

# Early season loss irrelevant, coach says

By David Moyer  
Staff Reporter

Wisconsin volleyball coach Margie Fitzpatrick would like to make one thing clear: The first match of the season means nothing now. Nebraska defeated the Badgers in that first match 15-10, 12-15, 15-8, 15-11. The two teams will meet again in the first round of the NCAA Midwest Regional tonight in the Bob Devaney Sports Center at 7:30.

"That was the first game of the year and things are a lot different now," she said. "Our team is more focused and the chemistry is better than it was then."

Despite having better chemistry on her team, Fitzpatrick said this weekend's game against the highly ranked Cornhuskers will be a difficult one. She said the Badgers may only be two matches away from a Final Four appearance but will have to be completely focused to defeat Nebraska on its own court.

Fitzpatrick said it would be premature to say that her team is thinking of the Final Four.

"We are very excited about the four teams that are left in our region and being a part of that," she said. "Because of the stiff competition, all our efforts this weekend will have to be put on defeating Nebraska first and then worry about the rest."

For Wisconsin to be successful, Fitzpatrick said her team needs a big game from setter Liz Tortorello, a 5-foot-8 senior.

"Liz has to run the offense effectively," Fitzpatrick said. "We definitely have to key in on her. If she is not doing her job well then the hitters aren't going to have any success."

One of those hitters who will be looking for the ball is junior Arlisa Hagan. The middle blocker has 422 kills and leads the team in hitting percentage at .275.

Hagan will try to add to her kill total by hitting against a Husker block which Fitzpatrick considers to be Nebraska's strength. She said if her team is able to execute after the

Nebraska block, then it has a chance to win.

Not only will the Wisconsin team be thinking about execution, but each player will carry something else in the back of her mind. Before the season, Badger Coach Steve Lowe died from cancer.

Fitzpatrick said each team member dealt with the tragedy in her own way, and she suspects the players think about it now and then.

Because everyone has dealt with it in an individual manner, she said, there has been no dedication of the season to the late coach. But she said players will probably think of him over the weekend.

**OHIO STATE**  
"Buckeyes"

28-3

1 Kim Ranft	S	Fr.
2 Laura Davis	S	Fr.
3 Julie Chellevoid	OH	Sr.
4 Erika Schlitz	OH	Sr.
5 Sara Daniel	MB	Fr.
6 Leisa Wissler	MB	Sr.
7 Carrie Leonard	OH	Fr.
8 Liáne Fenwick	MH	Jr.
10 Tracy Endecavogeh	S	Jr.
11 Gabriele Jobst	OH/MB	Fr.
12 Dawn McDougall	MB	Sr.

**PENN STATE "Nittany Lions"**

26-5

1 Salima Davidson	S	So.
2 Laura Stober	BR	Sr.
3 Susan Boner	H	Sr.
4 Jennifer Reimers	OH	Fr.
5 Angie Farlow	BR/S	Jr.
6 Laura Cook	OH	So.
7 Pam Petro	OH	Sr.
8 Kristi Hart	OH	Jr.
9 Jennifer Schuller	S/H	Sr.
10 Michelle Robinson	OH	Jr.
11 Kim Kumfer	OH	Jr.
12 Jenny Myszewski	MB	Fr.
13 Leanne Kling	MH	Jr.
14 Saundi Lamoureux	MB	Fr.
15 Erika Spencer	BR	Jr.

**U. OF WISCONSIN**  
"Badgers"

23-9

1 Angie Meyer	MB	So.
2 Kristin Sobocinski	S/OH	So.
3 Cathy Dezutel	OH	Fr.
4 Liz Tortorello	S	Sr.
5 Brigitte Lourey	OH	Fr.
6 Sara Wilson	OH	Sr.
7 Laurie Smith	OH	Fr.
8 Samatha Scott	OH	Fr.
10 Arlisa Hagan	MB	Jr.
11 Susan Wohlford	OH	Sr.
14 Jeanette Simenson	MB	Sr.

Arnie DeFrain/DN

## Buckeyes look to continue rise

By John Adkisson  
Staff Reporter

Nebraska is making a habit of creaming Big 10 volleyball teams. Now 28-3 Ohio State, the cream of this season's Big 10 volleyball crop, is coming to Lincoln with what many believe to be the best chance to knock off the Cornhuskers in this weekend's Midwest Regional.

But Ohio State Coach Jim Stone said before his team even thinks about derailing Nebraska, the Buckeyes must first think about Penn State, their opponent in tonight's 5:30 match at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

"I guess we have the best shot at (Nebraska) if we play them," Stone said. "With us and Penn State, it's a matter of which team is playing well on a given day."

If Ohio State is to reach the Midwest final Saturday night and if the opponent is Nebraska, history would not be on the Buckeyes' side.

Since losing to Illinois in late in the 1989 season, Nebraska has an 11-match winning streak against Big 10 foes. That string includes NCAA tournament wins over Minnesota, Penn State and Illinois. No Big 10 team in that time, however, has had the success Stone's Buckeyes have had this season.

After opening with a 3-3 record (with losses to Texas, Brigham Young and Notre Dame), Ohio State has gone on a record-setting 25-match winning streak and swept

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Stone  
Ohio State coach

through its conference schedule undefeated.

In addition, the Buckeyes have risen to No. 12 in the latest NCAA rankings.

Stone, the Big 10 coach of the year, said his team's winning streak is meaningless now that Ohio State has entered the single-elimination NCAA tournament.

"(The streak) really wasn't mentioned until last week," Stone said. "Our seniors have done a nice job of keeping us focused for every match we play. But now for every team, it's one loss and you're out."

Those seniors include Big 10 player of the year Leisa Wissler, a 6-foot middle blocker. Wissler has pounded down 318 kills and led the Buckeyes with 20 solo blocks and 71 blocking assists this season.

Julie Chellevoid, a senior outside hitter, has paced the Buckeyes' hitting attack, knocking down a team-high 423 kills and leading the team

with a 4.15 kill-per-game average.

Add in two more seniors, middle blocker Dawn McDougall and hitter Erika Schlitz, and Ohio State has the experience needed to compete in a regional final, according to Stone.

"They've done it all year," he said. "Every one of them has given us a good match when we really needed to have a good match."

Not all of Ohio State's talent lies in the senior class. Perhaps the most important cog in the Buckeye offense this weekend will be Laura Davis, the starting setter who was named Big 10 freshman of the year and also earned first-team all-conference honors. Davis has racked up 1,168 set assists for the Buckeyes this season.

Stone said Ohio State's first-round win, a 15-9, 17-15, 9-15, 15-7 victory over Pittsburgh, benefited his younger players.

"The NCAA environment was good for our players," he said. "After the match, we stressed the fact that Pittsburgh was anything but a seventh-seeded team."

And this weekend, if Stone's team gets to the final against Nebraska, the NCAA environment will be bigger and louder than ever.

How would Stone plan to slow the Huskers down?

"In order to beat Nebraska, you have to hope that your team is always swinging at the ball," he said. "Any sort of non-attack — a free ball, an overpass or something like that — they'll gobble it right up."

## Tamer Nittany Lion team returns for regional bid

By John Adkisson  
Staff Reporter

A year after leaving Lincoln with a fallen powerhouse, Russ Rose is back. Rose, the Penn State volleyball coach, saw his 44-0 team lose last year to Nebraska in the Midwest Regional Finals.

Now Rose is just hoping this year's version of the Lady Lions, 26-5 entering tonight's 5:30 match against Ohio State at the Bob Devaney Sports Center, can survive for a possible rematch in the final against the Cornhuskers.

"We have not been playing our best volleyball as of late," Rose said. "Ohio State is a good volleyball team, and we're going to have to play awfully well if we want to win."

Last season's Penn State-Nebraska regional final had all the drama of a Final Four match. The Huskers stormed back from deficits in the first two games and went on to win 15-12, 16-14, 10-15, 15-5 and advance to the Final Four.

Rose had some rebuilding to do, especially at setter. Michelle Jaworski, a first-team all-American, was lost to graduation.

In stepped Salima Davidson, a redshirt freshman who last week was named second team all-Big 10. Davidson has compiled a 11.67 assist-per-game average and has 1,191 assists on the season.

Rose said Davidson is a good example of how young players have stepped up to lead his team to its second straight regional berth.

"We didn't know how we would be early, based on a lot of the graduation we had," Rose said.

Penn State does return veterans on the front line with two of the most prominent being middle blocker Leanne Kling and outside hitter Kim Kumfer. Kling led the Lady Lions with 462 kills, and Kumfer led the team with 493 digs.

Rose said Kling and Kumfer have made significant contributions to his team this season.

"Those two players have been very instrumental in our performance this season," he said.

Penn State's strengths, Rose said, lie in the Lady Lions' ability to ball-handle and play solid defense.

"I think we're a team that needs to play a patient brand of volleyball," he said.

All of the Lady Lions' losses this season have been in the Big 10. Penn State has lost at Northwestern, at Minnesota and at Illinois, and Ohio State has beaten Penn State in both previous meetings.

Rose said the Big 10, represented by three of the four regional finalists, is one of the toughest conferences in the country.

As for the rematch with Ohio State, Rose said his team will need to play steady and a high level.

"What we need to do is have a good game," he said. "Our focus in coming here is to play a good match and give the fans an opportunity to see a good volleyball team."