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Some Collisions are Good, Some are Bad...

By **Fernando Rivera**
UCF Forum columnist

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When life events collide, sometimes the results are good and sometimes they're bad. In this case I couldn't have been more pleased.

During my junior year of undergraduate education at the University of Puerto Rico-Mayaguez, I participated in the National Science Foundation's Research Experiences for Undergraduates at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. To be honest, before that time I was hard-pressed to find Nebraska on a map. Furthermore, I did not know how much of an impact this opportunity was going to have in my life and how it was going to intertwine with my academic career at UCF.

As I prepared to leave home for the summer, I started learning more about Nebraska and its university. It was 1995, the Huskers football team had just won the 1994 NCAA national championship defeating Miami for the title, and the expectations were high for another championship run. As it turned out, they did go on to be national champions again, crushing Florida for back-to-back championships.

I returned to UPRM to complete my degree in sociology and after graduation joined the graduate sociology program at UNL. In 1997, Nebraska was again in the hunt for a national championship. Aided by a strong defense, a transfer student from Stanford took over the quarterback position to lead the Huskers to the team's fifth national championship. His name: Scott Frost.

Years passed and I joined the UCF faculty as an assistant professor of sociology. I still followed the Nebraska football team and had experienced no conflict in doing so while cheering on the UCF Knights. In reality, both teams were worlds apart: different conferences, regions of the country, etc. The only remembrance was a 1997 game in Lincoln, when the then "Golden Knights" under quarterback Dante Culpepper played toe-to-toe against the Huskers before losing 38-24. Outside of the rare baseball or basketball games against Nebraska, both my college athletic programs were worlds apart.

Forward to 2015, the Knights football program had come full circle under Coach George O'Leary, from 0-11 in 2004 to 0-12 in 2015 and the need for a change. At the conclusion of the 2015 season the announcement came out: A young offensive coordinator from the

University of Oregon became the head coach of the Knights. His name: Scott Frost. Slowly – and for the better – my worlds started to collide.

Coach Frost was new to many at UCF, but I knew great things were bound to happen under his leadership. In his first season, he was able to put the Knights back in the winning column and the expectations for his second season were high, but nobody could forecast what transpired.

Coach Frost guided the Knights to an undefeated regular season and a New Year's Peach Bowl victory against Auburn. Referred to as National Champions by some, Frost had elevated the course of the Knights football program to new heights.

But as we know, there wouldn't be another UCF season with him at the helm. Days earlier, after the Knights won the American Athletic Conference championship, news headlines came in: Scott Frost was named head coach of the Nebraska Cornhuskers football program.

Just like that, my worlds collided again. Nebraska and Frost were no longer foreign concepts to the Knights nation and I could no longer separate the two. In a strange twist of fate, my academic homes, my athletic programs had intertwined, forever tied to each other under one name: Scott Frost.

I am not a psychic and cannot predict the future. I can only hope that both the Knights and Huskers continue to be outstanding college athletic programs and academic institutions.

For me, cheering for the Huskers under Coach Frost will inevitably be connected to UCF.

Now the question remains: Go Huskers or Go Knights? If you read closely, the answer is both: Go Big Red and Go Black and Gold. Charge On!

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