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# Outside hitter may move inside despite back pain

By David Moyer  
 Staff Reporter

Back problems have greeted Nebraska volleyball player Cris Hall again this season.

Through the first part of last season, Hall suffered what were believed to be recurrent back spasms, which interfered with her practice and playing time as one of the Cornhuskers' outside hitters.

This year she found out those pains were the result of a slipped disc.

Hall, who said she hoped to come back healthy this season, said the injury would not keep her from the lineup.

"I can play with pain," said the junior from Chanute Kan., where she was a state champion high jumper and long jumper. "If anything I will be more focused because of it. I won't sit out because of a little back pain."

Hall played in pain enough last

season to finish second on the team in digs with 291 and third in kills with 367. She also earned all-tournament honors at both the Big Eight Tournament and the NCAA Midwest Regionals.

The Huskers are deep and experienced at outside hitter, Coach Terry Pettit said. With that surplus, Hall may find herself at a new position -- middle blocker.

Nebraska lost two starters from last year's team, which finished second in the nation. Both were middle blockers.

Because senior Linda Barsness, who as a sophomore outside hitter led the team in kills, returns after a season-ending knee injury at the start of last year, Pettit said, moving Hall would allow him to play more of his talent at once. The 6-foot-2 Hall said she would not mind a move to middle blocker.

Pettit said the amount of time Hall will play at middle blocker depends on the opponent and how well she comes along. He said her skills are not a problem.

"Physically, Cris Hall has the potential to do some things that are very unique to the middle blocker position," he said.

# Barsness hopes for on-court role after lost season

By Chris Hopfensperger  
 Senior Reporter

Last fall, Linda Barsness was a junior who was expected to make a huge contribution to the Cornhusker volleyball program after leading the team in 1988 with 465 kills, the third best single-season total ever at Nebraska.

That expectation ended in the second match of the year, when she suffered a knee injury that ended her season.

After finishing the previous year as a second-team All-Big Eight and honorable mention Lee Jeans/Big Eight All-Academic selection, she was forced to watch the rest of the season from the bench, having recorded 10 kills and a .381 hitting percentage in three games.

"It was hard, but it was exciting," Barsness said. "It was great to see the team do so well."

Nebraska went on to finish 29-4 and second in the nation, and won its 14th-straight Big Eight championship.

This year, Barsness is back. And so is her knee.

"It's great, ready to go," Barsness said. "It has come along fine through rehab."

Despite sitting out a year, Barsness will be a major asset to the team this fall, Cornhusker coach Terry Pettit said.

"Linda had a real good spring," Pettit said. "She played in our last tournament (of the spring) and played real well. She seems to have completely recovered."

"Linda brings a lot of experience to our team. She's certainly one of our most experienced players. She understands the game real well."

Nebraska returns all three of its starting outside hitters in juniors Cris Hall and first-team All-American Janet Kruse and sophomore Eileen Shannon, who went on to be named All-Big Eight and to the Final Four All-Tournament team after replacing Barsness in the lineup. Sophomore Debbie Brand also returns.

"I'm just part of a great team," Barsness said. "It will be great to have so many outside hitters. Coach (Pettit) will always have a reserve if someone isn't playing well or someone gets hurt."

Pettit said that depth could be deceiving, though.

"We thought we were deep in a few spots last year and then you get an injury or two and you find that maybe you aren't as deep as you thought you were," he said. "I think we do have a lot of talent in that position."

Talent will be required if Nebraska is to compete with a schedule stacked with nationally-ranked teams.

"It's going to be great," Barsness said. "There's a lot of good competition."

Taking into account the tough schedule, Pettit said that although he was confident with the team, he was not concerned with its record.

"Generally speaking, wins and losses take care of themselves," he said. "If you play enough good teams you may not be successful every night, but you put yourself in a position to perform like we did in last year's tournament."

"I don't feel the key to the season is that we win all but two matches. What will make this a great season for us is that we play great volleyball from Dec. 1 to Dec. 15."


Barsness said her hopes for the team outweighed her personal goals.

"I'd like to make it through the season healthy," she said. "But I want the team to win the national championship. There is so much potential on this team it is unbelievable. We have a very good chance to do that."

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