

Volleyball Super - Stater chooses the Cornhuskers

By Mark Derowitsch
Senior Reporter

A Nebraska high school volleyball Super-State selection announced Sunday that she has verbally committed to play at Nebraska.

Janet Kruse, a 6-foot senior from Blair, said that on Feb. 10 she will sign a national letter-of-intent to attend Nebraska.

"All along I've liked Nebraska, and I've always wanted to go there ever since I attended their camp my freshman year," Kruse said.

Kruse was recruited by Ohio State, Iowa, Kansas, Arizona State and Oklahoma as well as Nebraska. But she said it wasn't a hard decision to become a Cornhusker.

"I didn't take any other recruiting trips because I knew I wanted to go to Nebraska," Kruse said. "They have a good volleyball program."

Besides attending the Nebraska camp in her freshman year, Kruse also participated in the camp with her high school team.

Although Nebraska only graduated one player from this year's team, Kruse said she thinks she'll see plenty of action during her freshman season.

"I'd like to play a lot," Kruse said, "but I'll have to work really hard this summer to be able to do that."

Laurel Derry, Kruse's volleyball coach at Blair, agreed.

"With them losing only one senior, who was an outside hitter, I don't know how she'll fit in," Derry said. "But I anticipate that she will see plenty of action as a freshman."

Kruse said she will play outside hitter for the Huskers. She said she needs to improve a few aspects of her game to play that position.

"I need to work on my blocking and get that stuff down a little bit more," Kruse said. "My back-court game and my defense also needs work."

Derry said Kruse has the tools to play outside hitter in college.

"She's such a great hitter and that's the highlight of her game," Derry said. "Also, she's very mentally into the game and she's aware of some aspects that most players don't think about."

As a senior, Kruse recorded more than 200 kills and almost 100 blocks in leading Blair to the Class B championship game. In the finals, Blair was defeated by Grand Island Central Catholic in three sets.

For her efforts, Kruse was named one of the honorary captains for the Lincoln Journal-Star's Super-State volleyball team. She was also on the Class B all-state team.

"By the end of her sophomore season, she was playing real well with the best competition," Derry said. "I feel she has the potential to go as far as she wants."

Ex-Husker wants medal as a gymnast (or coach)

By Richard Cooper
Staff Reporter

Steve Elliott looks down at the floor exercise board from the stands of the Bob Devaney Sports Center. He remembers the days when he would walk on the floor and the crowd would start to roar.

Elliott, from Amarillo, Texas, helped the Nebraska men's gymnastics team win four of its five NCAA championships. From 1979 to 1982 he won three individual NCAA titles — two on the floor exercise and one on the vault.

Elliott said he remembers the fans more than anything else during the years he spent competing at Nebraska.

"Performing at home was the biggest thrill for me because the fans were so enthusiastic," Elliott said. "They inspired me to do my best."

"I saw competing as kind of an exchange between the crowd and me: They would get going because of the things I did, and I got going because of the things they did. It was an exchange of motivation and excitement."

Nebraska men's gymnastics coach Francis Allen said Elliott was exciting to watch because of his high skill level at tumbling. By 1980, Elliott was the only American who used a double-twist double-back flip and a 1 3/4 flip with a 1 1/2 twist in the laid-out position in his floor exercise routine.

Those two tricks earned Elliott three World Tumbling Championships from 1982-1984.

Elliott said one reason he came to Nebraska was to compete in diving and gymnastics. He won the Big Eight 3-meter diving title in 1979 and 1980.

Elliott said it was hard for him to compete on the diving team because he focused more attention on gymnastics.

"Doing gymnastics had always been my first love," Elliott said. "I didn't get into diving until high school, and there were times when I would come into the gym only once a week, because I had been doing gymnastics so much longer."

"The hard part was spending all day on the diving platform and then coming into the gym and working out."

Allen said Elliott always seemed to show up when he was needed at gymnastics meets.

"I remember during his first year at Nebraska, we were at the Rocky Mountain Invitational and we needed him to compete for us," Allen said. "Steve showed up right before the floor exercise, took off his sweats and performed."

"What's funny is, he had just finished a diving meet in Arizona, and he flew up to compete for us."

Elliott said 1982 is the year he remembers because it was the last national champion team he was on. It was also the year he won NCAA titles in the floor exercise and vault.

"The 1982 NCAA meet was the highlight of my career because we had won four straight NCAA titles," Elliott said, "but winning the floor exercise for the second time and winning the vault for the first time was icing on the cake."

During the four years he was at Nebraska, Elliott said, the team became more confident each year.

"At the NCAA's it seemed like the only challenge we had in the team finals was to beat our previous year's score," Elliott said. "We were so confident that we felt nobody could beat us at the NCAA's — especially at home."

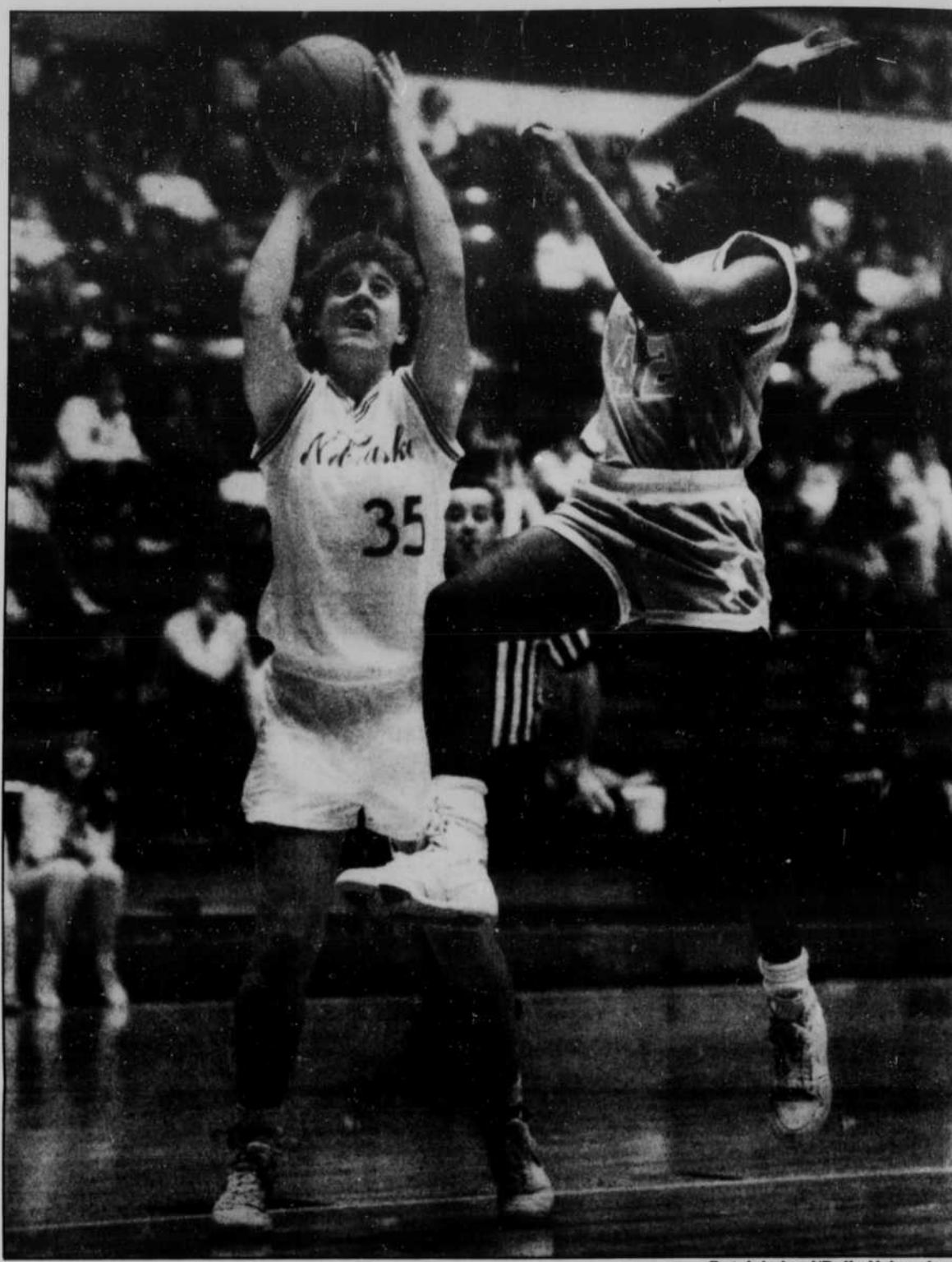
Elliott retired from tumbling competition in 1985 because he needed knee surgery. In the spring of 1987, he came out of retirement to compete in the U.S. Tumbling Nationals and won the meet. Elliott said he ended his retirement because the U.S. Olympic Committee accepted tumbling as a competitive event.

Elliott said he wants to earn an Olympic medal, either as a coach or a competitor.

"If something is going to happen in the next 10 years on the Olympic scene, I want to be a part of it," Elliott said. "I've accomplished every goal as a tumbler except winning a gold medal."

Elliott said that if he isn't a competitor in the 1992 Olympics he'll be a coach.

"Coaching is something I've always enjoyed doing," Elliott said. "If I don't make the team, the USOC is telling me I will be the coach."



Butch Ireland/Daily Nebraskan

University of Missouri-Kansas City's Broda Dickerson prepares to block a shot by Nebraska's Amy Stephens.

Ivy beats Stephens for scoring honors as NU defeats UMKC

By Chuck Green
Senior Reporter

The most-noticeable contest during the Nebraska women's basketball victory Monday was among the Cornhusker team itself — for leading-scorer honors.

Maurice Ivy scored 22 points and Amy Stephens added 21 to lead the Huskers past the University of Missouri-Kansas City 93-82 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Ivy's 22 points placed her at No. 2 on Nebraska's all-time career scorer. Ivy surpassed Kathy Hagerstrom and trails Debra Powell for first place by 54 points.

Ivy was pleased with her No. 2 place on the charts, "but my goal is to be No. 1," she said.

"I don't really think about records and stuff when I go in," Ivy said. "I just go out and play my game. If I did think about it, there may be some problems."

Nebraska coach Angela Beck said the team as a whole suffered some problems against the Lady Kangaroos, particularly in terms of motivation.

"We were very lethargic at times," Beck said. "We didn't play with a lot of emotion — it just wasn't out there on the floor."

Beck said UMKC's defense — a three-quarter trap — presented problems for Nebraska as well.

"We had trouble with that defense because we hadn't seen it this year," Beck said. "It was so simple to break, but we couldn't do it. The intensity just wasn't there."

Beck said that much of the motivational problem stemmed from the fact that the Huskers defeated UMKC earlier this season 96-79 in Kansas City, Mo. But, she said, Nebraska wasn't taking the Lady Kangaroos lightly.

"UMKC's not a pushover team," Beck said. "They've played some good teams this season, and played them well."

Ivy, however, said she thought the previous victory over UMKC made it difficult for the team to prepare for the game.

"When you play somebody after beating them, like UMKC, you think about the first win a bit," Ivy said. "It's much easier to get psyched up for a No. 1 team, like Iowa, than it is for a team you've beaten already."

UMKC coach Nancy Norman said that although she was satisfied with her team's performance, she wasn't content with the game's officiating.

"I'm really proud of what the girls did with our 11, 12 or 13 players," Norman said, "but we never fouled out four players in a game before. I just think the officials weren't ready for this upset

of a game. They were never in position to call a foul. I'm not saying it decided the game, I'm just saying it was poor officiating. When you let one team play physical, you let the other play physical."

Nebraska led 51-35 at halftime. The Huskers' biggest lead of the game was 81-55 midway through the second half.

Broda Dickerson of UMKC led all scorers with 28 points. Dickerson connected on 6 of 7 three-point shots — a record for Nebraska opponents — and shot 8 of 14 from the field overall.

"Broda is a streak shooter," Norman said. "When she's on, there's no better shooter than what she can do for you. She kept us in the ball game."

"I'd like to think it was, anyway," Beck said. "It was a very positive thing and it's helped the individual players and the whole team."

Ivy agreed.

"We're at the point where we're getting used to playing in the games with each other," Ivy said. "Now our main objective is to go out and play well in the Big Eight. We're starting to gell together as a team and I don't see any major problems with motivation from here on out."

"I think we're ready to go."