

Volleyball player pleased with year

By Cory Golden
Staff Reporter

The cover of this year's Nebraska volleyball press guide shows seniors Virginia Stahr and Carla Baker standing by the columns next to the NU Coliseum.

And, like the the column she's leaning on in the photograph, Baker has been a solid pillar of consistency in the Cornhuskers' lineup.

While six of Nebraska's top players have been out at one time or another because of injuries or illnesses and have gone in and out of slumps, Baker has cruised along by posting a .333 hitting percentage from her middle blocker position.

Baker added to her totals in Nebraska's 17-15, 15-5, 15-8 sweep of Illinois in the NCAA Midwest regional championship match at the coliseum Saturday. She totaled nine

kills on 18 attacks for a .389 hitting percentage, while adding seven digs and four blocking assists.

That performance helped Nebraska earn a berth in the Final Four, and also helped Baker move up in the Husker record books.

Baker's 108 blocking assists tie her for the fifth-best season total in Nebraska history, while her solo block total of 24 puts her at ninth.

Baker's output against the Illini did not shock Nebraska volleyball coach Terry Pettit. He said Baker always seems to rise to the occasion.

"Carla has a history of playing some of her best volleyball in big matches," Pettit said. "She did it against Hawaii, against Texas last year. She did it against Kentucky and Houston earlier in the year."

"I don't know whether the stars are right or what it is, but she performed real well."

Baker said after the match that she did her best just to fulfill her role.

"I think I played my part well," she said. "Being a senior, I think I did what needed to be done. I played like a senior. I didn't play like an All-American, I played like a senior."

"That's what the team needed, so

that's what I did."

Baker said her role is different than fellow senior middle blocker Stahr, the All-America team captain.

"It's not really like Virginia's. It's just more 'do your job'," she said.

"You're not going to be a captain but you have to hold the team together 'cause you've been here a while. You keep them going."

Baker leads by example with her work ethic, Pettit said.

"She was our lifter of the year," he said. "She works very hard in the weight room. I think Carla leads by working hard. She's one of the hardest workers we've ever had in Nebraska volleyball."

"Every day, no matter what the situation, she works very hard."

Baker's work ethic carries over into the class room, as she owns a 3.81 grade point average in elementary education. That mark has earned her spots on the Big Eight All-Academic and GTE District VII All-Academic teams.

Pettit said Baker also is unselfish. He said Baker proved her unselfishness when she was the lone Husker left off the all-tournament team that was announced following the Big

Eight competition in Omaha.

"I think she might like to be named All-this or that," Pettit said. "But she's a very unselfish player."

It's not always easy being left out, Baker said.

"It hurts sometimes," she said, "but I'm not the kind of person that plays for awards. I play for the team and play to do my job and fulfill my own expectations."

Baker said all the awards her teammates have gathered reflect on her.

"Sometimes I don't have good nights. I'm not a superstar," Baker said. "But if that many people on my team get those awards that's, in itself, an honor that I'm on that team and starting."

"The whole team can't be... so if they're going to choose somebody to not get an award, it may as well be me. I can handle it."

Baker said she has been pleased with her performance this season.

"I think this year has been my best year," she said. "I'm finishing it the way I want to finish it. The Final Four my senior year... it's a dream come true."

"I'm really happy."

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MENTAL from Page 7

the score says." Huppert praised the performance of diver Amy Aarsen and distance specialist Michelle Butcher. Aarsen claimed the meet's 1- and 3-meter diving titles, while Butcher won the 500- and 1,000-yard freestyles in

5:00.81 and 10:24.90. In addition to the wins by Butcher and Aarsen, Nebraska also received first-place finishes from Kansas native Carole Johnson in the 200-yard backstroke and Kristen Neuenfeldt in the 200-yard breaststroke. Huppert said Nebraska now

will begin preparing for its "second season," which begins in January. He said the Huskers will close out their first season by lightening their training load while the athletes are taking final exams. "We want to relieve some of the pressure," Huppert said.

Geter says he's happy with start, even though it hasn't been stellar

By Cory Golden
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska men's basketball team's 4-3 start hasn't been stunning, but sophomore forward Lewis Geter couldn't be happier.

Geter, along with teammate Carl Hayes, sat out last season as a Proposition 48 casualty. But this year, the 6-foot-7 Geter has been a starter all season and is averaging 10.6 points and 4.9 rebounds per game.

"It feels great. I'm really enjoying this so far," Geter said. "Last year was kind of hard because I knew I could've come out and helped the team off the bench or something."

Geter will get his eighth career start tonight when the Cornhuskers take on the Idaho Vandals at 7:35 in the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Geter said Nebraska is glad the game is at home. He said the home-court advantage gave the Huskers a big lift during their 76-69 win Saturday against Texas Tech.

"One reason we won is that we

came back home," he said. "That gives us more confidence."

The Huskers have won their last nine games at home and lost their last 13 road games.

Nebraska will try to extend its home winning streak tonight.

Idaho, 4-2, returns eight lettermen from a team that trounced the Huskers 83-68 and has won the last three meetings between the teams.

The Vandals are led by 6-8 center Riley Smith, who averages 24.7 points and 9.2 rebounds per game. Also in double figures are 6-5 Ricardo Boyd at 12.5 points and 5.5 rebounds and 6-8 Clifford Martin who averages 10.2 points and 6.6 boards.

Idaho is quarterbacked by point guard Otis Livingston, a 6-1 senior who was a reserve member of the Kansas Jayhawks' 1986-87 national championship team.

The Vandals have posted wins against Simon Fraser, Gonzaga and Whitworth this season. One of Idaho's losses was an 87-58 setback

to Kansas.

Idaho hosted the Palouse Classic Friday and Saturday, losing its first-round matchup against Texas Southern 78-77 in overtime. The Vandals then rebounded to pound Cetenary 94-63.

Geter said he doesn't know much about the Vandals, a Big Sky Conference team that participated in the NCAA tournament last year. He said the key to winning is concentrating on his own team.

"I don't really know anything about them," Geter said. "I know they were picked to win their conference. We just have to come out ready to play, execute, and do what's right to win."

Geter said Nebraska will not dwell on its start even though it has not been stellar.

SPRINT from Page 7

by Fitzpatrick, Nebraska also received top performances from Jan Birdman and Sean Frampton. Frampton won the 50 breaststroke in 25.71, while Birdman won the 50 backstroke in 23.32, the 100 individual medley in 51.49 and teamed with Frampton, Rhett Talbert and Seddon Keyter to form Nebraska's winning 200 medley relay team.

Bentz said he was not surprised by Birdman's performance even though the Sweden native is a freshman.

"He certainly does well," he said. "I think his talent is good -- we recognized that when we recruited him."

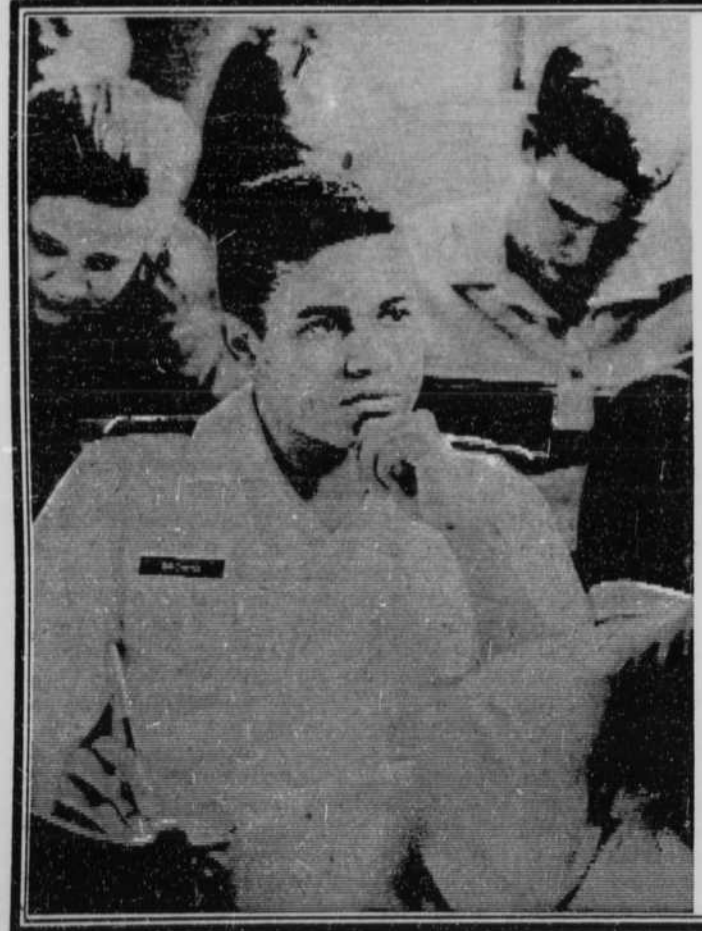
ADVANCE from Page 7

the score 15-15, the game's eighth tie, before Husker setter Val Novak served the final two points.

"She basically won that first game for us," Pettit said about Bolli. "She brought us back and the first game was the key game."

Nebraska advanced to the title match by defeating Minnesota in Friday's semifinals 15-10, 11-15, 15-13, 15-12. Illinois made it by stopping Ohio State 13-15, 15-7 15-10, 17-15.

Minnesota's Chris Schaefer was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player. The other members of the team were Ohio State's Holly O'Leary and Nebraska's Novak, Hall, Kruse and Virginia Stahr.



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