

Volleyball team to face improving foes

By John Adkisson
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska volleyball team's first-round opponent in today's Stanford Invitational is all too familiar.

The No. 1 Cornhuskers, one of four teams in the two-day tournament in Palo Alto, Calif., will face No. 12 Brigham Young for the second time in two weeks.

Nebraska beat the Cougars in a Sept. 28 match at the NU Coliseum. But that match went four games, and

“Most of the time in practice this week has been spent in preparation for this tournament.”

Cook
NU assistant volleyball coach

“They played us extremely tight the first time, and it was a struggle,” Cook said. “I’m sure they’ll want revenge.”

Brigham Young, 14-4, has won five straight matches since losing to Nebraska. Cook said the Cougars have been improving with every match.

“We know that they’re better now than when we saw them the first time,” Cook said. “But we are too.”

Cook said for Nebraska to control the match, the Huskers must stop outside hitter Tea Nieminen, who jump-served eight consecutive points when the two teams last met.

“We need to take care of her serve better or we’ll be in trouble,” Cook said. “We’ve made some defensive adjustments to prepare for her.”

The bracket-format tournament pits

No. 7 Stanford against St. Mary’s in the other first-round match. If both Nebraska and Stanford win their opening matches, the two would meet in the finals on Friday night.

The Cardinal is 11-2 on the season, with losses to No. 2 UCLA and No. 3 Pacific. By comparison, Nebraska beat UCLA in five games, but lost to Pacific in four.

Stanford is led by sophomore outside hitter Bev Oden and junior outside hitter Kristin Klein, who has compiled 1,116 kills in three years. Cook said both are “top-notch players.”

“They have one of the best attacks in the country,” Cook said. “Those two girls make them a very physical team.”

Cook added that playing Stanford on the road will make beating the Cardinal especially difficult.

“It will make it almost twice as tough for us, catching them in their home gym,” Cook said. “They get tremendous support from their fans.”

Nebraska raised its conference record to 2-0 Tuesday with a straight-game victory over Iowa State. Today’s match will be the third in six days for Nebraska, but Cook said fatigue will not be a problem.

“We’re ready to go, and we won’t be tired,” Cook said. “Most of the time in practice this week was spent in preparation for this tournament.”

Cook said the team is still adjusting to a lineup change that moved outside hitter Cris Hall to part-time middle blocker. The coach added that the emphasis this weekend will be on improvement.

“We’re going to go out there, give it 110 percent, and hope we make some improvement,” Cook said. “But this tournament is not going to make or break our season.”



Butch Ireland/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska's Cris Hall goes up for a block in the match against Texas A&M. The Huskers, ranked No. 1, play in the Stanford Invitational today and Friday. Their first-round match, against No. 12 Brigham Young, is their second of the season against the Cougars.

Poll addicts crave wicked drug in quest for NU national title

A reader recently sent a letter to the Omaha World-Herald complaining that sportswriters are poor pollsters for college football. The Associated Press top 25, the reader said, is messed up by regional biases and is

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dependant on an information-sharing network of ignorant sportswriters.

Oops. You got us. We're not qualified to vote intelligently on the entire sport. The poll is stupid.

And the reader forgot about personal respect or dislike for certain coaches and loyalty to an alma mater, which also can taint a writer's vote.

Go ahead then, ignore the AP poll. I dare you. Do what the coaches say they do, which is concentrate on the conference title. Control-your-own-destiny stuff. Focus on this Saturday, not the season.

Don't root for Michigan State to upset top-ranked Michigan this weekend. Enjoy a Wolverine win, even though a Wolverine loss would help Nebraska.

Got you there. You can't wean yourself from Nebraska's quest for the national championship so quickly. Winning the Big Eight is old stuff for Cornhusker fans. We have to have the nation acknowledge our greatness. We're No. 1!

Don't try to take refuge in the United Press International coaches' poll, which is just as bad.

At some schools, the coaches don't even bother with the voting. A sports information director will do the honors. The coaches that do vote usually are no better informed than the sportswriters and broadcasters.

“Heresy! Coaches know more than writers!”

Of course the coach knows more about his team, his conference and his opponents. Get away from the schedule and the region, though, and coaches won't have a clue. They've got enough to worry about as it is.

How many football games do you think Tom Osborne had time to watch Saturday?

So the polls lack voter credibility. But that won't drive you away. Nor will you ignore them when they spit on logic.

Auburn and Tennessee tied two weeks ago. Both dropped in the polls. Colorado fell two spots in this week's AP poll for a virtual loss to Missouri. If it wasn't for possibly the worst case of officiating ever, Colorado would have lost and dropped even more. Somehow awful officiating makes Colorado a better team.

You're addicted, though.

I feel like a drug pusher, spouting cruel truths and sneering as I sell a desperate junkie another top-25 fix. This year the Daily Nebraskan began running the AP top 25, plus a DN top 10 that I help vote on.

I know this drug is bad. Because of these stupid polls, the Scoring Explosion squad of 1983 is tainted by being No. 2. The 1970 and 1971 Huskers are regarded as better teams. Bob Devaney is a god, Tom Osborne is a failure. Give me a break.

Because of these stupid polls, Nebraska cannot afford to schedule

non-conference games worth watching.

You want the polls, so I shouldn't care. The reader is always right.

But I do care, since I'm a reader, a fan and an addict, too. I've ached for the Huskers every January since I went to my first game in 1977.

This is the year to throw off the yoke of the poll. Nebraska is No. 1 in Nebraska. That should be enough.

Oh, but complaining now, in October 1990, is painful! Nebraska, my school, has as good a chance as any to win the national championship this season.

Nebraska's strong position legitimizes my stand, though. Colorado column complaints about the polls would be sour grapes. I cover a seventh-ranked, undefeated team, so I don't have any reason to whine, except for a sincere dislike for the polls.

I'm not going to participate in the DN football top 10 from now on. This will take some ego swallowing when I want to look at the poll on Sunday and say, “How can you pinheads put Houston in the top 10? They beat Rice by two!”

However, I forfeit the right to complain. I'll turn in my pinhead poll voter card and just be a pinhead.

I solemnly promise now that from now on, I will deny the importance of the polls, let voters do as they wish and ignore Nebraska's final status in this inexact “national championship” mess, unless the Huskers end up No. 1.

Hey, take it easy on me. I'm still a Nebraskan.

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Cornhusker volleyball player anxious to play No. 12 BYU

By John Adkisson
Staff Reporter

Nebraska outside hitter Janet Kruse said the Cornhusker volleyball team will have to play “at our level at all times” if they hope to win this weekend's Stanford Invitational.

Nebraska will play Brigham Young today in the first round of the two-day tournament in Palo Alto, Calif. A Husker win today would set up a possible Friday night match with No. 7 Stanford.

Kruse said that Nebraska can win the tournament, but must play consistently.

“We work a lot in practice on keeping our play at a certain level,” Kruse said. “Our goal is to maintain it.”

Today's Nebraska-Brigham Young match will mark the second time this season the two teams have faced each other. Although Nebraska won the initial meeting at the NU Coliseum, Kruse said, the Huskers can't let up.

“They will be gunning for us, I'm sure,” Kruse said. “Naturally, they'll want to get us back for the first loss.”

Against Brigham Young, Kruse had her highest hitting percentage of the year with a .450 average.

The junior from Fort Calhoun also recorded 10 kills and two service aces.

Looking ahead to a possible showdown with Stanford, Kruse said the Huskers are anxious to face the Cardinal.

Kruse said playing Stanford would also hold a personal enjoyment for her.

“I've played with some of their players at summer camps and other places,” Kruse said. “So it's going to be nice to see some of them again.”

The tournament is Nebraska's fifth of the year, and the Huskers already have won three. Kruse said playing top-notch teams in tournaments will help Nebraska, especially in its goal of reaching the NCAA Tournament and Final Four.

“In the long run, we'll definitely benefit from it,” Kruse said. “When you play two tough teams in two days, that simulates the Final Four.”

The Huskers opened the season with a tournament win in Hawaii, where they beat No. 2 UCLA, No. 6 Hawaii and No. 11 Ohio State. Kruse said playing far from home doesn't seem to affect the Huskers.

“Actually, it's kind of fun,” Kruse said. “We usually don't get to play tournaments like this in the middle of the season.”

NU coach counts on top runners

By Benji Greenberg
Staff Reporter

The Cornhuskers' top runners will need to be among the leaders of the pack Saturday for the Nebraska women's cross country team to compete with two top teams.

No. 13 Nebraska competes in the

5,000-meter Wisconsin Classic Saturday in Madison, Wis. In addition to the Huskers, the meet includes two nationally ranked teams from Wisconsin and the University of California-Berkeley. The University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and Eastern

See DIRKSEN on 14