

# NU takes top spot in invitational

By Cory Golden  
Staff Reporter

It took the little things for the Nebraska volleyball team to pull off big wins in the First Tier Invitational Friday and Saturday at the NU Coliseum.

The Cornhuskers -- ranked No. 1 in the NCAA poll, No. 2 in the American Volleyball Coaches Association poll -- topped No. 12 Brigham Young, North Carolina and No. 17 Wisconsin to secure first place.

It looked as though upset-minded BYU was prodding a sleeping giant Friday night, thrashing the Huskers 15-3 in the first game.

Nebraska All-American Janet Kruse said being groggy wasn't the problem.

"We were just tense," she said. "We were making errors and they just continued to compound."

"They were mental errors. Everyone was trying hard but things just weren't clicking for us. But we pulled ourselves together."

The Huskers rose to their feet and battled the upstart Cougars to a knucklebiting 16-14 win.

Nebraska ground out a 10-3 lead before BYU came back behind the vicious jump serving of 21-year-old Finnish National Team member Tea Nieminen. The 5-foot-11 outside hitter ripped eight straight to slice the lead to one before serving long.

Moments later, Nieminen added a kill to give the Cougars a 14-12 lead but sent her 14-13 game point serve into the net. Kills by Huskers Cris Hall, Nikki Stricker and All-American Val Novak tied the match.

Kruse said Nebraska talked about fundamentals during the five minute intermission between the second and third games. Whatever was said, worked.

The Huskers' block and team defense iced over the hot BYU attack, lowering the Cougar's hitting percentage from .305 to .296, and winning game three 15-6.

In the fourth game, Nebraska crushed BYU 15-1 to take the match and earn the team's 500th all-time victory.

Saturday morning, it took just over an hour to make North Carolina number 501.

While the Huskers continued to play sub-par volleyball, Kruse said, they dispatched the Tar Heels 15-13, 15-8 and 15-8.

Nebraska realized its mistakes from the first two matches, and got it together for its final match against Wisconsin.

"In the first two matches, when things weren't going our way we tended to break down," Kruse said. "So we came into the third game, again, just concentrating on the little things."

Back to basics worked once more, Coach Terry Pettit said.

"The things we struggled with early in the tournament really helped us in the final match," he said.

Nebraska took the first game from Wisconsin, unbeaten in its previous 13 matches, 15-5. An adjustment in the Badgers lineup moving 6-1 middle blocker Arlisa Hagan away from the Huskers' 6-2 Stephanie Thater sparked a 15-13 game two victory.

Pettit won the chess match by moving the 6-2 Hall to middle blocker to counter Hagan.

"Having Cris go to the middle and having Linda Barsness come in and take left was very important," Pettit

**Nebraska Volleyball**

## First Tier Invitational

### Scores

Nebraska (3-0) over Wisconsin (2-1) 15-5, 13-15, 15-4, 15-8  
 Nebraska over BYU (1-2) 3-15, 16-14, 15-6, 15-1  
 Nebraska over North Carolina (0-3) 15-13, 15-8, 15-8  
 Wisconsin over BYU 15-10, 15-13, 15-5  
 Wisconsin over North Carolina 15-5, 15-4, 15-6  
 BYU over North Carolina 15-7, 15-5, 15-6

### All Tournament Team:

MVP Cris Hall, Nebraska; Janet Kruse, Nebraska; Stephanie Thater, Nebraska; Lis Tortorello, Wisconsin; Arlisa Hagen, Wisconsin; Tea Nieminen, BYU; Liz Berg, North Carolina.

*Jana Pedersen/Daily Nebraskan*

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said. And effective.

Hagan, who entered the tournament with a .402 hitting percentage, ended the match with just 12 kills on 32 attempts for a .281 percentage.

Hall became even more dominant at the middle. Fed by her roommate, Novak, at setter, she pounded 21 kills on the night and led Nebraska to a 15-4 game three victory, followed by a 15-8 fourth game win to take the match.

Thater, Eileen Shannon and Kruse also had double-figure kill performances in the match, as the Huskers hit .391 to the Badgers .095.

That and the emphasis on fundamen-

mentals staved off the upset, Pettit said, looking over statistics.

"Reception errors, digs, 15 blocks... That tells the whole story right there," he said. "And the attack was pretty balance -- every rotation got about 10 kills. That's certainly nice to see."

Other things don't show up on stat sheets for Nebraska, now 12-1 on the season, 7-1 against top 20 teams.

"We just hung in, played tough ball. There was some great volleyball out there," Pettit said. "They were a real good team and there were a lot of side outs, finally we broke them a little at the end."

"This was by far our best match."

## NU runner takes 1st in invitational

From Staff Reports

Leading the way for Nebraska was Lisa Graham, who completed the 6,000-meter course in 22:28.1, capturing 5th place. Theresa Stelling was 14th in 23:23.1, Becky Lund 18th in 23:30.4, Sylvia Veit 21st in 23:36.0, Julianne Campbell 24th in 23:45.7 and Kelly O'Donnell 29th in 24:03.2.

No. 1 runner and team captain Katie Fletcher missed the meet because of illness, while No. 2 runner Fran tenBensel missed the meet to attend her sister's wedding.


"Having Fran and Katie gone was probably the difference between first and fourth, but that's OK," Dirksen said. "The people that were there did a really good job."

"Washington State is one of the top five teams in the country, and we can run with them if we have everyone. We just need to get them. There was some good competition, so this will pay off down the road."

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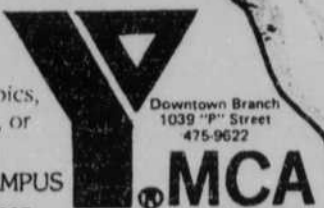


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