

Top 20-caliber teams to compete

# Nebraska spikers prepare for Classic

By George Davis  
Daily Nebraskan Staff Writer

The UNL volleyball team will resume action this weekend by hosting the Husker Classic Volleyball tournament today and Saturday at the Coliseum.

The Husker Classic is the first of two tournaments the UNL volleyball team will host and it will

feature some of the top teams in the nation.

No. 17 Louisiana State (1-0) and No. 18 Northwestern (8-2) will give the fifth-ranked Husker team its first look at top 20-caliber competition. United States International (2-2) of San Diego Calif. is also expected to be a strong team contender for the tournament championship. Northwestern is coming off a tournament in California this week, where they lost to No. 1 Pacific 13-15, 15-3, 15-4, 15-8.

Nebraska coach Terry Pettit said all of the teams in the tournament will be strong and noted that two have played more games than Nebraska. Even so, he said Nebraska will be a strong team because of the hard work his players have put in this season.

"We've worked hard this fall and have had good practices," Pettit said. "I think our players are ready for the tournament."

Two players who are especially ready for tonight's opening match against LSU are senior All-American Cathy Noth and sophomore Karen Dahlgren.

This summer, both Noth and Dahlgren played on the national Junior Olympic team with LSU players Leah Bennett and Wendy Stammer. The team practiced in Lake Placid, N.Y. for three weeks before participating in a one-month exhibition volleyball tour in Europe. LSU coach Ruth Nelson also was the coach of the Junior Olympic team.

"I'm really excited about the game Friday and the two games on Saturday," Noth said. "The games will be exciting and should be a good test for our team."

Noth said she is looking forward to seeing her former teammates after the two-month summer schedule and hopes to have fun during the tournament.

"We got to know each other really well this summer," Noth said. "I hope all of us can play well this weekend."

Both Noth and Bennett are setters and outside hitters. As seniors, Noth thinks both will play similar roles for their teams.

"Leah is a very spirited player and is an excellent leader," she said. "She was our captain this summer, and I learned a great deal from her. I'm sure she helps her team out in many ways besides her play."

Noth said Bennett is extremely solid in the fundamentals of volleyball and is an excellent hitter.

"She's a strong player because of her leadership and consistent play," Noth said.

Noth said she also learned a great deal from LSU coach Ruth Nelson during the summer tour.

"Ruth is very experienced in volleyball at the national level. I learned many new techniques while working with her this summer," she said.

Dahlgren said she also learned a great deal from playing on the Junior Olympic team and from Nelson.

"My experiences this summer will help me a great deal during the season this year," Dahlgren said.

Dahlgren will likely see a great deal of Stammer on the court Friday night and hopes to play well against her former teammate.

"Wendy is very strong, but hasn't had much experience," she said. "She is a very good defensive player and a great passer. I think both of us became a lot more disciplined this summer."

Noth said that having friends on the other side of the net doesn't really affect her play.

"I have enough to worry about on our side of the net," she said. "As a senior, I need to help make sure we run smart plays and also help keep our team emotionally intense. We can't let teams have long rallies against us."

Both Noth and Dahlgren are looking forward to playing against the fast-paced offense of LSU and are sure the play will be exciting for the fans.

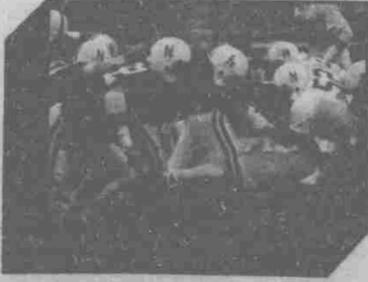
Both are concerned, however, with Nebraska's lack of game experience compared to the other squads. Both agree the games this weekend will be challenging, but also fun for the players.

"We like to compete against fast-paced teams," Noth said. "We know we have our work cut out for us this weekend, but it will be fun also."

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**Schedule**  
**First Husker Volleyball Classic — Nebraska Coliseum**  
**Friday, Sept. 14**  
5 p.m. — U.S. International vs. Northwestern  
7 p.m. — Nebraska vs. Louisiana State  
**Saturday, Sept. 14 (Free admission with presentation of Nebraska football ticket.)**  
11:30 a.m. — Nebraska vs. U.S. International  
1:30 p.m. — Northwestern vs. Louisiana State  
5 p.m. — Nebraska vs. Northwestern  
7 p.m. — Louisiana State vs. U.S. International

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## Two UNL volleyball players to challenge summer friends

By Ward W. Triplett III  
Daily Nebraskan Senior Editor

Leah Bennett and Wendy Stammer will get a chance to see some summer friends this weekend, but chances are it won't be a friendly reunion.

Bennett and Stammer, the two top players on 17th-ranked Louisiana State's volleyball squad, were teammates of Nebraska's Karen Dahlgren and Cathy Noth on the junior national team this summer. The two teams will play at 7 p.m. tonight at the UNL Coliseum.

The junior national team is a training ground for the United States Volleyball Association. The association looks to the juniors for potential national team members.

"It was a great experience," Stammer, a 6-foot tall sophomore from San Antonio, Texas, said. "We all got along so well, and we played well. It made me see how much I didn't work here last season."

When the summer tour ended, Bennett and Stammer returned to LSU with a goal to move that team up in national recognition. The Tigers beat Southern easily in its first match Tuesday night. Now their sights are set on winning the first Husker Classic.

"We're really looking forward to it," said Stammer, who had 12 kills against Southern. "First, it's our first tournament of the year. If we do well, we should go up in the ratings. It will also be good to see how Cathy and Karen are doing."

Bennett, who is 6-2, plays essentially the same position for LSU that Noth does for Nebraska — setting most of the time, but doubling as an outside hitter.

Bennett suffered a stress fracture during the junior team training at Lake Placid, N.Y., and did not play against Southern. The injury may also keep her out of the line-up tonight.

"I sure hope I get to play, but I have to wait and see how it goes at practice,"

Bennett said. "I played on it during the tour, but it affected me in practice and whenever I jumped. When I got back here, we just decided to lay off it a little and see what happens."

Bennett said she enjoys playing setter, despite its no-glory status.

"I like to watch other people put the ball down, and it's fun to watch other people get excited about their hits," she said. "It's a challenge for me, and when things do work, I like to know I had a part in it."

Of her teammate-opponent Noth, Bennett said there aren't many better setters around.

"I think Cathy is an exciting player," Bennett said. "She talks a lot on the court and keeps the hitters happy, and that's really the setters job."

"She does a very good job of hitting and blocking, and takes advantage of smaller players when she's at the net."

Stammer said Noth and Dahlgren are "really nice players."

"They're both very good, but they really pushed themselves to improve all summer," she said.

Both Stammer and Bennett were attracted to LSU because of coach Ruth Nelson. Stammer said she knew she could learn from Nelson, while Bennett remembered taking trips as a fifth grader to watch the Nelson-coached Houston Cougar squad play.

"I really wanted to play for her ever since then," she said. She played on a Nelson-coached junior team in high school before signing with the Tigers.

Nelson also coached the junior team, giving her a chance to learn about Noth and Dahlgren's play. However, neither of the two LSU players expected either side to have an advantage because of it.

"It will be really good to see them again, but once the game starts, we're out to win," Bennett said. "This is our first chance to really move up. I don't think anyone will hold back anything."