

# Kansas-Missouri shootout to benefit NU

By Jeff Apel  
Senior Editor

Even though the Nebraska men's basketball team isn't playing, the Cornhuskers will receive a bonus tonight when top-ranked Kansas faces No. 2-ranked Missouri.

Nebraska coach Danny Nee said the game will benefit the entire Big Eight Conference because it will help it continue to create an identity for the conference.

The game, which will be televised by ESPN (CableVision channel 23), begins at 6:40 p.m. at Allen Field House in Lawrence, Kan.

Nee said the game will help Nebraska's program by drawing potential recruits' attention to the Big Eight.

"It's like a trickle-down effect," Nee said. "It gets you basketball identity."

Nee said the Big Eight still is battling for identity, despite its increasing level of national prominence during the last decade. Several conference coaches agreed Monday that the Big Eight began to reach its current level in 1980, when Missouri signed Steve Stipanovich, a 7-foot center who went on to play for the Indiana Pacers.

"Missouri has done it all along," Nee said, "and there has been a

commitment by the other schools in the Big Eight.

"They went out, sold their programs and had commitments from quality players."

Nee said quality players will be in tonight's showdown, as Kansas and Missouri possess individuals who are among the Big Eight's best at their respective positions.

The Tigers took the No. 1 ranking away from Kansas when they defeated the Jayhawks 95-87 earlier this season in Columbia, Mo. Missouri is led by forward Doug Smith and guard Anthony Peeler.

Smith scored 44 points during the Tigers' 107-85 win against Nebraska

on Saturday while Peeler is averaging 18.7 points per game.

Kansas, which reclaimed the top spot when Missouri lost a 65-56 decision to Kansas State last week in Manhattan, Kan., is led by guard Kevin Pritchard. The 6-3 senior has averaged 15 points per game this season.

"I can't think of any player in the country I'd rather have playing guard," Kansas coach Roy Williams said. "He's having a great season. He's truly a great youngster to be around."

Missouri coach Norm Stewart said he has been impressed by Pritchard. He said he also is impressed by the media attention surrounding this year's two Missouri-Kansas games, which

he describes as the biggest regular-season contests he has been involved in during his 23-year coaching career at Missouri.

Stewart said the only game more important to the Big Eight in terms of prestige was the 1988 NCAA Final, in which Kansas defeated Oklahoma, 83-79.

Stewart said he isn't letting that game take anything away from tonight's contest.

"From my recollection, I can't remember two ballclubs playing two ballgames under these conditions," he said.

Stewart said the Missouri-Kansas game promises to be an exciting one.

## Hall strives for technical as well as physical strength

Cris Hall could easily be mistaken for a natural, a player who doesn't have to work to improve.

The sophomore on the Cornhusker volleyball team can make the most difficult plays look easy. Her ability, which includes a high-jumper's spring and a powerful hitting prowess, has caught the eye



Paul Domeier

of Terry Liskevych, coach of the national team.

She is one of four starters at outside hitter who will return for the Huskers next fall. All three from last season -- Hall, Eileen Shannon and Janet Kruse -- come back along with Linda Barsness, who started in 1988 but missed most of this season with a serious knee injury.

But despite all of her athletic ability, the 6-foot-2 Hall wasn't born spiking a volleyball. She didn't grow up spiking a volleyball, either, which makes the respect she commands in the collegiate ranks even more astounding.

In two years Hall has changed herself from a potential volleyball player to a potential player of the year. Much of the improvement, maybe most of the improvement, came during the off-season.

At the same time she knows that potential means nothing in the present, and Val Novak, Virginia Stahr and Kruse were the Husker All-Americans last year.

Hall and the rest of the Huskers are fine-tuning for next season, away from the crowds and the recogni-

tion, so that next year they can go as far or further than their national runner-up finish last December.

Nebraska coach Terry Pettit said his self-motivated players are working as hard now as they would in September or October.

"Even if nobody came to our matches, (the players) would still be competitive," he said. "All you have to do is come to our practices to see that."

Pettit said spring practice meets three times a week and lasts 11 weeks. The Huskers, he said, concentrate on individual skills more than team play, allowing him to work players in at positions they may play in the fall.

"It's like a ship going into dry dock," he said.

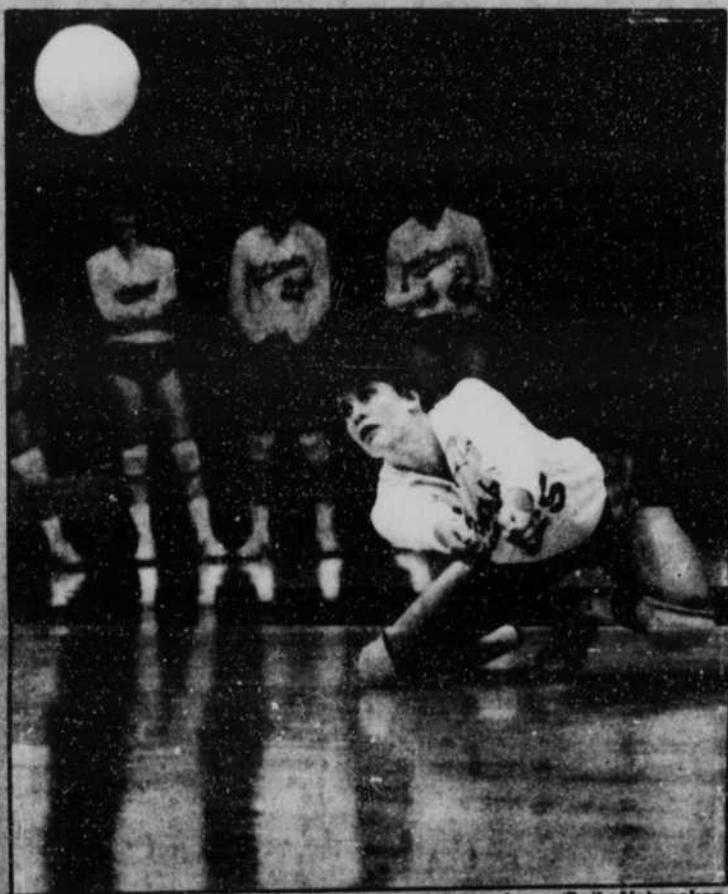
Two giant beams in the Husker ship, middle blockers Stahr and Carla Baker, have used up their eligibility.

The only returning middle blockers are Sara Hesch and Stephanie Thater, neither of whom played much in 1989. Hesch missed much of the season with a shoulder injury, and Thater is a freshman.

So Pettit is drawing from his overabundance of outside hitters to fill the hole in the middle. He said Kruse, a first-team All-American selection last season, is practicing at middle blocker for next year.

Hall, who Pettit said has the ability to play middle blocker or any other position, has been going inside for attacks only -- the Long Beach State influence.

No, that's not fair to Pettit. He's not going to change his offense because of the loss in the NCAA finals any more than Tom Osborne is going to change his offense because of the Fiesta Bowl. A good coach designs the system according to the talent, and Pettit has the power-hitting volleyball equivalent



William Lauer/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska's Cris Hall executes a dig at the NU Coliseum.

of the Oakland A's.

Hall has the potential to be the Huskers' Jose Canseco.

"Cris is becoming a dominant player in several areas: blocking, attacking, digging, passing, serving," Pettit said.

That's about all there is, folks, except for the mental aspect of the game. Hall has shown her mental toughness just by getting to this position. When she came out of Chanute (Kan.) High School she was known for her state track titles, not her volleyball skills.

She spent most of her freshman season on the bench, playing in less than half of the Huskers' games. When she did play, her main job

was to attack.

It wasn't until the summer that Hall showed she could be a force in volleyball. She and fellow Huskers Kruse and Val Novak played in the Olympic Festival, and Hall went on to play in the World University Games.

And at the U.S. Olympic Festival Hall attracted the attention of Liskevych, who called Hall as fine an athletic talent as he has seen in collegiate volleyball.

At the start of Nebraska's season Hall broke down physically, partly due to the wear and tear of a full summer. Fighting back pain

See HALL on 8

## Olson's confidence, unique style pays dividends in season

By McGraw Milhaven  
Staff Reporter

Nebraska's Corey Olson admits he is not a normal college wrestler.

Olson said his wrestling style is unique because he uses his entire body. He adopted his style, which places an equal emphasis on the upper and lower body, while competing in Greco-Roman wrestling.



Olson

"I am not your normal college wrestler," Olson said. "I use my upper body and throw people to the ground, much like in Greco-Roman."

Olson said he acquired this style as a youngster when he competed in standard and Greco-Roman wrestling in his hometown of Hayfield, Minn. His style has paid dividends this season, as he is the 10th-ranked 177-pounder in the country with a 25-9 record.

He leads Nebraska in pins with 13, a feat which has earned him the nickname of the "fallguy."

Olson credits his success to confidence. He said he entered the season unsure if he was ready to compete on the collegiate level after spending last year as a redshirt, but changing his mind when he recorded a sixth-place finish at the Las Vegas Invitational earlier this season.

"When I finished sixth in Las Vegas, I started to get confidence in myself and started to set high goals for myself," Olson said.

Olson said he also credits his success to his childhood, when he began wrestling family members as a kindergartner.

"My father, brother and myself would wrestle all the time," he said. "I learned a lot from them."

Olson said his first taste for competitive wrestling occurred in grade school when he joined a club wrestling team. That decision proved to be

See OLSON on 8

# Men's gymnastics team solidifies national title contention

By Jeff Apel  
Senior Editor

A hungry Nebraska men's gymnastics team chomped up a pair of titles last weekend and solidified its position in the national championship race.

Nebraska coach Francis Allen said the Cornhuskers showed they are the best team in the country by dominating the Cal State-Fullerton and UCLA Invationals. He said Nebraska will win this year's national championship if the Huskers continue to improve on the performances they delivered.

The Huskers claimed the team title at the Fullerton invitational on Thursday in Fullerton, Calif., by scoring 280.80 points. New Mexico finished second with 270.75, followed by Cal State-Fullerton with 270.05, Illinois, the defending national champions, with

262.15 and San Jose State with 261.05.

Nebraska then followed up on that performance Saturday by scoring a season-high 283.075 points at the UCLA invitational in Los Angeles. UCLA finished second with 279.2 points, followed by Minnesota (278.8).

— 6 6 —

**I'm not saying we can't be beaten. But for someone to beat us, they're going to have to perform awfully well.**

Allen  
men's gymnastics coach

— 9 9 —

New Mexico (273.075) Arizona State (271.5) and Illinois (269.95).

Allen said he is sure Nebraska's performance left a lot of teams wondering if the 15-0 Huskers could be beaten.

"It's a nice position to be in," he

said.

Allen said the only chance of Nebraska not winning the NCAA championship this season is if one of a few teams -- including UCLA or Minnesota -- "max out" with excellent performances against the Hus-

kers. "I'm not saying we can't be beaten," Allen said. "But for someone to beat us, they're going to have to perform awfully well."

Allen said the Huskers aren't worried about being tabbed as the

team to beat.

"We've been in this position for the last 11 years," he said. "The only thing we need to do is keep it in perspective. We can't blow it out of proportion."

Allen said seniors Patrick Kirksey, Bob Stelter and Mark Warburton, and freshman Trent Dimas kept things in perspective last weekend, as they led Nebraska to its titles.

Kirksey, the defending NCAA all-around champion, won the pommel horse, and finished second in the floor exercise and parallel bars at the UCLA invitational to win the all-around competition with a 57.475 score.

Warburton won the all-around title at the Fullerton Invitational, and Stelter finished second. Dimas captured his first event title at the same meet by winning the horizontal bar.

Allen said he is impressed by Dimas. "Dimas is continually making a

name for himself," he said. "Everyone I know that sees him is talking about him."

"Before, they had just heard about him, but they hadn't seen him."

Allen said the Huskers need to work hard this week in preparation for its meet against Houston Baptist.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln students who present their student ID cards will be admitted free. The meet will begin at 2 p.m. Sunday at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Allen said he would like to see an abundance of fans at the meet because it will mark the last time that Kirksey, Stelter and Warburton will compete at home. He said the trio of seniors is the best group of upperclassmen that Nebraska has ever had.

"This is the best senior class in the United States," Allen said. "It's definitely the best class we've ever had."