

# Nebraska's No-Huddle Offense Equipped To Rally

BY ERIC OLSON  
 AP Sports Writer

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska switched to the no-huddle offense last year with the idea of dictating tempo and wearing out defenses.

The system also has proved valuable when the 18th-ranked Cornhuskers have had to play from behind.

This past weekend's 28-24 victory at Michigan State marked the third time the Huskers have won after wiping out double-digit deficits in the second half.

Quarterback Taylor Martinez and his mates say they take a business-as-usual approach when the clock is running down.

"It's pretty much our normal offense," Martinez said Monday, "because we go at such a fast pace."

Down 24-14 to Michigan State, the Huskers ran six plays covering 58 yards in 2 minutes, 9 seconds to make it a three-point game.

They got the ball back with 1:20 left and used nine plays to go 80 yards, converting a fourth-and-10 to keep the drive alive and scoring the winning touchdown with six seconds to play.

Two weeks earlier, Martinez led quick fourth-quarter drives of 80 and 76 yards to overcome a 12-point deficit and beat Northwestern.

There wasn't nearly as much drama as Nebraska came back from 17 points down in the third quarter to beat Wisconsin in September. Scoring drives of 77 and 75 yards, the first lasting 87 seconds, pulled the Huskers within three points. A couple field goals put them over the top early in the fourth quarter.

Without the three come-from-behind wins, the Huskers (7-2, 4-1 Big Ten) wouldn't be in control of the Legends Division heading into Saturday's game against Penn State (6-3, 4-1).

Coach Bo Pelini said Martinez

has successfully orchestrated the late-game dramatics because of the poise and confidence he's gained as a three-year starter.

Martinez's maturity was apparent on the last drive against Michigan State when Nebraska faced fourth-and-10 at its 42 with 40 seconds to play. He checked down to his third receiver, finding tight end Kyler Reed open for a 38-yard catch-and-run that kept the series going. Four plays later, after a questionable pass-interference penalty on Michigan State, Jamal Turner caught a well-placed 5-yard pass in the corner of the end zone.

"Let's face it, he's getting better as a football player," Pelini said of Martinez. "You get better and your confidence grows, and you have a belief you can get in that situation and have success."

"I don't want to find myself exactly in that situation again, but he's a guy who can execute when need be."

The Huskers implemented the no-huddle offense last year after Tim Beck took over as coordinator.

Before coming to Nebraska, Beck was receivers coach and passing-game coordinator for the high-speed offense that carried the 2007 Kansas Jayhawks to an Orange Bowl victory under Mark Mangino.

Beck came to Nebraska in 2008 as running backs coach and last year replaced offensive coordinator Shawn Watson.

Pelini said Watson's West Coast offense had a complex system of audibles and wasn't adept at accelerating when the situation dictated it.

In Beck's offense, players are right up on the line of scrimmage after the previous play. The next snap often comes with more than 20 seconds to spare on the play clock.



KIRTHMON F. DOZIER/DETROIT FREE PRESS/MCT  
 Nebraska's Jamal Turner catches a 5-yard touchdown pass with six seconds to play against Michigan State, touching off a celebration on Saturday at Spartan Stadium in East Lansing, Mich.

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# Iverson Looks To Stay On Court



PHOTO COURTESY: COLORADO STATE SPORTS INFORMATION

Colton Iverson poses for a preseason photo in his Colorado State uniform. The senior from Yankton sat out the 2011-12 season after transferring from Minnesota, and has studied his play — including a highlight film of all 135 fouls he committed in a Gopher uniform — to prepare himself for his final season of college basketball.

## Yankton Native Studies His Game To Keep Self In Contests In Final Season Of College Basketball

BY JEREMY HOECK  
 jeremy.hoeck@yankton.net

Colton Iverson does not study a highlight film of all his fouls, let alone one with all his collegiate baskets.

No, the Yankton native has a 40-minute montage of all his 135 fouls during the three seasons he spent at the University of Minnesota. Now a senior on the Colorado State men's basketball team, Iverson doesn't want anything to prevent him from seeing the court during his final college season.

"Yeah, it's something different, that's for sure," he said in a phone interview Monday from Fort Collins, Colo. "It's a learning experience."

Iverson, a 23-year-old and 6-foot-10 center, is no stranger to adaptation.

The 2008 Yankton High School graduate transferred from Minnesota to Colorado State, mostly — as he points out — because of previous CSU coach Tim Miles. When Miles left for Nebraska and the Big Ten waters, Iverson decided to stay.

Then came a year of having to sit out as a Division I transfer, but now Iverson and his teammates are ready to bring the Rams back to the NCAA Tournament.

"Sitting out was tough, but we're excited about this year. We've got a lot of experience," he said. "We're setting high expectations for ourselves. I think we should be able to build off last year."

Colorado State posted a 20-12 record last season under Miles and earned a bid to the NCAA Tournament, where the Rams ul-

timately lost in their first game to Murray State.

After Miles left, CSU hired Larry Eustachy, who guided Southern Miss to the NCAA Tournament last season.

Iverson — and his teammates — were understandably surprised by Miles' departure, especially in the case of Iverson who came to Colorado State knowing he would have one season on the court.

"It was tough at first, coach Miles was a big reason why I came here. He recruited me out of high school, and we had a good relationship," Iverson said. "Him leaving was a big shock to me, but we went out and got another great coach."

Iverson's collegiate resume now includes stints with three well-known coaches (Tubby Smith, Miles and Eustachy), and again has to adapt to a new philosophy.

"You learn a lot from every system in you're in, and it's definitely benefited me to have a relationship at different schools. I like to take that as a positive," Iverson said. "You have to adapt to whatever system you're in because every coach has a different perspective. It's a pretty similar to what we did at Minnesota right now."

The Rams figure to run a high-low offense and a physical defense under Eustachy, Iverson said, which was much the same system while at Minnesota from 2008-11.

Iverson's role with the Golden Gophers changed throughout his

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## MMC's Fly, Pater Qualify For Nationals

VANCOUVER, Wash. — Mount Marty College senior Kaylee Fly and junior Jordan Pater have earned individual berths in the NAIA Cross Country National Championships, Nov. 17 in Vancouver, Wash.

Fly will compete in her second consecutive girls' race after earning the third women's qualifying spot out of the Great Plains Athletic Conference with her ninth place finish in Saturday's GPAC meet. Dordt earned the women's



Fly

ual spots.

Pater finished 11th in the GPAC meet to earn the fourth in-

team automatic berth out of the league, with Concordia's Sarah Kortze and Jen Schwalenberg, Hastings' Jessica Cunningham and Doane's Jessa Sughroue earning the other individual spots.



Pater

the league's automatic team berth, with Morningside earning an at-large berth.

dividual spot out of the league.

Dordt's Ryan Tholen and Nathan Jackson, and Doane's Jarid Holliday and Eric Weers earned the league's other individual spots.

Concordia earned the league's automatic team berth, with Morningside earning an at-large berth.

## Sputtering Vikings Search For Passing Solutions

BY DAVE CAMPBELL  
 AP Pro Football Writer

EDEN PRAIRIE, Minn. (AP) — The Minnesota Vikings are trying to figure out how to get off the ground.

They struggled through another poor performance by Christian Ponder in Sunday's loss at Seattle, wasting 182 yards and two touchdowns rushing by Adrian Peterson. As the toughest part of their schedule comes into view, the Vikings are searching for solutions to their sputtering passing attack.

Sound familiar? "We've seen what the passing game can do in the early season. We just have to get back to that. We're good at throwing the ball. We've got good receivers. We have good blocking up front," Ponder said after the 30-20 defeat. "I just have to keep doing a better job of getting the ball in their hands. This team isn't one-dimensional. This offense isn't one-dimensional."

Coach Leslie Frazier said Monday he hasn't thought about pulling Ponder from a game or even a series. The second-year quarterback, who has thrown for 23 touchdowns and 21 interceptions in 19 career starts, has been bothered by a minor injury to his right knee. He got up slowly a couple of times on Sunday, enough to prompt the coaches to tell backup Joe Webb to be ready.

Frazier said Ponder hasn't complained about the knee and doesn't believe it's a problem. The coach did, however, acknowledge Ponder's footwork as a factor in his incompletion to Percy Harvin on a simple bubble screen throw in the second quar-

ter against the Seahawks.

"He's completed that with high accuracy throughout the season. For whatever reason, that ball sailed on him. Got to get his feet set. Got to make that throw," Frazier said.

Harvin, who badly sprained his left ankle and might not be able to play this Sunday against Detroit, was frustrated enough to scream at Frazier on the sideline after that miss. The Vikings were at the Seattle 11 in a tied game at the time, and Ponder was sacked on the next play to force them to settle for a field goal.

"It was just a frustrating point in the heat of the battle," Harvin said, lamenting the missed opportunity for a touchdown. "But it was nothing more than that."

Harvin has been one of the NFL's most productive players this season, but when defenses have ganged up to try to take him away the Vikings have infrequently been able to produce an effective response.

"It's very frustrating. I would be lying if I told you different. We've got a lot of work to do. We're all still confident we can turn this thing around," Harvin said.

Whether it's calling the right plays at the right times, the receivers getting open or Ponder having enough confidence and accuracy to deliver a completion in those situations, the Vikings have not shown they can consistently use the deep ball to move up and down the field.

When they were winning, their defense was good enough that didn't matter. Lately, that group has been shaky, too. Peterson is often capable of covering up that deficiency all by himself, but he couldn't make that happen on

Sunday. He took only five hand-offs after halftime, but the Vikings ran only 19 plays.

The bubble screens and other creative ways offensive coordinator Bill Musgrave has used to put the ball in the multi-talented Harvin's hands haven't been working as much, either. Harvin said he's hearing the defense call out the bubble screen before the snap a lot more than in the past. He said other teams have also sent safeties and linebackers out to cover the play, making the blocks for Harvin's teammates more difficult than if they were trying to get in the way of a corner-back.

"We'll have to dial some different things up, see if we can get something else going," Harvin said.

In Seattle, Ponder produced his third game of 100 yards passing or less. That's one-third of the season. The Vikings got away with it beating Detroit and Arizona, but there has to be more balance for them to be able to get back on track. Frazier said in his conversations with Ponder he's come away with the same belief in Ponder's confidence that he had earlier in the year when the Vikings started 4-1. But Ponder was sacked four more times by the Seahawks, and his body language in the pocket and the accuracy of his throws have suggested he's lost a little of his moxie.

"He knows there are some things that he needs to improve on, but there are also some things throughout our passing game that we have to get corrected in order to help him be successful," Frazier said. "That will be the challenge for all of us."

## Kritenbrink Honored By Summit League

### USD Soph Gets League-Best Third Honor Of Season

ELMHURST, Ill. — For a league-leading third time this season, South Dakota sophomore Kendall Kritenbrink has been named the Summit League volleyball Offensive Player of the Week.

Kritenbrink, an outside hitter from Gretna, Neb., earned the fourth Summit League honor of her career by recording 33 kills in wins over South Dakota State and North Dakota State at the DakotaDome. She also recorded 16 kills, four blocks, a service ace and an assist.

The victories helped keep USD's post-season hopes alive. The Coyotes finish the 2012 regular season at Omaha on Saturday.

NDSU senior Andrea Henning earned Summit League defensive honors. She had 45 digs, including 18 in the loss to USD, and seven assists as the Bison went 1-1.



P&D FILE PHOTO  
 South Dakota's Melissa Firtko, 3, and Kendall Kritenbrink go up for a block against North Dakota State's Brynn Joki during their Summit League volleyball match on Sunday at "The Den" in the DakotaDome. Kritenbrink was named the Summit League Offensive Player of the Week, the third time this season that the sophomore has earned that award.