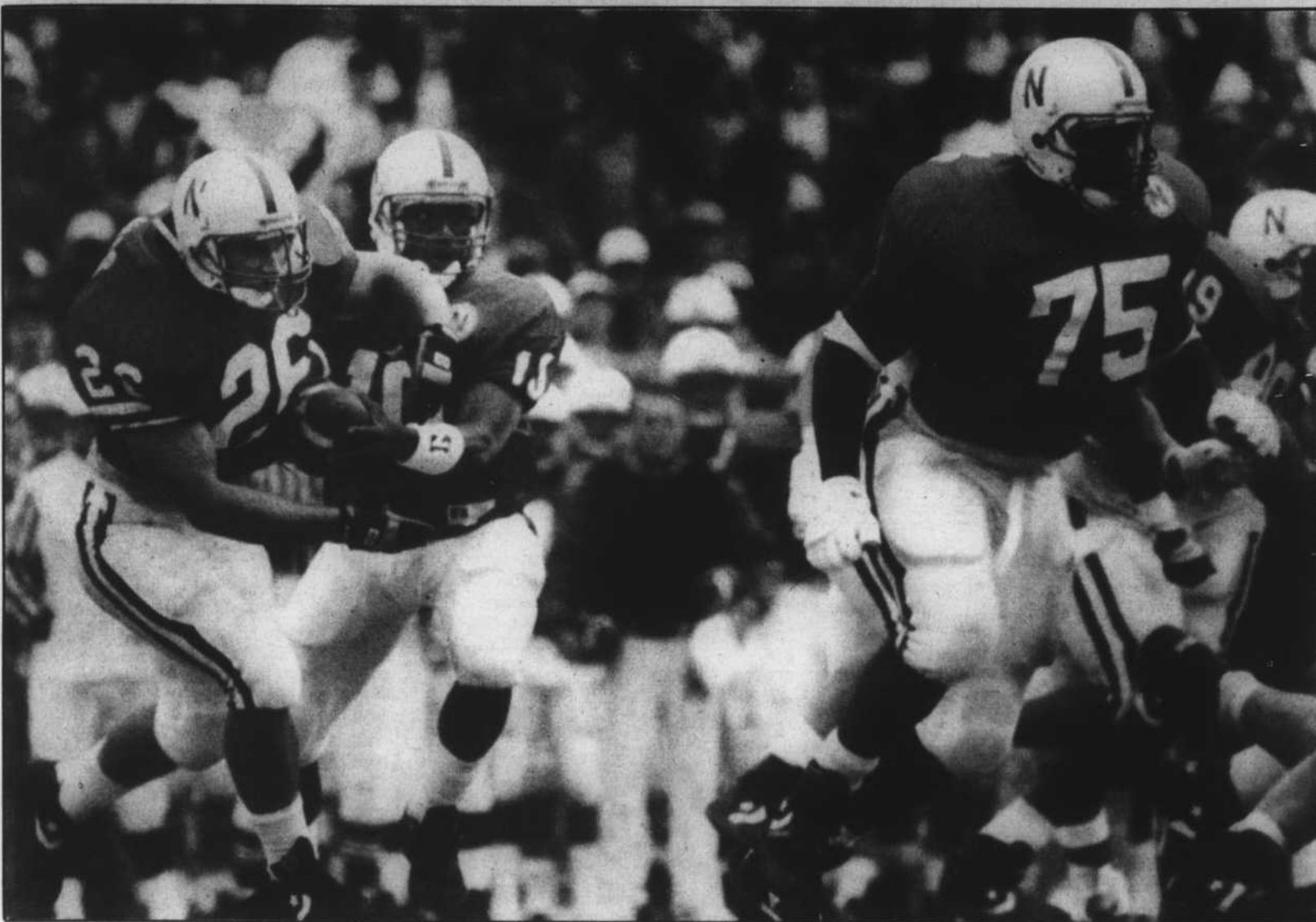


Fullback reflects on controversial fumble



By Todd Cooper
Senior Reporter

Cornhusker fullback Lance Lewis made some big plays for Nebraska on Saturday, but he said his biggest play was his second-half fumble that almost secured a victory for Kansas State.

"It's like I told the guys after the game, 'I made some big plays today but one of them was bad,'" Lewis said.

Lewis was stripped of the ball by Kansas State cornerback C.J. Masters at the 40-yard line. Masters rambled untouched into the end zone on the play, which Coach Tom Osborne and several players protested.

"I was thinking, 'What's going on?'" Husker quarterback Keithen McCant said. "I'm running over to Coach Osborne to get a play and all of a sudden, they scored."

According to Osborne, the touchdown, which put Kansas State up 24-17, could have cost the Huskers the game. Nebraska went on to win 38-31.

"I thought (Lewis) was stopped," Osborne said. "Several players said they heard a whistle on the play."

"That was kind of unbelievable to me."

Believable or not, Lewis said the fumble shouldn't have happened.

"I started to relax a little bit and there went the ball," Lewis said. "I gave them a little present."

Lewis said that gift could have been costly.

"I thought, 'Oh no, here we go, it's going to be a miserable evening,'" said Lewis, whose family was visiting for the game.

Robin Trimarchi/DN

Nebraska's Keithen McCant fakes a handoff to fullback Lance Lewis as Will Shields blocks against Kansas State on Saturday. Lewis had a career-high 79 yards on six carries, including a 25-yard run to the Wildcat 1-yard line to set up the winning touchdown.

See LEWIS on 8

Husker volleyball team plans a Wildcat defeat

By John Adkisson
Staff Reporter

Last weekend, an underdog Kansas State football team came within a whisker of shocking Nebraska.

Tonight, the Kansas State volleyball team will be trying to pull an even bigger shocker.

"I've seen a real attitudinal change on this team," said Kansas State Coach Patti Hagemeyer, whose Wildcats have already lost twice to Nebraska this season. "We're real excited to play Nebraska again."



Pettit

Pardon the Cornhuskers if they aren't impressed. Nebraska, at 14-3 overall, has won 44 consecutive matches against the Wildcats entering tonight's 7:30 p.m. matchup at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

The Huskers are also leading the conference and riding a seven-match winning streak. Kansas State is in the league basement at 0-5.

Hagemeyer said her team's record isn't indicative of the Wildcats' improvement since Nebraska took two September matches from Kansas State.

"We've spent a lot of this season not concentrating on wins or losses, but just improving," Hagemeyer said. "Now we're playing our best volleyball of the fall."

Nebraska Coach Terry Pettit said his team will be concentrating on improvement as well.

"They probably are not as strong as they have been in the past," Pettit said of the Wildcats. "The issue for us is not really Kansas State, but playing well."

Nebraska has been doing just that. Since a loss to New Mexico on Sept. 21, the Huskers have roared to their customary top spot in the Big Eight with conference wins over Colorado,

Kansas, Iowa State and Oklahoma.

Part of Nebraska's improvement can be attributed to the play of freshman middle blocker Kim Tonniges. In Nebraska's win last weekend over Oklahoma, Tonniges recorded a career-high 13 kills and a .667 hitting percentage.

Pettit said Tonniges' play is a direct result of better sets from sophomore Nikki Stricker.

"(Tonniges) played real well," Pettit said. "But it's all predicated on where Nikki gets the ball. Both of them did a good job against Oklahoma."

One area with which Pettit said he's concerned is unforced errors. In its six conference matches, Nebraska has committed 62 service errors, an average of more than 10 per match.

"I think that in order to be in contention for a national championship, you have to have exceptional serving," Pettit said. "I would hope that (serving) would begin to improve in the next eight weeks."

A critical match for Nebraska in those eight weeks will be on Saturday against Big Eight second-place Colorado. The Lady Buffaloes destroyed Kansas State in three games last weekend in Boulder.

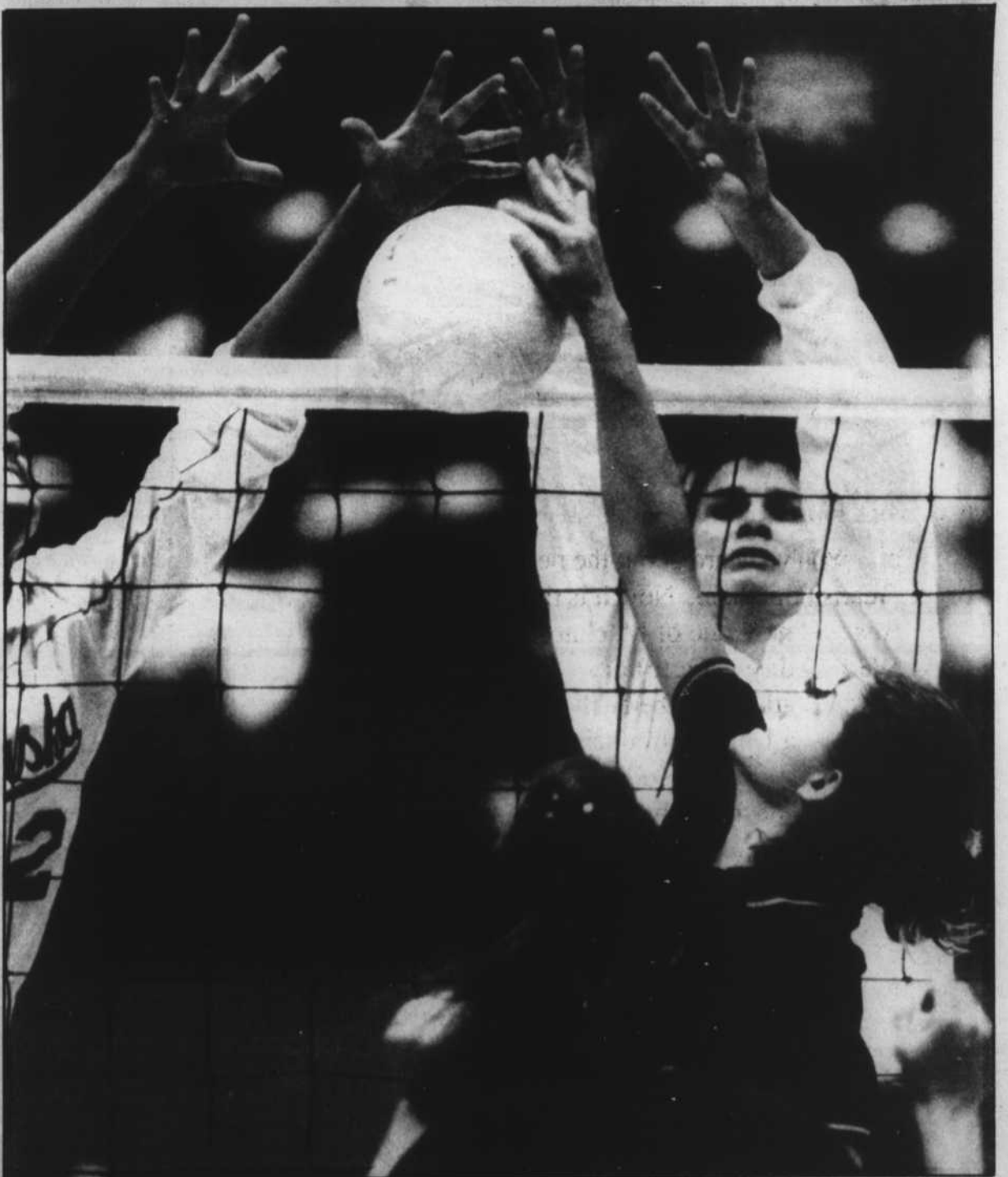
Hagemeyer said Nebraska and Colorado are both a level above other teams in the Big Eight at this point.

But she added that Kansas State has some goals as well.

"I really think that Kansas State has a place in the top four of this conference," she said. "That's certainly a goal."

● Pettit said the loss of freshman middle blocker Rachel Errthum, who has been lost for the season with a torn anterior cruciate ligament, "limits our options," especially in practice. Errthum, from Dubuque, Iowa, had played in eight of the Huskers' 17 matches.

● Free tickets for tonight's match can be obtained at the door with a donation of \$1 or a can of food to the Food Bank in Lincoln.



Shaun Sartin/DN

Nebraska's Stephanie Thater (left) and Cris Hall attempt a block against Illinois earlier this season. The Cornhuskers face Kansas State tonight, a team they have beaten twice this season and 44 times in 44 tries overall.