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Nebraska to defend conference lead

By John Adkisson
Staff Reporter

It has all the trappings of a great rivalry.

But according to Nebraska volleyball coach Terry Pettit and Colorado coach Brad Saindon, this weekend's showdown between the Huskers and Buffaloes is nothing more than a big match for both teams.

And in the Big Eight, they don't get any bigger. Nebraska, alone atop the conference standings with a 7-0 league mark, will play second-place (6-1) Colorado Saturday in an 8:30 p.m. (CST) match at the Coors Events Center in Boulder, Colo.

Pettit, whose team is ranked ninth by the NCAA, said he doesn't consider the No. 18 Buffs a rival — at least not yet.

"I don't think it's a rivalry," Pettit said. "Almost every year, there's some other conference team than Nebraska ranked in the Top 20, and that becomes our critical match."

Saindon agreed. "It's not a rivalry because we

haven't beaten them yet," he said. "But we feel that we've got a good chance at playing them a good match Saturday." Colorado has won seven straight matches entering a Friday match at home against Iowa State. The Buffs, at 17-6 overall, also appear to be in line for the second NCAA tournament appearance in the history of the school.

"That's one of our goals," said Saindon about playing in the NCAA's. "Our other two are to win a share of the conference championship and win the Big Eight Tournament."

Earlier this season, Nebraska beat Colorado in three straight games in Lincoln, the tenth straight Husker win over the Buffs. Pettit said the key to that victory was good overall play by the Huskers.

"We probably played better than Colorado in most areas of that match," Pettit said. "I think if we serve and pass at the same level as them, we're a better team."

Pettit said the key to winning Saturday's match will be getting setter

Nikki Stricker the ball in good position.

Colorado will have the services of swing hitter Tiffany Jestadt, who sat out the first Nebraska match this year. Jestadt was All-Conference as a sophomore last season.

"I'm sure (Jestadt) will certainly help them," Pettit said. "But when we played them before, we weren't at full strength either."

Saindon said for Colorado to be successful, the Buffs must play long points with Nebraska.

"We need to get them into a game where there is a lot of rallying, a lot of transition," Saindon said. "I think we're a good enough defensive team to play well in a match like that."

Saindon said that there has been "tremendous excitement" on the Colorado campus about the match.

"I'm sure Nebraska will come into this match fully expecting to win," Saindon said. "But for us, this is for a potential share of the conference championship. We've been prepared for a long time."

Huskers must overcome youth, coach says

By Thomas Clouse
Staff Reporter

Nebraska women's swimming and diving coach Ray Huppert said his team has to overcome youth and lack of depth to repeat as the Big Eight champions.

Huppert said the team lost seven swimmers from last year's squad and only returns two seniors, five juniors and 10 sophomores.

"We have a lot of new young blood," Huppert said. "We need to give them an opportunity to show what they can do."

Depth is a question with only 20 swimmers, which is "as small a team as we've had in a long time," he said.

"We are not lacking quality, just lacking experience," Huppert said.

The young team will get its first competition Saturday against Iowa at the Bob Devaney Sports Center pool.

Huppert said he expects a strong challenge from Iowa.

"I don't know if we can beat them this early in the season," he said. "We need to see how our young swimmers react to the situation."

Cal Bentz, coach of the Nebraska

men's swimming and diving team, said his Cornhuskers should have a good chance to repeat as the Big Eight champions and improve on their 32nd finish in the NCAA championship.

"We have a good mix with a lot of returning talent and tenacious young swimmers," Bentz said.

The men's squad also opens its season against a group of Midwestern teams this weekend here at the Great Pumpkin Classic.

"It will be a good opportunity for our guys to see what they can do in a meet situation," Bentz said.



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Huskers

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Missouri's offensive line averages 291 pounds per man.

"They're big but we like that," Licwer said. "Anymore, everybody's big, so we're pretty comfortable going against them."

Nebraska's offense is comfortable with what it will do Saturday, tight end Johnny Mitchell said.

Mitchell said he expects a high-scoring game and high yardage output against the Tigers, who rank 102nd nationally and last in the Big Eight defensively.

"We're going to try and capitalize on the mistakes we made last Saturday," he said.

Alberts said he hopes the Huskers don't make too many mistakes when Missouri has the ball.

"We know what we've got to do," Alberts said. "It's just a matter of doing it. We've got to pin our ears back and do it."

Tigers

Continued from Page 7

total defense, allowing 482 yards per game. Add to that the fact that Nebraska's offense leads the conference, and Stull is worried.

"There's no doubt we're going to give up some points on Saturday," he said. "The question is, can our offense answer their scores with scores of our own?"

Last season, the Tigers passed for 325 yards but turned the ball over five times, stalling potential scoring drives and giving the Huskers good field position for their drives. Nebraska won 69-21.

"If we play the way we did last year, the outcome won't be much better than it was then," Stull said. "It might not be even if we play well. But I'd much rather get beat badly playing well than to lose a poorly played game and wonder what could have been."

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