

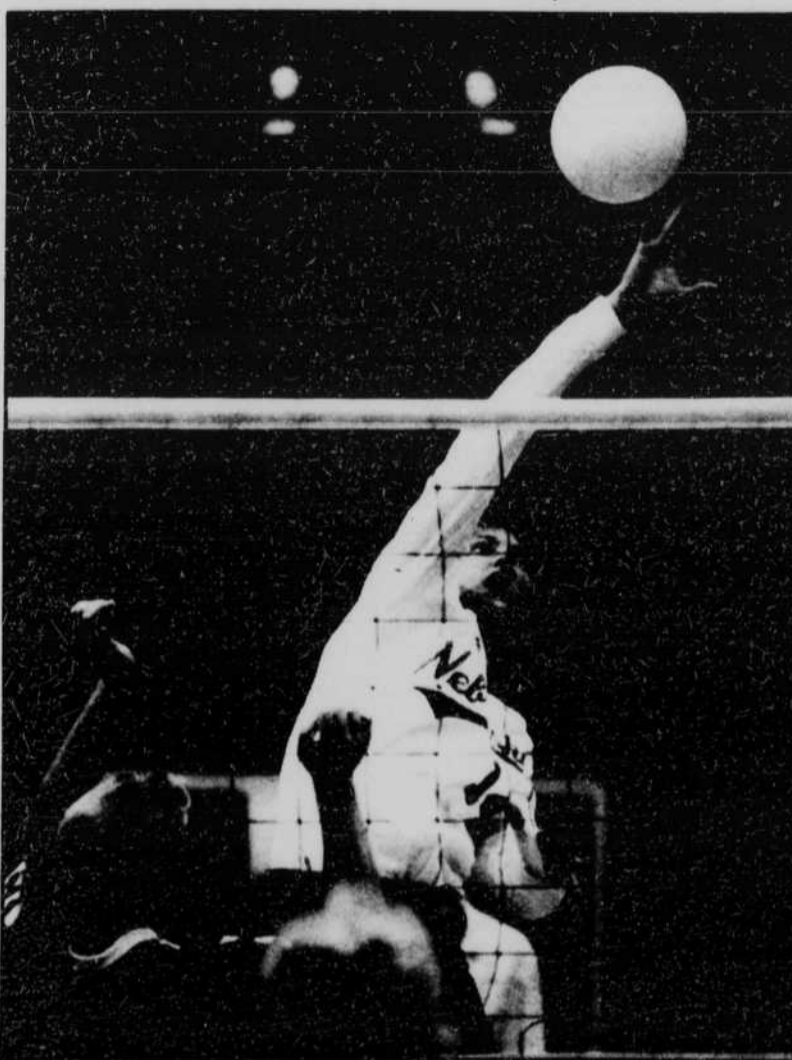
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rebuild a defense. That's our Achilles' heel, so to speak."

Fassel said the main problem Nebraska will present for Utah's defense is its strength and the speed off the line at the snap of the ball. He said the Utes will try to take away big plays by the Huskers.

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more utility player Misti Guenther and sophomore first baseman Khara Trenka have been working out at that position.

Wolforth said it is probable that highly recruited freshman pitcher Tracy Smith could miss the entire fall season.

Smith, who was considered by most collegiate scouting services as one of the top seven high school pitchers in the country last year, has been hampered by a back injury she suffered during the summer.



Shaun Sartin/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska's Carla Baker

NU volleyball team faces first road trip of season

By Darran Fowler
Senior Reporter

The Nebraska volleyball team's first road trip of the season will be a bit of a homecoming for senior middle blocker Carla Baker.

Baker said she is excited about the trip because her hometown of Winona, Minn., is a 2 1/2-hour drive from Minneapolis. The Cornhuskers will travel to Minneapolis to compete in the Minnesota Reebok Classic tonight and Saturday.

Nebraska, which is ranked sixth in the latest American Volleyball Coaches Association poll, will face 20th-ranked Minnesota tonight at 7:30 p.m. The Huskers then will meet Hofstra University, a Division I school from Hempstead, N.Y., at 2 p.m. Saturday.

Baker said her parents, friends and relatives, who haven't seen her play in a while, are planning to attend the three-team tournament. She said their presence has her excited.

"I'm looking forward to it," she said.

Baker said teammate Sara Hesch's hometown of Wahpeton, N.D., also is nearby, and that the sophomore middle blocker also expects to have several family members and friends at the tournament.

Nebraska won its first four

matches against Drake, Iowa, Bowling Green and Houston at the NU Coliseum. In those matches the attendance levels were 1,039, 1,257, 978 and 2,034 respectively.

Baker said playing at home makes a big difference, and that the Huskers will have to adjust to the new atmosphere.

"It definitely matters," she said.

Minnesota returns five starters off a team that finished 21-10 and tied for second in the Big Ten. Nebraska leads the series between the two teams at 18-6.

Baker said the match against Minnesota will be tough, because the Golden Gophers have more match experience.

"I guess they've played 12 games already," she said. "I guess they've played in a couple tournaments already."

Minnesota is 10-2 after winning the George Washington Invitational and finishing ninth in the Cal-State Fullerton Tournament.

Hofstra returns four starters from a team that finished 37-5 last season. The Dutchwomen currently are 8-1 on the season.

This will be the first meeting between Nebraska and Hofstra.

"We don't know much about them," Baker said.

Cross country to open season

The Nebraska men's and women's cross country teams will open their seasons Saturday by competing in the Nebraska Invitational.

Nebraska cross country coach Jay Dirksen said the meet is ideal because it will not be high powered. No team scoring will be kept in the meet, which begins at 10 a.m. at Pioneers Park.

The men's teams that will join Nebraska are Kearney State, Nebraska Wesleyan, Midland College of Fremont and Tarkio (Mo.) College. The women's competition will include those five teams plus Northwest Missouri State.

Dirksen said he is looking forward to the meet.

"I like this kind of opener because it allows us to see what kind of shape we're in," Dirksen said. "It will be good for us to use a low-keyed meet like this as our first to see where we are in regards to the team as a whole."

Dirksen said the Nebraska men will be led by All-America selections Jacques van Rensburg and Joe Kirby and twins Frank and Harald Graham. He said Pat Day, Tom Banks, Kirk Petit, Kevin Clark and Todd Elwood will challenge for the remaining spots on the Husker roster.

The Nebraska women will compete without All-America selection Yvonne van der Kolk. Dirksen said van der Kolk is resting after spending her summer in Europe competing.

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