

Women swimmers aiming for Big Eight title

By Jeff Apel
Senior Reporter
and Rich Cooper
Staff Reporter

The bitter taste of a 2nd-place finish in last year's Big Eight Championships still lingers with Nebraska women's swimming coach Ray Huppert.

Huppert said he blames himself for the Cornhuskers' 2nd-place finish to Kansas in the 1988 conference Championships at the Bob Devaney Sports Center in Lincoln. The loss ended Nebraska's reign of three-straight Big Eight Championships.

"It was my fault that I didn't have the team prepared," Huppert said. "(But) we've made some changes in training and we'll be ready for this year's meet."

Huppert said last year's squad didn't swim well late in the season. In addition to finishing 2nd to Kansas, the Huskers finished 39th at the 1988 NCAA Swimming and Diving Championship's and failed to score at the U.S. Senior National Championships in Orlando, Fla.

Huppert is counting on abundance of experience to avoid another disappointing finish. He said this year's team returns 24 swimmers, all of

whom are balanced performers. The strengths of the squad will be in the butterfly, backstroke and diving events, he said.

Huppert said Nebraska's top returning performer is Kristen Neuenfeldt, a sophomore from Wayzata, Minn. He said Neuenfeldt is a versatile swimmer who can swim a multiple of events.

Neuenfeldt proved her versatility last season by scoring 33 points at the Big Eight Championships. She finished 3rd in 200-yard individual medley, 4th and 5th in the 200 and 100 freestyle events and was a member of Nebraska's 200, 400 and 800 freestyle relay teams.

Huppert plans on giving Neuenfeldt the opportunity to swim as many events as she wants this season.

"She is so talented," Huppert said. "She can do anything for this team and give a quality performance."

Huppert said Deanna Wilbourn and Mindy Matheny join Neuenfeldt as top sophomore returnees.

Wilbourn, from Barstow, Calif., shattered the Big Eight record in the 100 backstroke by recording a 57.77 clocking en route to winning nine of her first 10 races last fall. Huppert said Wilbourn cooled off in the spring because she developed prob-

lems in her left shoulder that later required surgery.

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— Huppert

Matheny was Nebraska's leading scorer at last season's 1988 Big Eight Championships with 38 points. In addition to winning the 50 freestyle at last year's conference meet, she finished 3rd in the 100 freestyle, 5th in the 100 backstroke and was a member of the Big Eight champion 200 medley and 400 freestyle relay teams.

Huppert said Nebraska's top returnee in the butterfly is Allison Barker, a junior from Cambridge,

England. He said Barker has the potential to develop into one of the top butterfly swimmers in the world. The only factor that kept Barker from qualifying for the British Olympic Team was lack of experience, he said.

Huppert said Janell Garcia adds depth in the butterfly events. Garcia missed qualifying for the butterfly competition in this year's U.S. Olympic Trials by five-one-hundredths of a second.

The top returnee in the breaststroke is junior Terri Long, Huppert said. Long is the Big Eight's defending 200 breaststroke champion.

Huppert said diving will be the strongest area of the team as Nebraska returns sophomore Amy Aarsen and senior Julie May.

Aarsen was the Big Eight runner-up in the one and three-meter diving events last year while May returns after redshirting in 1988. May won the one-meter diving event and finished 2nd in the three-meter diving competition at the 1987 Big Eight Championships.

Huppert said this year's crop of recruits is led by Tammy Custer, a freshman from Edmonds, Wash. Custer was two-time Washington state champion in the butterfly

events. Huppert said his top diving recruit is Julie Handren. Handren finished 2nd in the one-meter diving competition and 3rd in the three-meter event at the 16 to 18-year-old junior national meet last year.

Huppert said the race for this year's Big Eight championship will once again be between Kansas and Nebraska. He said Kansas will enter the season as the favorite to win this year's title.

"Kansas had an excellent recruiting year and (is) stronger than us in diving," Huppert said. "The shoe is on their foot now."

"I think our girls learned a lot from last year's championships and we're going to be ready this year for them."

Huppert said this year's schedule is the toughest he has ever put together for his team. In addition to traveling to Tempe, Ariz., to compete in the Sun Devil Classic, Nebraska will compete in the National Dual Meet Invitational in Tuscaloosa, Ala., which will feature NCAA runner-up Florida and No. 5-ranked Clemson.

The Huskers will begin their 1989 season Oct. 28, when they compete in the Big Eight Invitational at Ames, Iowa.

Team needs maturity against OSU

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and are ranked 10th in the nation. The Huskers, with their sometimes-sloppy, always-coachless defense, will need to score often against the Cowboys to win the game. It could be ugly.

Against the Jayhawks, Nebraska coaches could provide invaluable experience for their younger skill players, and not just for this season.

And let's face it, Nebraska can't lose to winless Kansas even if they try.

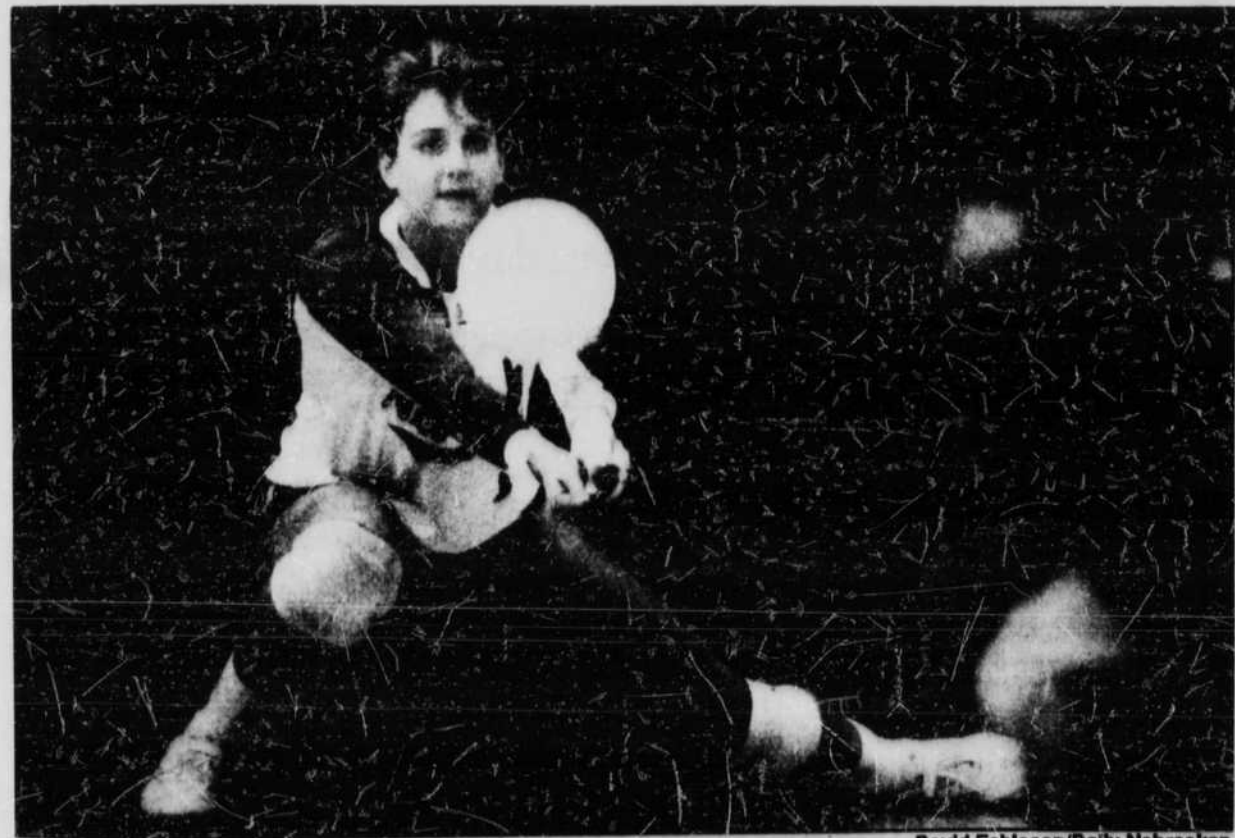
Maybe Husker coaches can stumble into a new offensive phase. Kansas is the perfect opponent to try something new on.

That doesn't eliminate the problems the Huskers have experienced this year. But experience can ease any uncertain situation. If not for the

remainder of this season, then for seasons to come.

It certainly can ease the pressure of the challenges yet to come from two schools in Oklahoma that are better than Nebraska this year.

Green is a news-editorial and criminal justice major, and is the Daily Nebraskan's copy desk chief and First Down Magazine editor.



David Fahleson/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska's Virginia Stahr bumps the ball during the Husker's 15-9, 15-11, 15-8 win against Kansas State Wednesday night at the NU Coliseum.

NU volleyball team picks up team in straight-set win over Wildcats

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to 13-9, but Nebraska used an ace serve by middle blocker Carla Baker and a kill by outside hitter Sue Hesch to post the 15-9 victory.

In the second game, the Huskers used a kill and two tips by Virginia Stahr and a kill by Novak to take a 9-2 lead, then held off a Kansas State rally with a kill by Barsness to post the 15-11 victory.

Nelson said Kansas State's first two games were frustrating because the Wildcats lowered their intensity level when the games were on the line.

"It was hard to chew gum," he said. "When you throw gas on a fire it doesn't help your cause."

Nelson said Kansas State took a 3-0 lead in the third game because Nebraska appeared to relax.

But he said Nebraska showed "the mark of a championship team" by rallying from the deficit for a 15-8 victory. Baker had a pair of kill spikes

Huskers, Jayhawks replace injured

NEBRASKA — Tyrese Knox will play behind starter Ken Clark at I-back this weekend after the loss of Terry Rodgers to a torn ligament in his left knee, Coach Tom Osborne said.

Knox, who moved to fullback two weeks ago when starter Sam Schmidt broke an ankle, will be prepared to move into that position if the Cornhuskers lose another fullback to in-

jury, Osborne said.

KANSAS — Injuries are also plaguing the Kansas Jayhawks. Coach Glen Mason said he did not expect flanker Willie Vaughn to play Saturday against Nebraska. Vaughn, who accounted for three of the Jayhawks' touchdowns Saturday against New Mexico State, is recovering from a sore knee.

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