

# Pettit foresees tough opener for Huskers

By John Adkisson  
Staff Reporter

No patsies allowed. That is the rule the Nebraska volleyball team may well see posted throughout Memorial Coliseum in Lexington, Ky., this weekend.

The Cornhuskers, ranked third in the preseason American Volleyball Coaches Association poll, will open their season in the Kentucky Kickoff Classic against three other teams in or near the Top 20: Wisconsin, Texas Tech and Kentucky.

Nebraska Coach Terry Pettit said the tournament field is strong and his team will need to play well to win all three games.

"We are definitely going to have to play quality volleyball to win," Pettit said. "But if we stay organized, we can put ourselves in that position."

The Huskers will play three games in two days in the round-robin tournament. They will open against Wisconsin and Texas Tech on Saturday, and then face Kentucky Sunday.

Nebraska defeated Wisconsin in one meeting last year, beating the Badgers in four games in Lincoln. But the Badgers return three starters, including All-Big Ten selection Arlisa Hagan, who registered 478 kills last season.

Pettit said Wisconsin, following the death of Coach Steve Lowe,

is a team that may be emotionally ready for Nebraska.

"We have to prepare ourselves to face a team that could be emotionally charged," he said. "As far as we're concerned we're getting ready for a very tough volleyball team."

Texas Tech finished last season 30-3 and ended its season losing to Final Four participant Louisiana State in the NCAA Tournament. The Lady Raiders are rated 20th by the AVCA, and return four starters from last season's team.

"They are a good ball-control team," Pettit said. "We don't know a whole lot about them, but we do know that they return a lot of people from last season."

Pettit said Kentucky, which just missed being rated by the AVCA, is a "well-coached" team that will "play at the same level throughout the match."

The Wildcats also qualified for last season's NCAA Tournament, winning a match before losing to Texas in the South Regional.

Nebraska freshmen Kim Tonniiges and Christy Johnson will see some playing time, Pettit said.

Pettit said he will also experiment with a 6-2 offensive scheme, which uses two setters. But that doesn't mean he is abandoning Nebraska's standard 5-1 offense.

See OPENER on 9



Michelle Paulman/Daily Nebraskan

Nikki Stricker dives for the ball during Nebraska's exhibition against Nebraska alumnae Saturday, with Eileen Shannon in the background.

## Hughes takes style to split end

By John Gardner  
Staff Reporter

Hidden beneath Tyrone Hughes' football helmet, shaved into the hair on the back of his head, is the silhouette of a woman.

This season, Hughes, a junior kick returner for Nebraska, will be taking that flamboyance outside. He has been moved from wingback to split end and is second behind Jon Bostick. Hughes said he knows why.

"They moved me to utilize my speed at that position," he said. "(Nate) Turner and (Vincent) Hawkins took over the (wingback) position because they are bigger and can block the linebackers better."

"I don't like blocking too much." Hughes said he plans to catch a lot of balls this year.

"I'm not going to say we'll pass more than we'll run, but we will pass when we need to," Hughes said. "We plan on opening drives with the pass to open up the defense and enable us to run."

In 1990, Hughes led the nation in kickoff returns for the first four games and eventually finished third. But that didn't exactly change his thinking.

"It felt good, of course," Hughes said. "But I had to think of the team and stay on top of my game."

Hughes recorded 523 kick return yards, breaking the school record held by his friend Dana Brinson.

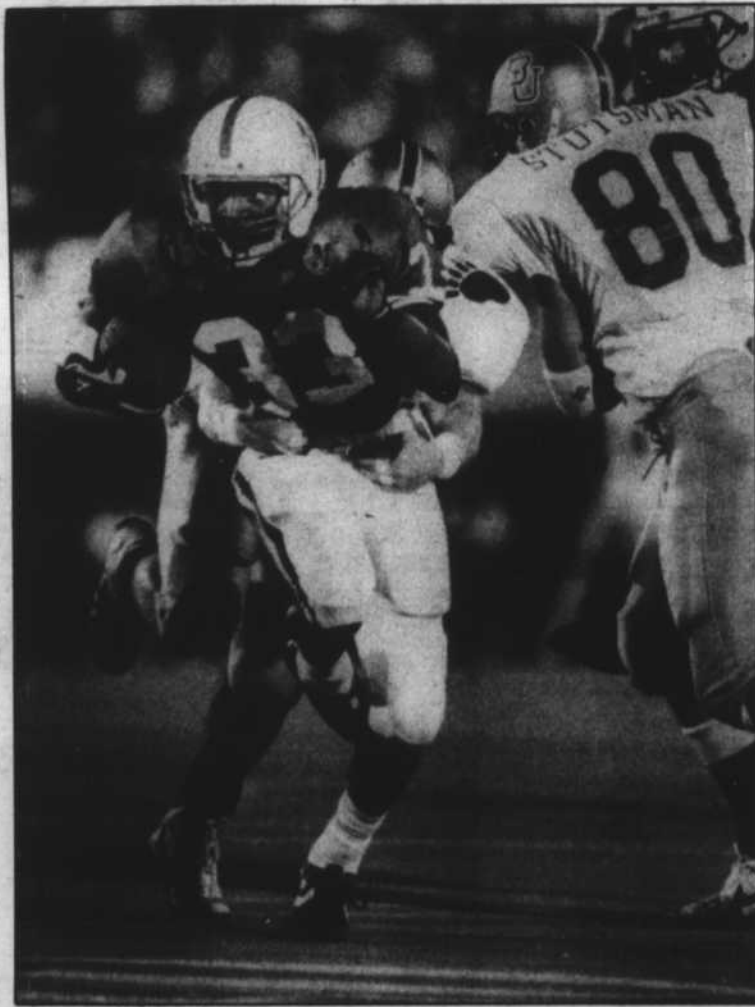
When Hughes was a freshman, he backed up Brinson, and immediately their similarities were noticed. Hughes said he didn't especially like this.

"It was real hard being compared to him," he said. "We were best friends and many people said I was better than him."

"I guess I concentrated more than Dana, but we're two different players, that's all."

Brinson wasn't the only player Hughes was compared to.

"When I was first coming up, some of the veteran players even called me 'Baby Rocket' and that bothered me," he said.



DN file photo

Tyrone Hughes breaks a tackle last season against Baylor. Hughes is making the switch from wingback to split end.

The "Baby Rocket" tag was in reference to former Notre Dame standout Raghieb "Rocket" Ismail.

Hughes was heavily recruited his senior year in high school. Oklahoma, Louisiana State, Minnesota and Tulane wooed him as well as Nebraska. Hughes said he chose the Huskers for several reasons, one of which was the style of offense.

"When I was in high school (at New Orleans St. Augustine), we ran a wing-T offense and I noticed Nebraska was doing a lot of the same thing," he said.

Hughes also said he felt the coaches were more honest with him.

"They really stressed academics and seriously let me know where I stood, what my chances were," he said.

Hughes quickly gained status as a return man. After redshirting in 1988, he led the Big Eight in 1989 with a 15.1-yard per return average. Hughes also shared the wingback position with Turner in 1989 and 1990.

See HUGHES on 10

### Top ten reasons

## Nebraska ought to win championship in order to . . .

1. I'm sick and tired of hearing constant talk about why the Nebraska football team won't win the national championship this year.

2. I hear my fraternity brothers arguing whether the Cornhuskers will lose either three or four games this year, and my fellow sportswriters can't decide if the Huskers belong in the middle or the bottom of the Top 25. Ridiculous.

3. Now maybe this California kid hasn't lived in the Midwest long enough to realize the Husker tradition of losing the big games, but I think Nebraska has what it takes to win it all this year.

4. So I have compiled my top 10 reasons why the Cornhuskers should give all they've got to bring home the national championship.

5. The Cornhuskers should win it all so that . . .

6. 10. Nebraska can cure itself of the common disease, January bowl game-itis: The fear of a college football team to win a big game on New Year's Day.

Jeff  
Singer

7. 9. The football players can drop previously challenging popular courses such as Underwater Basket Weaving 101 and Advanced Gum Chewing 311 to now accommodate an equally difficult course to help them with their new national championship rings: Ring Wearing 101 — so many choices, so few fingers.

8. Tom Osborne can shed his title as "the nation's best coach not ever to

have won a national title despite having some of the best talent and schedules any head coach in the country dreams of," and leave that distinction to college football's humanitarian — Florida State's Bobby Bowden.

7. After Nebraska wins the national title, Husker Bob can retire and we can rest our ears.

6. Defensive coordinator Charlie McBride, whose defense gave up a total of 117 points in nine quarters against Colorado, Oklahoma and Georgia Tech, doesn't get fired and realize the only football vacancy that will be offered to him is head equipment manager of the Broken Bow Bearcats of the 10-and-under youth football league.

5. Even if Nebraska has a weak non-conference schedule as in the past, people won't look to the Huskers' battles with Alaska A&M or Jerry's Kids and Sisters of the Poor as an excuse for a good season.

4. When Bob Devaney hits the bars, he has a different excuse besides Nebraska not winning it all again.

3. Nebraskans can stop filling Memorial Stadium to capacity every Saturday hoping for a national championship and can start supporting the equally popular sport on campus: Women's archery.

2. A Big Eight team can actually be respected for winning a national championship (see Colorado's 1990 fifth down and all of Oklahoma's titles that seem to follow with terms on probation).

1. If football players receive free cars, they can make reference to the national championship on their personalized license plates.

Remember Husker fans, national championships are to be taken seriously, humorous columns are not.

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