

Reaching for the Beach

1991 NCAA Mideast Regional volleyball supplement



Coach Terry Pettit

- 15th year at Nebraska
- 468-110 at Nebraska, 515-127 career
- seven-time Big Eight Coach of the Year
- 1986 American Volleyball Coaches Association National Coach of the year
- Pettit has coached 16 All-Americans and 61 All-Big Eight selections

New faces, old mainstays keep Nebraska near top

By John Adkisson
Staff Reporter

Change. It was a prospect that stared the Nebraska volleyball team in the face as the Cornhuskers em-

barked on the 1991 season.

A new setter. A new home. A new rule.

But as the Huskers prepare to host this weekend's NCAA Mideast Regional, the most underlying fact is the same as it has been in recent seasons:

At 26-4, Nebraska is a heavy favorite to win the four-team tournament and advance to a third consecutive Final Four.

In that sense, nothing changes.

Since 1986, when Nebraska first reached the Final Four, the Huskers have compiled 133-21 record and have made it to the national semifinals two more times. The most recent trip, last year, ended with a four-game loss to Pacific.

That team not only lost to Pacific, but also lost an all-American setter as well. As Husker Coach Terry Pettit entered this season, he faced the task of replacing Val Novak, who used up her eligibility along with Becky Bolli and Linda Barsness.

Enter sophomore Nikki Stricker, who emerged as Pettit's choice to replace Novak.

Stricker piled up 1,259 set assists in her debut season as the Husker setter, and earned her coach's praise.

"She's done a good job," Pettit said. "She makes good decisions, and she follows a good game plan. When she's assertive, she is a dominating player."

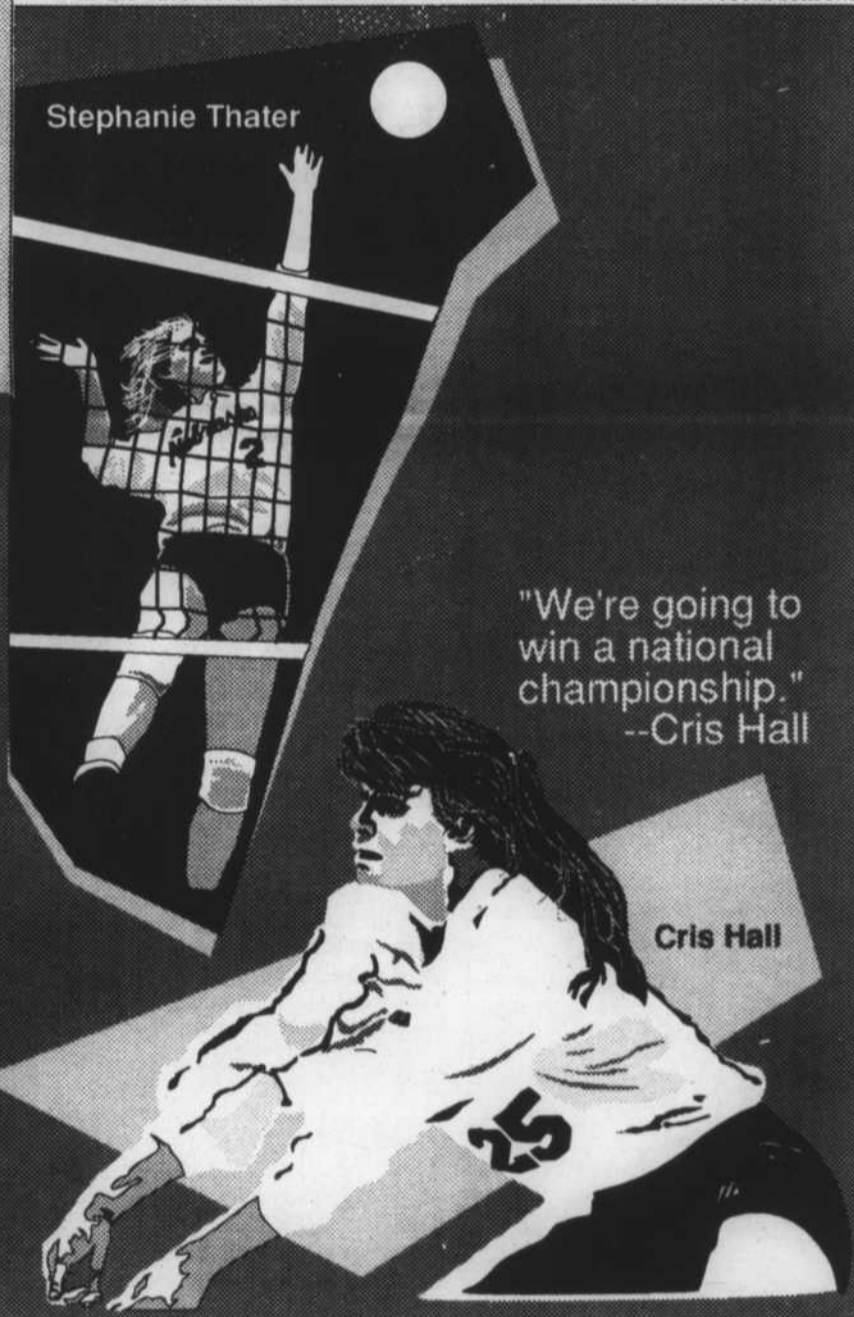
Nebraska freshman Kim Tonniges, has played in all but one of the Huskers' matches. Tonniges, a 5-foot-11 middle blocker from Lincoln East, earned a starting role early in the season and came on to rank fifth on the team in total kills.

"Kim has been a steady player for us," Pettit said. "More than anything, her blocking has improved over the course of the season."

And then there were the mainstays: all-American outside hitter Janet Kruse, who finished with 243 kills despite missing eight matches; senior Cris Hall, who ranked second on the team with 376 kills; junior Stephanie Thater, who emerged as one of the best middle blockers in the nation while leading the Huskers in kills and blocks; and junior Eileen Shannon, who almost certainly will break several Husker career records next season.

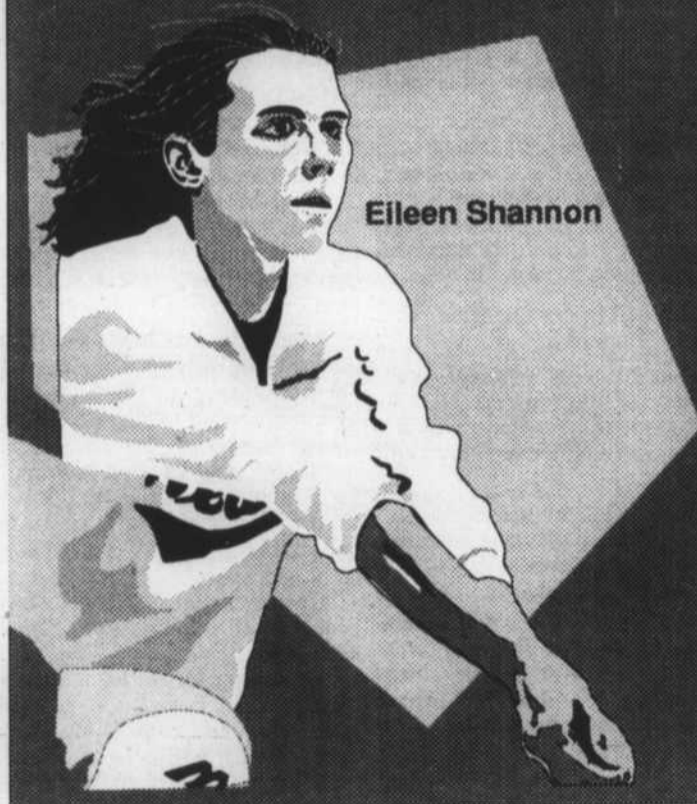
The mainstays struggled early, however. Kruse went down in Ne-

Stephanie Thater



"We're going to win a national championship."
--Cris Hall

Cris Hall



Eileen Shannon