

# Fire to win national title motivates Husker

By John Adkisson  
Staff Reporter

And the flame rises. Call it what you will, but Nebraska volleyball senior Cris Hall has only one word to describe how bad she wants to return to the NCAA Final Four and win a national title.

"It's definitely a fire," Hall said. "I've had it ever since my sophomore year when we came so close. We've done everything else possible, and now it's time to win a national championship."

Listening to Hall, you might think the trophies are already engraved with Nebraska players' names.

But the 6-foot-2 outside hitter from Chanute, Kan., knows that it will take more than lip service to lead the Cornhuskers to their third consecutive national semifinal.

"It's going to be really hard for anybody to dampen my fire," she said. "If it's 14-12 and we're down, I'm going to be aggressive. It's going to take a lot to stop me."

Not much has stopped Hall recently.

She has exploded late in the season, pounding 20 kills in a Nebraska loss two weeks ago to Pacific and more recently leading the Huskers' first round NCAA win over Illinois with 14 kills and a .500 hitting percentage Saturday.

The next challenge is leading the 26-4 Huskers into this weekend's Midwest Regional semifinals Friday against Wisconsin. A win would mean a Saturday match against the Ohio State-Penn State winner and a chance to again play in the Final Four.

Hall has already seen two Final Fours. In 1989, she and her teammates lost in the final to Long Beach State. Last season, Pacific took out Nebraska in the semifinals.

What is different about this year's team and its chances?

"In '89, we had a conflict among teammates, and that's why we didn't win it," she said. "In '90, it was a lot of things. I was playing on a broken foot, coach (Terry Pettit) was sick . . .



William Lauer/DN

Nebraska tri-captain Cris Hall passes the ball against Kansas earlier this season. The senior from Chanute, Kan., has provided valuable leadership this season, Coach Terry Pettit said.

there was a lot involved in it."

Now, with just four possible matches left until the Huskers have another shot at a title, Hall said all the problems she has seen in the past are no longer there.

"The only way you can win it is going into it thinking 'We're going to

win it,'" she said. "And that's the only attitude we have right now."

A new challenge confronting Hall is her role as team captain. Last week, the Husker coaching staff named Hall as a tri-captain with senior Janet Kruse and sophomore Nikki Stricker.

But don't think that a new title will

do anything to change Hall's methodical, workmanlike attitude.

"Right now, when I step on the volleyball court, I'm out there to have fun," she said. "But I'm out there to do business, to do the job. And that comes first."

And if the job gets done, Hall and

her goal of bringing a national title to Nebraska can finally rest.

"If we do win, years from now, nobody will remember we won a national championship," she said. "But I'll know that I set a goal, and I achieved that goal. I'll always be able to keep that feeling."

## Season of giving brings sports awards

Christmas quickly is approaching and we are entering the season of giving. Therefore, it seems appropriate college football is beginning its yearly onslaught of awards.

On Saturday afternoon, Michigan's Desmond Howard most likely will receive the biggest present under the tree when he is handed the 1991 Heisman Trophy and others will write Santa asking for one of the other prizes, which are given out to the player whose school has the best public relations department.

But there is one award ceremony which isn't highly publicized — The David Moyer Graduation Awards.

After several frustrating years watching Nebraska sports, I'm finally ending my misery by heading into the real world. For that reason, here is the best and worst from Nebraska sports during my academic career.

**The Best Car Deal Award** — To former Cornhusker basketball players Tony Farmer and Jose Ramos. They got a deal they couldn't refuse and now have a lot of free time to practice driving. My car has a lot of rust, maybe I should see Raymond Peery.

**The Give It Time . . . It Will Happen . . . Eventually . . . Hopefully Award** — To the Nebraska football team, for finally beating a ranked team, and the basketball team, for finally winning on ESPN. It just shows how lots and lots and lots of persistence eventually pays off.

**The Mick Jagger "I Can't Get No Satisfaction" Award** — To volleyball coach Terry Pettit. He continually has one of the nation's best teams, making the Final Four three of the past five years, but can't win it all. It's kind of like writing your name in the snow,

but having to leave off the last letter. It feels good, but you just don't quite finish it off.



David Moyer

**The Clarence Thomas Award** — To Bob Devaney. After allegations of sexual harassment about women's swimming coach Ray Huppert earlier this year, Devaney had to divert his attention to something else besides the Husker turf drive. In an effort to solve both problems, the athletic director is rumored to be re-releasing M.C. Hammer's "Can't Touch This" on video. His world tour begins with Gloria Estefan at the Orange Bowl in Miami. Devaney Time!

**The Nice Try Award** — To Danny Nee for beginning Dead Dog Alley. Granted the Devaney Sports Center is quieter than Love Library at times and something needed to be done, but Husker fans just aren't the wild beasts Nee expected. Dead Dog Alley has turned into the Sleeping Kitty-Litter Box.

**The Sticks and Stones Award** — To defensive coordinator Charlie McBride, who weathered a lot of heat early in the season after his young defense faltered against Washington, but was able to turn it around in time for the goal posts to come down against Oklahoma.

**The Worst Halftime Show** — Hands down it is Nebraska basketball. It's bad enough we have to see gymnastics every other night, but we have to

sit through the lame-o's from the audience trying to make a free throw for a gift certificate or whatever. The idea is good, but they always seem to find the biggest corn cob in the stands. "You mean I just throw it in that there hole?" Yes, Jethro.

**The Francis Allen Award** — Usually given to Allen, the men's gymnastics coach, himself for his perennial predictions of a national championship, usually backed up. This season it is given to Pettit. Before playing Colorado at Boulder this year, Pettit boldly proclaimed the Huskers match against the Buffaloes would be "the only other conference match (Colorado) will lose." He was right.

**Best Memorial Stadium Performance** — Sorry Tom Osborne, it isn't the Huskers. It goes to the Colorado State Ram. The Rams' mascot kept an otherwise bored Husker crowd amused by ramming the goalposts, making Herbie Husker look like the Farmer Ted he is. Maybe if Herbie would run into the goalposts like the ram did, it would knock some sense into him, or at least knock him out.

**Where Are They Now?** — The Husker special uniforms. The basketball team came out in all black against Iowa State last season and actually looked pretty cool. Derrick Chandler insists he's an intimidator so let's bring them back and let him be "the man in black."

**The David Can Beat Goliath Award** — To Tom Osborne for insisting his team can get beat by anyone on any day. I've seen less smoke blown in O'Rourke's on a Friday night.

Moyer is a senior speech communications major and Daily Nebraskan sports staff reporter.

## Standout NU gymnast has eyes on Olympics

By John Gardner  
Staff Reporter

Nebraska gymnast Dennis Harrison is only a sophomore, but already he has made his presence known.

Harrison, who so far this season has led the Cornhuskers in scoring in the first two meets, doesn't consider himself to be the leader of the team, though.

"My role is to be really consistent in every competition," Harrison said. "If I actually had to lead the team, I'd just key on doing well enough for my teammates to count on me."

Josh Saegert is the captain of the team, so Harrison said it's probably more his job to do the leading.

He said Saegert, a junior, is the oldest member of the young team. Despite this, Harrison said, he is excited about this team.

"We have a really strong team this year," he said. "We don't have any real weaknesses, with a lot of quality gymnasts up and down the lineup."

Harrison said when the Huskers get Saegert, Che Bowers and specialist, Louis Ball back, they will be even tougher.

Saegert is out with an injury until January, and Bowers has a shoulder injury that has limited his action.

By the time Harrison reached high school in Ralston, success was inevitable. He won the Metro Championship all three years, was the Nebraska all-around champion

his junior and senior year and placed third as a sophomore. Harrison looked at various schools, but knew all along where he was going.

"I pretty much chose Nebraska before the state meet my senior year," he said.

Now that he's settled in Lincoln, Harrison has one simple goal. He wants to win a national championship.

"My personal goal is to make an Olympic squad some time," he said, "but for the rest of the team, we want to win it all."

Last season, the Huskers weren't really in the running for the title, but Harrison, as a freshman, had a moment of glory. At the NCAA Championships, he made it to the vault finals. And the team, despite its youth, had a few good moments as well. Harrison said he was really pleased with the way the Huskers fared at the NCAA Regionals.

"We gave a lot of schools a tough time last season," he said. "A lot of them didn't really think we could give them a run, either."

Now Harrison looks ahead. He said he would like to teach history some day and become a gymnastics coach. Harrison said he coaches some kids back home, as well as some at coach Francis Allen's club. For now, however, Harrison said he is concentrating on getting better.

"I pretty much train all year round," he said. "Gymnastics is a pretty continuous sport, so you can't really take any time off."