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Men's tennis teammates courting Big Eight title

By Jeff Korblik

Last spring for the second consecutive year, the Nebraska men's tennis team came away with third place in Big Eight Championships. But this year, Coach Kerry McDermott is looking to finish higher.

"We are starting to come on and are becoming more competitive," McDermott said. "We should be able to catch up on Oklahoma this year."

Nebraska finished behind Oklahoma State and Oklahoma in the final conference standings. Nebraska's women's championships, which give an indication that the Oklahoma schools are dominating the Big Eight conference.

"A lot of it has to do with the weather," McDermott explained. "People are more apt to go to the warmer climate where they can play all year round."

The Cornhuskers have seven people returning from last year's team, which finished with a dual record of 13-7, 4-2 in the Big Eight. They lost senior David Schulze, who decided to stay in Minneapolis to finish school. They have added two new recruits — Lincoln's Jim Burton, the Nebraska number-one

singles champion, and John Rhoades of Las Vegas, Nev., state singles champion.

Junior Craig Johnson (Lincoln) will return to play number-one singles for Nebraska.

"Craig can compete with any guy in the Big Eight," McDermott said. "For example, the Kansas singles player who won the Big Eight was beaten by Craig twice. He is just as good as any of the others."

Joining Johnson will be junior Jim Carson, senior Brian Edwards, senior Doug Elsass, sophomores John Schuele and Tony Sloboth, junior Ridge Smidt (Big Eight No. 6 singles champion), and seniors Ashwin Vasan and Scott Wilson.

"We are just as good as last years team because of our experience," McDermott said.

Nebraska will play in the Kansas Invitational the weekend of Sept. 30, one or two away matches, and one or two at home this fall.

A team meeting is scheduled for 3:30 Thursday in the press room of the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Walk-ons who want to try out for the team can attend a meeting at 4:15 p.m. that day in the same room.

Paterno . . .

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Paterno and Osborne agreed that tailback Jon Williams can be just as dangerous as Curt Warner, last year's Lion All-American.

Last year, Williams rushed for 65 yards on 10 carries against Nebraska and caught three passes in a reserve role.

Paterno has said he believes his defense is his team's strong suit, and fall practices haven't changed his mind. The squad returns five starters, but Paterno thinks that four of those players tackle Greg Gattoso, linebacker Steve Radeck and backs Harry Hamilton and Mark Robinson, are legitimate All-Americans.

"Our defense is quicker and a little bit more mature than last year's," he said, "and, overall, a better defense."

Paterno said at first he was puzzled about why his team accepted the invitation to play in the Kickoff Classic, but now he is not apprehensive about the game.

"It has turned out to be very exciting for our fans," he said, "and the squad is excited."

HUSKER SPOTLIGHT

VOLLEYBALL — ERIN DEAN begins her fourth season as a starting outside hitter for the Huskers. The senior from Kansas City was named honorable mention All-American by Volleyball Monthly last season, and was named to the NCAA All-Regional team after recording 24 kills against Purdue.



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