sully.

"Coach always says that, 'Big 3,' and we always think about it," Brunasing said. "If we had three, I think everything would fall into place."

Even for a Wagner program that has been consistently competitive in its district (now region), boasting two weapons like Brunasing and Kuca is a rarity.

"Those two have been playing with each other since fifth grade, so they know how to play together," Koupal said.

"In the past we've had one really good scorer, but now we've got two, and that really helps your younger players."

The team's overall versatility is also a benefit, Brunasing pointed out.

"We have a lot of girls who can play different positions," she said. "We work on that in every practice; playing all over the court."

Part of that ongoing search for a third consistent scoring option, to be fair, centers on the fact that teams haven't really gotten into their routines yet.

Wagner, for example, was playing its third game of the season Monday, and Irene-Wakonda was playing its fourth.

Much like Wagner, Irene-Wakonda knows what it's getting with its top two scorers, seniors Caitlin Hinseth and Andrea Sokolowski.

The duo combined for 35 points in Monday morning's 54-48 victory over Chester Area.

"That helps, for sure," said Irene-Wakonda coach Todd Bak, whose Eagles improve to 2-2 on the season.

"We definitely need a third scorer, though," he added.

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JEREMY HOECK/P&D
ABOVE: Gayville-Volin's Genny Clark, right, is hounded by two Sanborn Central-Woonsocket players during a loose ball in Monday's game at the Parkston Classic.
BOTTOM LEFT: Wagner's Ali Kuca, right, puts up a shot on the baseline against two Tri-Valley defenders during Monday's game at the Parkston Classic.
BOTTOM RIGHT: Irene-Wakonda's Andrea Sokolowski, right, shoots over Chester Area defender Sarah Benson during Monday morning's game at the Parkston Classic.



Langford Downs Platte-Geddes In Home Classic

LANGFORD — The Langford Lions jumped out to a 27-12 halftime lead and held on for a 46-32 victory over Platte-Geddes in the Langford Classic on Monday.

Chance Olson scored 21 points to lead Langford. Mason Larson had 13 points, nine rebounds and five blocked shots. Ryan Punt also had nine rebounds.

For Platte-Geddes, Alex Gerlach led the way with 10 points and three assists.

Langford also won the 'B' game 28-16.

PLATTE-GEDDES	7	12	25	32
LANGFORD	13	27	34	46

Highmore-Harr. 64, Wess. Spr. 46

WESSINGTON SPRINGS — Max Ring scored a game-high 19 points to lead Highmore-Harold to a 64-46 victory over Wessington Springs in boys' basketball action on Monday.

Hadley Hamlin scored 16 points and Jarrett Krause added 12 points in the victory.

Landon Ochsner scored 15 points and grabbed eight rebounds to lead Wessington Springs. Nicolas

Paulson added 10 points.

Highmore-Harold, 3-1 and winners of three straight, plays Hanson at the Parkston Classic today (Tuesday). Wessington Springs hosts Colome on Saturday.

HIGHMORE-HAROLD (3-1)	12	27	48	64
WESSINGTON SPRINGS (0-4)	11	17	33	46

O'Neill 69, Madison 31

O'NEILL, Neb. — O'Neill used a 45-7 edge in the middle two periods to pull away to a 69-31 victory over Madison in the Stanton Holiday Tournament on Monday.

Tyler Regan had 16 points and eight rebounds, and Tyson Hostert had 10 points and six assists to lead O'Neill. Jake Young also had 10 points in the victory.

No statistics were reported for Madison.

The tournament continues today (Tuesday).

MADISON (3-5)	14	14	21	31
O'NEILL (5-1)	15	38	60	69

Norfolk 65, McCook 30

MCCOOK, Neb. — Norfolk outscored McCook 61-20 through the first three quarters and coasted to a 65-30

victory in the opening round of the GNAC Tournament on Monday.

Logan Strom scored 17 points and grabbed seven rebounds to lead a balanced Norfolk attack. Matt Hagedorn netted 12 points. Brandon Villalpando added five assists and three steals in the victory.

The tournament continues today (Tuesday).

NORFOLK (6-1)	24	37	61	65
MCCOOK (4-3)	14	16	20	30

Girls

Arlington 45, Canistota 33

BROOKINGS — Arlington's Bailee Steffensen posted 19 points and 13 rebounds to lead the Cardinals past Canistota 45-33 at the Swiftel Classic on Monday.

Jade Gallagher and McKenzie Mix each had 10 rebounds for Arlington. Mix also had eight assists and five steals.

Kalli Ortman led Canistota with 16 points and eight rebounds.

Arlington hosts Florence-Henry on Saturday. Canistota travels to Parker on Saturday.