

Tennis player inspired to face the best

By Paul Domeier
Staff Reporter

Professional wrestler Ric Flair used to challenge competitors to try for his heavy weight championship by saying, "You wanna be The Man, you gotta BEAT The Man."

Nebraska tennis player Matthias Mueller has taken Flair's words to heart. He said he knows that to be a top player, he must play the top players.

So Mueller, in his first season at No. 1 singles for the Cornhuskers, used to the Volvo All-American tournament in Athens, Ga., last weekend.

Mueller was the last player to enter the qualifying round of the tournament, and he won three matches to reach the finals of the qualifying rounds.

John Mizuerk of Louisiana State defeated Mueller, 6-4, 6-4, to keep the Husker out of the 32-man tourna-

ment, but with the three victories Mueller should make the top 50 in the next collegiate rankings, Nebraska men's tennis coach Kerry McDermott said.

Mueller didn't make the first rankings.

Mueller said he went to the meet so he could play the top individuals in the country.

"It was my first time out against all of the good players," he said. "I want to know how good they are."

Last semester, Mueller won the Big Eight's No. 3 singles title. When Steven Jung and Robert Sjolholm completed their eligibility, Mueller inherited the top spot.

Mueller said he played Jung in practice last year, and Jung, who was the NCAA individual runner-up, always would win.

But last year Jung went to the Volvo tournament and only reached the final round of qualifying. McDermott said he hopes Mueller can make

the same progress that Jung did.

After his showing at the Volvo tournament, Mueller said he thinks he can battle for a top-60 spot, and maybe make the NCAA tournament next spring.

Mueller said he isn't looking to make the finals of the NAAs. He even said he'd be satisfied with reaching the semifinals of the Big Eights this season.

But he is confident in his spot on the team.

"I don't want to sound too selfish and self-centered, but I think I'm the best player on the team," he said.

Mueller came to Nebraska from Hamm, West Germany, last year. Though originally from Sweden, Sjolholm played club tennis with Mueller in Hamm. They even teamed together in doubles.

Mueller said he visited the United States in the summer of 1988. He stayed with Sjolholm for a week, and McDermott asked Mueller if he

wanted to play for Nebraska.

Kathrin Edelkötter, another friend of Sjolholm's and Mueller's from the club in Hamm, came to Nebraska in the fall of 1988 to play for the women's team. She tested the school for Mueller, and encouraged him to enroll.

Mueller said Sjolholm helped him prepare for the SAT and other entry tests he needed, and after completing his year of military service, Mueller joined his friends in Lincoln. He soon took over at No. 3, and ran off a 16-match winning streak before grabbing the Big Eight title.

Mueller said he wasn't sure he'd be back, though. He said he had trouble adapting to the university, and he knew little English.

He went home to Hamm this summer, he said, still undecided. McDermott told Mueller that he needed to know his decision by early June, so he could give the scholarship to someone else if the top returnee

elects not to come back.

Mueller weighed his options at Nebraska and in Germany, and decided to come back to the United States.

"First of all, I liked it," he said. "I also get the opportunity to play tennis every day, study and get my degree."

At Nebraska, Mueller gets his tuition paid for, and he gets to play some of the top players in the country.

He said he will improve by playing the best players. Going up against the best is also good for McDermott, since the coach and the player admitted Mueller has trouble concentrating against lesser opponents.

In spite of that annoying habit, McDermott said Mueller is in the same situation Jung was last fall, and Mueller could do the same things Jung did.

"I still feel Matthias has the potential to be a solid No. 1 for us, and make a name for himself," he said.

Columnist advises Iowa on win against NU

Iowa State coach Jim Walden will be up to his usual tricks when the Cyclones face Nebraska on Saturday.

But he needs to add some new twists.



Jeff
Apel

Throughout the year, Nebraska has shown that it is vulnerable. The Cornhuskers have a mounting number of key injuries on offense, and they showed against Oklahoma State that their dime defense can be run against.

With this in mind, Walden needs to adjust his plan of attack so it exploits these areas of concern. Here's what Walden needs to do in order to beat Nebraska:

● Run in what appears to be obvious passing situations.

Time and time again, Oklahoma State tailback Vernon Brown picked up alarming amounts of yardage when the Huskers went into their dime defense. The dime is effective

against most passing quarterbacks, but Brown and the Cowboys showed that it can be challenged when a team has a halfway-decent back.

This week, Iowa State needs to run in second-and-long situations and throw only when it absolutely needs to or believes it can catch Nebraska off guard.

The Cyclones have a formidable running back in Blaise Bryant, and quarterback Bret Oberg is capable of putting up big numbers through the air in a hurry. If the Oberg-Bryant combination is used effectively and mixed occasionally with another receiver or tight end, things could get interesting.

And if nothing else works, Iowa State always can run up the middle.

● When his team does pass, work on the corners and stay away from the middle.

Throughout the year, Nebraska proved safety Reggie Cooper has strong that he is a formidable force in the middle. To try to neutralize his presence, as well as give up a seemingly automatic six points on an interception return, work on cornerbacks Tahaun Lewis and Bruce Pickens.

Pickens possesses great speed, but is vulnerable on short, hook patterns. If Iowa State starts its offensive series

off with a quick pass for seven yards that come compliments of Pickens, it will allow Oberg to drop back in the pocket and either throw or hand off on a draw to Bryant.

If the quick pass is dropped or incomplete, let Nebraska's defense dictate what is done next. If the dime unit is in, run. If not, it's all up to Oberg.

And if all else fails, Iowa State always can attack Lewis by throwing deep down the sideline. This works -- just ask Oklahoma State's Curtis Mayfield.

● Concentrate on stopping Nebraska quarterback Gerry Gdowski and the vaunted triple option.

A large part of Nebraska's offense this season has come compliments of Gdowski and Husker fullback Bryan Carpenter. Carpenter's statistics aren't that impressive, but his role in Nebraska's offense is.

Carpenter is dangerous, particularly when Gdowski takes the football and stuffs it into his belly to begin the triple option. If the defensive line sags toward Carpenter, Gdowski takes the ball out and runs an option play.

This combination, which also includes Nebraska running back Ken Clark, has proved to be an effective

combination all season long. Iowa State must stop it, or at least contain it, in order to be successful.

● Force Nebraska to throw.

Gdowski is an impressive passer, but his once talent-filled group of receivers is diminishing quickly.

The latest receiver to fall by the wayside is wingback Richard Bell, who suffered a hamstring injury against Oklahoma State. Bell's status for Saturday is questionable, and even if he plays, it's doubtful that he will be 100 percent.

To make matters worse, Bell's backup -- the talented Nate Turner -- didn't make the trip to Oklahoma State and is questionable for Iowa State. That leaves two unproven players -- Mark Dowse and freshman Tyrone Hughes -- at the wingback position.

● Avoid kicking situations as much as possible.

Iowa State dropped a 43-40 decision to Oklahoma Saturday thanks largely to kicker Jeff Shudak, who was suspended for breaking an undisclosed team rule. Shudak won't play against Nebraska, and his replacement, Rich Petrovich, might as well not even make the trip.

After Petrovich missed his first extra point attempt of the day against

Oklahoma, Walden elected to go for two points the rest of the game. He also turned the ball over three times on downs instead of kicking chip-shot field goals.

That means Iowa State gave up at least four points against Oklahoma, and easily could have made 13 more. Makes you wonder how Shudak feels, huh?

● Use the no-huddle offense.

If Walden really wants to throw a wrench into Nebraska's plans, he should run a no-huddle offense. This would prevent the Huskers from making their defensive changes and also would allow for more offense-defense mismatches.

The only trouble with a no-huddle offense is it relies so much on the talents of the quarterback. If Oberg is on -- which he is capable of being -- a no-huddle attack would be a great weapon.

But if not, it could be a disaster.

None of these recommendations of success. Iowa State probably could run them all day and still find a way to lose.

But if run effectively, these recommendations would at least give Iowa State a chance.

Apel is a senior news-editorial major and is the Daily Nebraskan sports editor.

Jump serve will be effective against ISU starters, volleyball coach says

By Darran Fowler
Senior Reporter

Becky Bolli, a junior on Nebraska's volleyball team, will find out if her tight-spinning, high-velocity jump serve still is effective against Iowa State when the Cornhuskers meet the Cyclones today at 7 p.m. in Ames, Iowa.

"I've always been real successful against Iowa State for some reason," Bolli said. "I started off real good against them as a freshman and now I think it's just become a psychological edge."

Nebraska, ranked No. 4, has a record of 15-1 and 5-0 in the conference. Iowa State is 13-9 and 4-2 in Big Eight play.

Nebraska assistant coach John Cook said he is anticipating a big match from Bolli. He said he expects Bolli to be effective again this year against Iowa State because the Cyclones are returning the same six starters from last year's team.

"She's always had big matches with Iowa State in the past," Cook said. "We're counting on her to make real good runs on them with her jump

serve."

"They have trouble with the jump serve. And it's the same girls that she saw last year and she served them off the court. Psychologically, she's got their number."

Bolli, a walk-on who was awarded a scholarship last spring, said the jump serve initially looks like it is going to sail out of bounds, but then it drops suddenly due to the ball's tight spin.

An ace weighs heavily on the minds of opposing players, she said.

"Every time I register one they get tight," Bolli said, "and then it gets to be a psychological problem more than a physical one, because it's not that tough a serve. It can be handled."

Returning to handle those serves for the Cyclones are three seniors, two sophomores and a junior.

"They're a real experienced team," Cook said. "They started off doing really well. They upset Iowa when Iowa was in the top 20."

Cook said sophomore Tracy Graham, who is second on the Iowa team with 268 kills, is the Cyclones' best

player. Graham has compiled a .241 hitting percentage.

Senior middle blocker Dana Burson leads the team with 323 kills and an average of 3.8 kills per game, and is hitting .271.

"She's a big-time outside hitter," Cook said. "She could pretty much start anywhere in the country. She's a 6-footer and she rips the ball."

"We're going to try and match her up with (outside hitter) Cris Hall -- our best blocker," Cook said.

Over the weekend, Nebraska split a pair of matches with top-ranked Hawaii. The match-up featured the nation's last two unbeaten major collegiate volleyball teams.

Hawaii won Friday in straight sets by scores of 15-9, 15-9, 15-9. Nebraska rebounded by claiming a 15-7, 14-16, 16-14, 15-12 victory Saturday.

The Huskers had only one day -- Monday -- to prepare for Iowa State. Cook said coaches will make sure players are not distracted by the win over Hawaii.

"Any time you go on the road, you've got to play well to win," he said. "We'll convince our players of that."

sports SHORTS

NU claims crew team title

The Nebraska crew team closed out its season by winning the 10-team Head of the Iowa Regatta Saturday at Iowa City, Iowa.

The Cornhuskers used gold-medal performances from their men's novice eight, women's novice four and men's varsity lightweight four teams to claim the team title. Nebraska was awarded the title based on the fact that it had six boats finish among the top three in their respective categories.

The members of the men's varsity lightweight four, which broke the course record en route to winning the 2.5-mile event in 14:33,

included Diana Meers, Rob Volkoun, Scott Nelson, Dave Schmidt and Rob Mellion. Meers, Paul Taylor, Eric Dunning, Tom Gajenic, Rich Brown, John Leary, David Yoacov, David Wieseler and Eric Dove teamed up to win the men's novice eight.

Mellion, the team's public relations director, said he was pleased with Nebraska's performance. He said the team title was an appropriate way to close out the season.

"We've been getting better and better each time," Mellion said, "so we're very pleased with how we performed."

Support club elects officials

The Nebraska rebounders club announced its officers and elected 22 people to its board of directors.

The club, which acts as a support group for the Nebraska's basketball program, named Linda Hrdlicka as its president and selected Albert Maxey and Mert Oden as its vice presidents. John

Westland was named treasurer, and Pat Jones was chosen as secretary.

This year's board of directors includes Don Bryant, who is the assistant director of the athletic department and is the director of sports information and of the Bob Devaney Sports Center.