

# Volleyball team shuts down Fighting Illini

By David Moyer  
Staff Reporter

The Bob Devaney Sports Center was rocking and the Nebraska volleyball team was rolling on Sunday as the Cornhuskers defeated the 15th-ranked Illinois Fighting Illini 15-7, 15-7 and 15-1 in front of 4,052 fans.

Nebraska coach Terry Pettit said he had no explanation for the Huskers' easy win.

"I anticipated a much more competitive match," he said. "Physically, I'm not sure to this point in the season they would have played somebody that could do some of the things we were doing."

What the Huskers were doing was using a balanced offensive attack led by Eileen Shannon's 15 kills. Her fifth kill of the game gave her 1,000 for her career and put her in the same club as teammates Janet Kruse and Cris Hall.

Nebraska also took advantage of a young and inexperienced Illinois team that Hall said seemed to self-destruct during the course of the match.

Despite the lopsided score, Pettit said he wasn't sure if the match was the best the Huskers have played this season.

But Kruse said she thought it was the best.

"I think as far as playing as a team it was," she said. "I think we came together real well in all three matches, and when Illinois was down, we really took it to them."

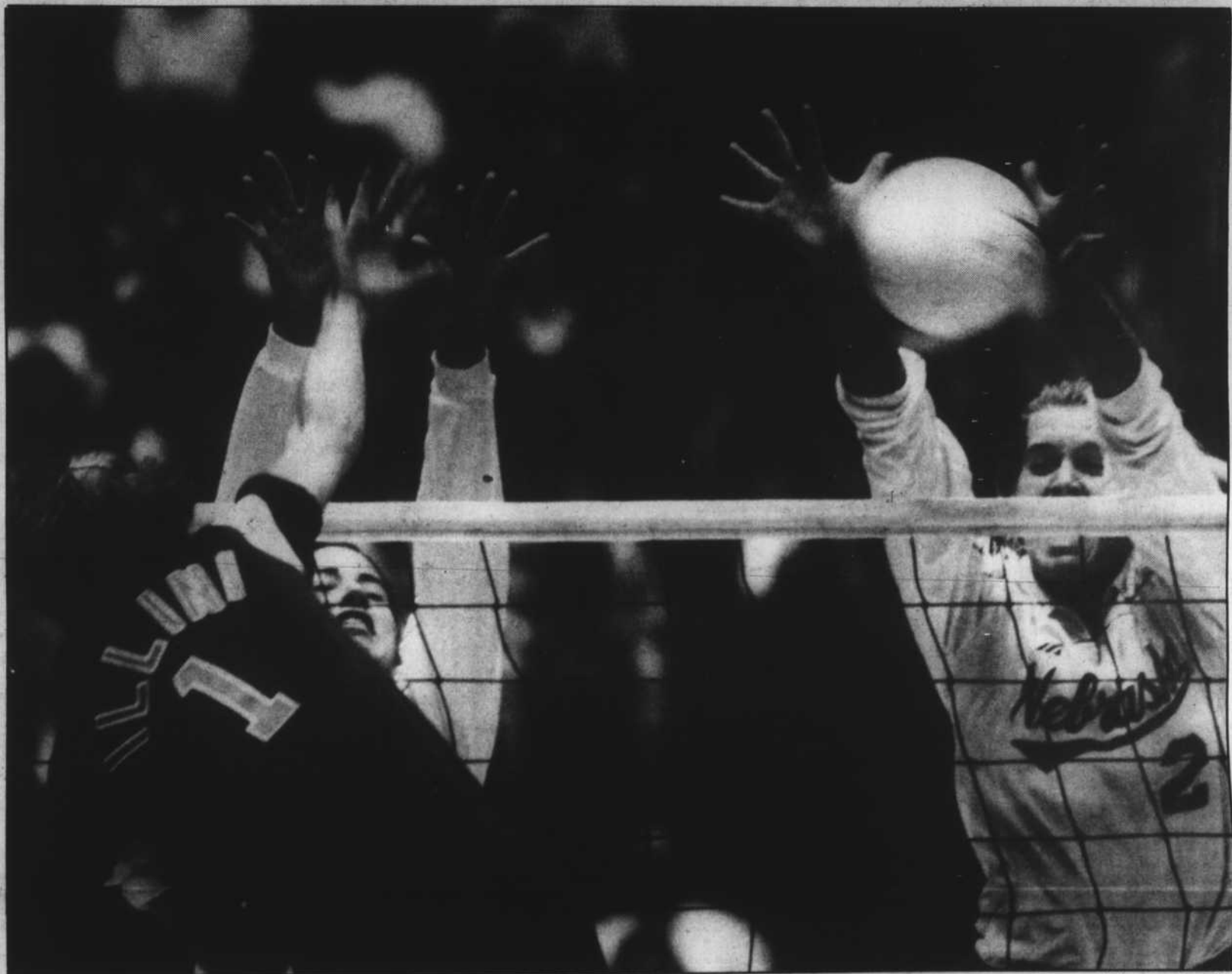
The match began the way Pettit had anticipated. After Nebraska took a 1-0 lead on a kill by Stephanie Thater, both teams traded sideouts. After the 11th straight sideout, the Illini tied the score. But from there, the Huskers never looked back.

Illinois kept the game close, cutting the Huskers' lead to 9-5, but Nebraska came through with a 6-2 run that ended on a block by Kruse and Kim Tonniges to end the game.

The Illini have used the block to their advantage so far this season, Pettit said, but the Huskers turned the tables.

"They've won a lot of their matches on blocking," he said. "Thater, Hall, Kruse and Shannon are going to get blocked some, but you're not going to go out and score six or seven points a game blocking."

In the second game, Nebraska jumped out quickly, taking a 12-0 lead, including seven straight on



Kiley Timperley/DN

Nebraska's Nikki Stricker and Stephanie Thater block a spike by Illinois' Lorna Henderson, left, during Nebraska's straight-set victory over the Fighting Illini Sunday at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Tonniges' serve to begin the game scoring.

The Illini eventually closed the gap to 13-7, but the Huskers were able to finish them off after that, silencing the restlessness of the crowd.

Pettit said that because Illinois' players showed that they were not going to give up, the Huskers needed to come out and finish off the Illini in the third game.

Pettit got his wish. The Huskers ran away from Illinois in the final game, 15-1.

"I was pleased that we didn't let them in in the third game," he said. "I thought that they would come out with fire and I was pleased that when you get somebody in that position we were able to close it out."

The win snapped a four-game

winning streak for the Illini, who were coming off a Friday night win over Penn State. But Illinois coach Mike Hebert said he didn't sense a let down by his team.

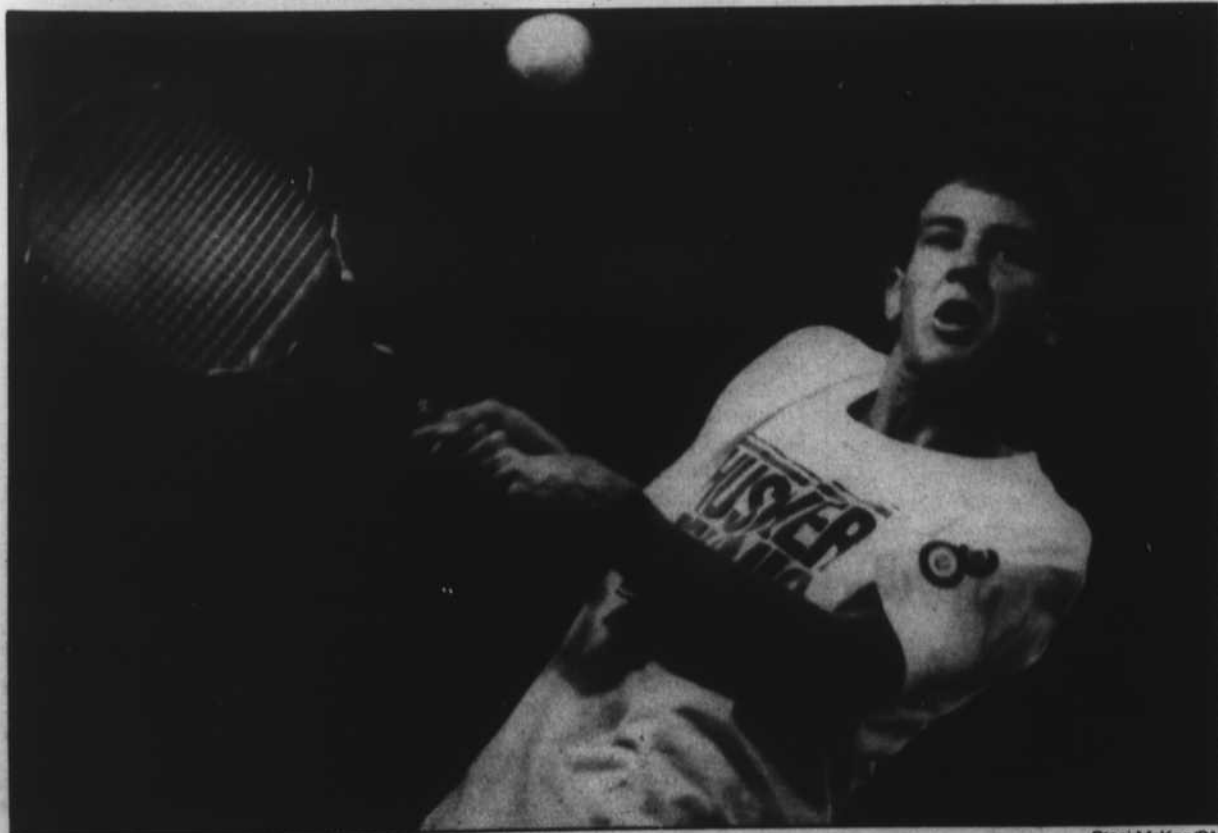
"It was clear we weren't prepared to play," he said. "I think every team plays within a range from top to bottom, and I think Nebraska's top is higher than our top, and their bottom is not as low as our bottom."

Hebert said the Illini found their bottom Sunday.

"This is our poorest performance of the season by far," he said. "We would have had to have played very close to our top, and they would have had to be sort of mid-range for us to be competitive."

Illinois fell to 8-3 on the season while Nebraska improved to 12-3.

# Men's tennis bounces back to take Husker Invitational



Staci McKee/DN

Nebraska's Mike Garcia returns a shot during his match against Iowa State's Mickey Ramsey Friday at the Bob Devaney Sports Center. Garcia won 4-6, 6-3, 7-6.

By Jeff Singer  
Staff Reporter

After an anemic performance last weekend at the Tom Fallon Invitational at Notre Dame, the Nebraska men's tennis team took out some frustration at the Husker Invitational this weekend.

The Cornhuskers dominated their competition in the seven-team tournament, advancing a player in each bracket to the semifinals. Nebraska captured four titles while winning the invitational.

Joseph Rahme was the first of the Huskers to take home a title, defeating Iowa State's Stefan Tzvetkov 6-2, 3-6, 6-4 in the No. 1 singles final. He said he hopes his success against some of the region's top players will help people remember his name.

"This was a really good tournament for me," Rahme said. "I hope my name is now one of the most feared in the region, and that this will help get me a top regional ranking."

Karl Falkland equaled Rahme's success when he won the No. 2 singles title by beating Tim Derovia of Southern Illinois in straight sets 6-4, 7-5. Falkland said the invite was a big confidence booster.

"When you win a tournament, it really helps your confidence," Falkland

said. "This will definitely help me when Big Eights start."

The other singles champion was Troy Bray at No. 6 singles. He beat teammate Jay Segrist 6-3, 6-1 to win his first Husker Invite title.

After the top two doubles teams lost in the semifinals, the No. 3 doubles squad of Todd Broaderick and Chris Nielsen won Nebraska's fourth title by beating Jeff Nielsen and Mickey Ramsey of Iowa State 2-6, 6-4, 6-3.

Broaderick said he was proud of how he and Nielsen competed.

"Both Chris and I play very well together," Broaderick said. "We got down when we lost the first set, but we came back and gave it our all."

Nielsen said he was glad to win his first tournament as a Husker.

"This was awesome. I just love winning," Nielsen said. "We played well together in the tournament, and this has really helped my confidence."

Nebraska coach Kerry McDermott said he hoped the Huskers' success will help his team gain some recognition in the region.

"We're trying to establish ourselves as one of the better teams in the region, and I think we did that this weekend," McDermott said. "This was a big boost for our program and will hopefully get us some respect."