

sports

Bryant doesn't remember avoiding a tough opponent

When both wire service polls released yesterday showed Alabama and Nebraska ranked one-two, national championship fever spread in epidemic proportions.

But Nebraska fans should remember that they are No. 2 and may have to try harder. Although No. 2 is nice, imagine how it must feel to be No. 1?

A telephone call to Alabama head coach Paul "Bear" Bryant, the man who runs the Crimson Tide, revealed his thoughts on a possible national championship.

He said being No. 1 is better than being No. 10, but added that it doesn't mean anything unless his team keeps winning.

After a come-from-behind 27-17 defeat of Tennessee Saturday, Bryant called his team a "champion" for winning despite injuries to key players.

Can anything stop the Tide once it gets healthy?

"I don't think so, but then again I've been wrong on this lots of times before," Bryant said.

BRYANT DIDN'T say who he would like to play in a bowl game, but said his team would play whoever would give Alabama the best chance for the national championship.

What that means is not perfectly clear.

It may mean he will choose the highest ranked team available at the end of the season, which would be Nebraska if the Huskers stay undefeated.

It may mean he would like to play an opponent he thinks Alabama could beat.

It may mean a lot of things. Your guess is as good as mine.

Bryant said he has great respect for Nebraska, and after Southern California was tied by Stanford he voted the Huskers as the No. 1 team in the country.

But this week, he voted for Alabama. Bryant downplayed some sportswriter's theory that Georgia-Alabama may meet in the Sugar Bowl.

IF GEORGIA goes undefeated in Southeastern Conference play, they will go to the Sugar Bowl because Alabama went last year.

tom prentiss

"I wouldn't be interested in an all SEC matchup but the players might and it's their decision," Bryant said.

Being the No. 1 team in the country, chances are Bryant will influence the decision who the Tide plays for the championship.

Although Nebraska fans may remember differently, Bryant said he can't recall Alabama choosing a bowl game to avoid playing a tough opponent.

"I don't think that's ever happened to us," he said. In the past, he has discussed possible bowl matchups

he said.

Bob Devaney, Nebraska athletic director, said Alabama before bids went out. He did this with Nebraska in 1966, and Nebraska chose to play in the Sugar Bowl when it became apparent that neither one would be invited to the Orange Bowl.

BRYANT SAID he isn't as involved in decisions anymore because too many bowl games are bound by contract to specific conference champions.

Devaney said if Alabama is the Sugar Bowl host school, then Bryant probably does have pull in determining who its opponent would be.

"He's got some weight that he uses, but I'm not criticizing it, because it's up to the bowl officials to decide how they want to handle that," Devaney said.

So if Nebraska and Alabama keep winning, chances for a national championship showdown are good, but not great.

Both teams must stay undefeated. Georgia too, must go undefeated in SEC play so they can go to the Sugar Bowl, freeing Alabama for the Orange Bowl with the Huskers.

It's all hypothetical and the bowl picture may become clearer Nov. 17.

That is the earliest date the NCAA allows bowls to issue bids. However, Nebraska, will still have Oklahoma to play the next week to help determine the Big Eight representative to the Orange Bowl.

Volleyball player Vollertsen almost a sure bet for Moscow

Julie Vollertsen gets embarrassed by standing ovations, but she loves every minute of it.

The Palmyra, Neb. native doesn't have to be embarrassed. After all, not everybody can say they're going to the 1980 Olympics in Moscow.

Vollertsen and her teammates on the USA Women's National Volleyball Team were in town Monday night to face the Korean Volleyball Association Team at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

rick huls

The U.S. won 12-15, 16-14, 15-6, 8-15 and 15-9 over Korea and for the second straight year Vollertsen received a standing ovation from the home crowd.

"It helps me get up to play," said Vollertsen, who was again touched by the ovation from the crowd of 5,062 fans.

The ovation was especially meaningful because Vollertsen doesn't spend much time at home anymore. In fact, she's been home just twice in the past year.

"I was home May 24th," Vollertsen said. "And once in March."

But she's looking forward to a long Christmas vacation.

"Luckily we get a vacation from Thanksgiving to New Year's. That's nice." Vollertsen will be home even less after this year's vacation.

SHE'S PRACTICALLY assured of a spot on the USA team traveling to Moscow to compete in the 1980 Games.

Fourteen players can suit up for action, but only 12 can play, Vollertsen explained.

"I'm about the 13th or 14th player so I really don't know yet if I'll play," she added. "I wish I knew."

Vollertsen was used in three different positions—center-blocker, right-side blocker and left-side blocker—by coach

Arie Selinger in Monday night's confrontation with the Koreans.

SHE FINISHED with five blocks which ended in points or sideouts (Korea turning over the ball) Vollertsen also accumulated 10 digs (saving hits while ball is in play) and eight kill (unreturned) spikes, while seeing extensive action only in the second, third and fourth games.

Selinger was pleased to be able to use Vollertsen in three different positions. "She played them all well," he said. "She's improved and is becoming one of the powers of the team."

The definite power of the U.S. team is 6 foot, 5 inch spiker Flo Hyman, who accumulated 35 kill spikes in the win Monday night.

Vollertsen said the USA team, which has only one match remaining with Korea on the tour, is a "progressing team."

"Other countries say we've come a long way. And we're improving all the time," she added.

SELINGER SAID his team has improved on defense, something the Koreans have been noted for.

"This is the best match Korea has played," said Selinger. The tour has made six stops across the country.

However, Selinger said, the Koreans had a couple of advantages.

"They warmed up longer down here (at the Sports Center) while we were running around town. And it's hard to win consistently against a team over and over," he said.

"We'll be looking to qualify for the top four teams," he said, mentioning that South and North Korea, and Japan all have excellent teams. And if China decides to compete, they may field the best team, Selinger added.

While Selinger remains optimistic for a gold medal, Vollertsen will wait—to have a chance to play.

Then the ovations won't embarrass her. They'll make her proud.

Runners host Big Eight championship

By Paul Martin

A key injury and an illness have added to an already difficult task facing the UNL women's cross-country team this Saturday.

Nebraska will host the Big Eight Conference championships at Pioneers Park, but may have its top two runners at less than full speed.

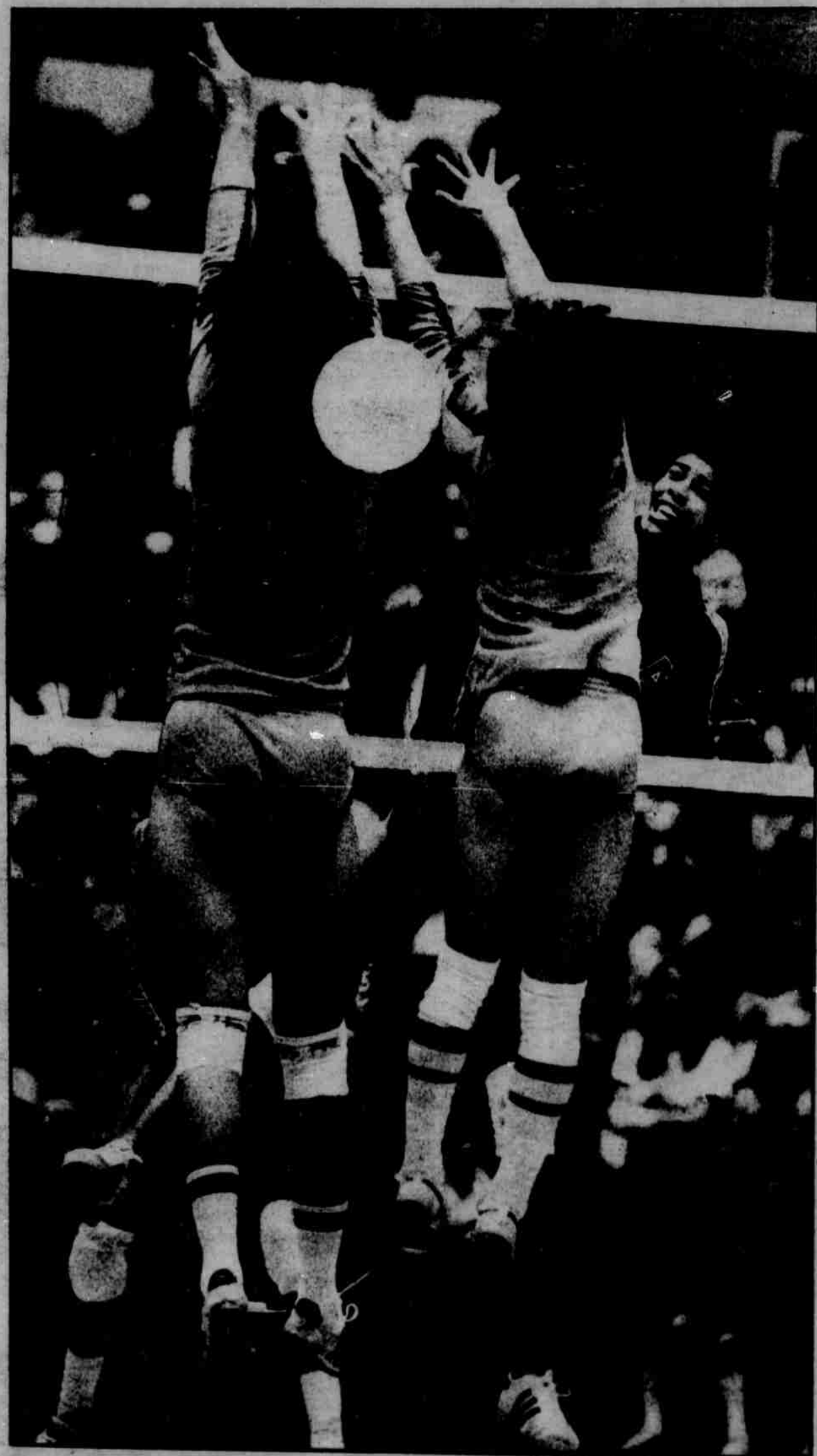
Gina Hungerford suffered a shoulder separation in a weightlifting mishap, while Chris Hass has been bothered by a virus.

Although Hass will be able to run, Hungerford's status is questionable, according to coach Carol Frost.

"We're hoping she'll be able to run," Frost said.

Defending champion Iowa State, looking for its sixth consecutive conference championship, appears to be the team to beat again this year, Frost said.

"There was a poll given to the coaches around the Big Eight Conference and the consensus was that Iowa State would



USA's Flo Hyman, completes a killer spike against In-Sook Kwon, (3), and Ai-Joo Kim, (7), leading the USA team to a defeat of the Korean Olympic volleyball team Monday night.

Photo by Mark Billingsley

repeat as champions for the sixth straight year," she said.

Iowa State may be without the services of defending individual champion Deb Vetter. Frost said she has heard Vetter is suffering from a pulled hamstring muscle.

Should Iowa State falter, Kansas State has a shot at the title.

Frost said KSU runner Kathy Saxon would be a "definite favorite" to take the individual crown if Vetter doesn't run.

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