

NU wins tournament with tri-sweep

By John Adkisson
Staff Reporter

It was sweep-city at the NU Coliseum this weekend.

In the Baden-Mizuno Invitational played at the Coliseum Friday and Saturday, not one of the six matches went more than three games.

The No. 1 ranked Nebraska volleyball team had a tri-sweep and claimed its second tournament this season, and setter Val Novak claimed her second most valuable player award of the season.

The Cornhuskers, now 7-0, were victorious over Texas A&M, Purdue and Wyoming, which is ranked 20th.

"We did some good things in the tournament," said Nebraska coach Terry Pettit after the Huskers secured the tourney title with a 15-12, 15-8 and 15-8 win against Wyoming Saturday night. "We started to block and dig the ball a little better."

The tournament victory came on the heels of a tournament in Hawaii where Nebraska beat three ranked teams. Next week, the Huskers play two more ranked teams in the Illinois Invitational in Champaign, Ill.

"These first few weeks have been a meat grinder," Pettit said. "It's hard to come back from such a long trip and play this well."

In the final match against Wyoming, Novak recorded 33 set assists and four service aces. For the tournament, Novak had 106 set assists and nine aces.

"It's just the people around me," said the senior co-captain from Oak Lawn, Ill. "I just set the ball for them and they put it away."

Pettit said Novak delivered at crucial times.

"I thought Val did a good job of keeping us organized," Pettit said. "When we'd get down, she'd still find a way to get us a point or two."

Novak was joined on the all-tournament team by outside hitter Janet Kruse. The junior from Fort Calhoun recorded 23 kills in the three matches.

Pettit also praised the play of sophomore middle blocker Stephanie Thater. Thater had 22 kills, five blocks and 10 assists this weekend.

"Stephanie does a lot of nice things on the court," Pettit said. "She rose



Nebraska's Nikki Stricker (12) lunges to receive a Texas A&M serve as Janet Kruse looks on.

Butch Ireland/Daily Nebraskan

up in pressure situations and got us some blocks when we really needed them."

Pettit said Wyoming put up a good fight and is a top-caliber team.

"They're a good volleyball team and they played real well tonight," Pettit said.

A crowd of 3,783 almost filled the Coliseum for the Nebraska-Wyoming game. Pettit said he was impressed with the large early season turnout.

"I'm impressed, but not surprised," he said. "The crowds seem to get a little bigger each year. It's more of a gradual growth."

Nebraska's biggest scare of the tournament came on Saturday afternoon against Purdue. The Boilermakers had two game points at 14-12 in the first game, but the Huskers came back to take the game and the match 16-14, 16-14 and 15-3.

NU cross country men and women take first

By Cory Golden
Staff Reporter

"That's good, that's good," Nebraska cross country coach Jay Dirksen

said, grinning as the Cornhusker women's team collected its trophy Saturday at Pioneer's Park.

Dirksen had reason to smile as both the Husker men's and women's teams edged Colorado to capture first place at the Woody Greeno-Nebraska Invitational.

Nebraska All-American senior Joe Kirby cruised to a first-place victory in the men's 8,000 meter race, while sophomore Fran tenBensel finished first for the women.

"This will be our easiest meet for sure," tenBensel said. "I was just kind of looking at it to get the legs going and to kind of get rid of the first meet jitters."

"I was trying to find out what I could do. I surprised myself. I was really happy with how it went."

It was tenBensel's first-ever win in cross country, prep or collegiate.

The women's team finished nine points ahead of Colorado -- the only other Division I school competing -- despite running without sophomore team captain Katie Fletcher, who has an infection.

Sophomore Sylvia Veit finished 15th despite not feeling well, Dirksen said.

Other top 10 Husker finishers were Lisa Graham (second), Theresa Stelling (fourth) and Julieanne Campbell (ninth).

Dirksen said he was pleased with the freshmen debuts of Stelling and redshirt freshmen Campbell and Becky Lund (11th).

"Campbell and Lund have really improved over last year," he said. "It was good to see Theresa Stelling race. I thought in practice that she could be just as good as she showed today."

Kirby broke away from a dozen-runner pack at the 5,000-meter mark to win by four seconds over Kendrick Sealy of Northwest Missouri State.

Kirby said he was pleased with how he ran.

"During the race, I just concentrated on staying relaxed and staying in that pack," he said, "then, going when I did, with about 3,000 meters to go."

Redshirt sophomore Kevin Clark and junior Pat Day finished sixth and ninth respectively to help the Huskers top Colorado by five points.

"Joe Kirby looked really easy and didn't have to run that hard," Dirksen said. "That's nice to see that he didn't have to kill himself in the first meet."

"We had a good grouping and that was really encouraging."

Another of the team's top seven, freshman David Iteffa, did not run because of a groin injury. Iteffa's status will be determined later today, Dirksen said.

It was good for the team to get back into competition, he said.

"Everybody's getting kind of sick of training all the time," Dirksen said. "This gives everybody a starting point. It was very important to get a race under our belts."

"Everyone should be even more focused when we start practice again."

Nebraska Volleyball

Baden-Mizuno Invitational

Scores

Nebraska (3-0) over Texas A&M (0-3) 15-0, 15-3, 15-3

Nebraska over Purdue (1-2) 16-14, 16-14, 15-3

Nebraska over Wyoming (2-1) 15-12, 15-8, 15-8

Wyoming over Purdue 15-12, 15-7, 15-10

Wyoming over Texas A&M 15-13, 15-7, 17-15

Purdue over Texas A&M 15-0, 15-3, 15-9

All Tournament Team:

MVP Val Novak, Nebraska. Janet Kruse, Nebraska. Elizabeth Edmiston, Texas A&M. Amber Douglas, Purdue. Erin Cantacessi, Wyoming. Kim Smith, Wyoming.

Jana Pedersen/Daily Nebraskan

Coaches agree on nation's top volleyball team

By John Adkisson
Staff Reporter

The three coaches whose teams faced the top-rated Nebraska volleyball team this weekend in the Baden-Mizuno Invitational at the NU Coliseum had one resounding answer to the question, "Is Nebraska the best team in the nation?"

Yes.

Wyoming coach Mike English, whose 20th-rated Cowgirls lost in three sets to Nebraska in the final match of the tournament had only good things to say about the Huskers and their coach, Terry Pettit.

"Nebraska's the No. 1 team in the country," English said. "I have a lot of respect for what Terry's done."

"It's easy to have (one) good season but harder to keep it there," he said. "He's definitely kept it there with a lot of hard work and a lot of good coaching. It says a lot for the university and his ability."

English said that his team played well, but was outmatched by Nebraska.

"We increased our level of play," he said. "We felt disappointed that we didn't come away with a few games or even the match."

Purdue coach Carol Dewey, whose Boilermakers took Nebraska to two 16-14 games before falling 15-3 in the third, was impressed with Nebraska's size.

"Everybody on that team in the front line is tall and they hit the ball hard," Dewey said.

Dewey said she was especially impressed with Nebraska's serving ability, especially jump-server Becky Bolli.

Texas A&M coach Al Givens said he was "extremely impressed" with Nebraska's overall athletic ability. His Aggies were blasted 15-0, 15-3 and 15-3 by Nebraska.

Nebraska prep players trade NU for Wyoming

By Cory Golden
Staff Reporter

Three members of Wyoming's volleyball team came to the NU Coliseum this weekend with something to prove.

Wyoming's Krista Bashaw, Stacy Cudabeck and Kim Smith are all former Nebraska prep players who received scholarships to play for the Cowgirls. Wyoming lost to No. 1-ranked Nebraska in three games in the final match of the Baden-Mizuno Invitational Saturday.

All three players were asked to walk on at Nebraska, but declined for scholarships at Wyoming. Smith, a junior, is the team's starting setter, while Bashaw and Cudabeck, both sophomores, are reserves that see considerable playing time.

Bashaw, from Kimball, said that while there's no grudge, that all three players wanted to play well in front of Nebraska coach Terry Pettit.

"I always wanted to come back and show him he missed something," she said. "There were four of us last year that felt that way. And I think he did miss something."

The fourth player was Cudabeck's sister Darcy, who was an All-American for the Cowgirls. The Exeter native completed her eligibility last season and is now a graduate assistant.

Smith, from Lincoln East, said she prefers Wyoming coach Mike English's coaching style.

"Terry Pettit's more into taller, homegrown talent," she said. "I believe short people can do it, too, you know. So I went somewhere where I could play front and back row, and because of Mike -- he had a lot of faith in my height and what I could do."

And English is more than happy to get players from Pettit's backyard.

Smith, who collected 21 set assists against the Cornhuskers, and named to the all-tournament team, said Nebraska deserves to be No. 1.

"They deserve their ranking," she said. "I'm proud of them, too, because they're from the Midwest. We're all building Midwest volleyball together. And it's not just a reflection of them, but on the whole Midwest."

"They're awesome. I was very impressed," Cudabeck said.

Woody Greeno-Nebraska Invitational

Top 7 Cornhusker placemen:

Women's 5,000 meters

Pl.	Name	Time
1	F. tenBensel (So.)	18:05.3
2	L. Graham (Jr.)	18:15.4
4	T. Stelling (Fr.)	18:48.0
9	J. Campbell (Fr.)	19:08.9
11	B. Lund (Fr.)	19:20.7
15	S. Veit (So.)	19:38.2
19	A. Lippold (So.)	20:02.4

Men's 8,000 meters

Pl.	Name	Time
1	J. Kirby (Sr.)	25:51.9
6	K. Clark (So.)	26:10.0
9	P. Day (Jr.)	26:29.5
12	K. Pettit (So.)	26:41.1
18	F. Lee (So.)	27:05.2
20	S. Coulter (So.)	27:20.4
21	T. Elwood (Fr.)	27:31.1

Jana Pedersen/Daily Nebraskan