

NU dominates Texas in tournament finals

Huskers look to West Coast challenge

By John Adkisson
Senior Editor

On any other night, Nebraska volleyball coach Terry Pettit said Saturday, a match between his Cornhuskers and No. 12 Texas would be a "tossup."

But Saturday wasn't any other night. Nebraska pounded the Longhorns 15-2, 15-11, 15-2 before 3,572 fans at the NU Coliseum in the finals of the Arby's Classic — one that was billed as a showdown between two of the nation's top teams.

Pettit, whose team improved to 18-2 with the victory, attributed the blowout to Nebraska's strong play.

"It was just that everything went right for us," Pettit said, "and it didn't go well for Texas."

The post-match statistics sheet reflected the Husker domination. Nebraska outlit Texas .319 to -.040, outblocked the Longhorns 13-4 and held a 44-19 kill advantage in the match which lasted barely longer than an hour.

Pettit said he wasn't surprised with his team's strong blocking performance against the Longhorns — a team that had no starter under 6 feet tall.

"We are a great blocking team," Pettit said. "I'm not going to hesitate about that. And we are close to being a great defensive team."

Nebraska rolled from the outset, taking an 8-0 lead after only two Huskers had served. From there, the Huskers went on to quickly finish the first game, closing it on a kill by middle blocker Stephanie Thater.

"We didn't start very well in any of the matches," said Texas coach Mick Haley. "I think when you get behind like that, you're always playing without a full deck."

In the second game, Texas erased an early 5-0 deficit and came back for a 9-7 lead. But a rally ignited by Nebraska jump-server Tami Thompson tied the game, and the Huskers closed with a 6-2 run.

Haley said that his team's failure to win the second game was pivotal.

"I really felt like we needed to take one of the first two games to have a chance to win the match," he said.

In the third game, the Huskers finished the match much as they started it, taking a 7-0 lead and cruising the rest of the way. A kill by Eileen Shannon gave the Huskers their 16th straight



Nebraska middle blocker Kim Tonniges attempts a block in the Cornhuskers' match against Texas Tech on Friday. Staci McKee/DN

Arby's Classic

Friday

Texas def. Wichita State 15-7, 15-6, 15-4
Nebraska def. Texas Tech 15-7, 15-9, 15-7

Saturday

Texas Tech def. Wichita State 15-13, 15-2, 15-9
Nebraska def. Texas 15-2, 15-11, 15-2

All-Tournament Team

Jennifer Cohn, Texas Tech
Katy Jameyson, Texas
Errica Hibben, Texas
Becky Sutter, Wichita State
Stephanie Thater, Nebraska
Nikki Stricker, Nebraska
Eileen Shannon, Nebraska*

*most valuable player
Scott Maurer/DN



win of the season and their third straight over Texas.

Shannon, who finished with 11 kills, was named the tournament's most valuable player. Thater and Husker setter Nikki Stricker joined Shannon on the all-tournament team.

"We're going to play every game as intense as we can," said Stricker, who finished with 39 set assists. "That was the goal tonight, and we did a good job of that."

The Texas match was the third in a string of five straight for Nebraska against rated opponents. After beating Colorado and Texas Tech earlier in the week, Pettit said he was happy to see his team dominate Texas.

"This week was a challenging week," he said. "What it says is that a major college athletic team had a challenge, and they met it."

Nebraska must now turn its sights to next weekend, and matchups in Los Angeles with No. 10 Southern California and No. 1 UCLA in the Big Eight-Pac 10 Challenge.

Stricker said she had no doubt that the players will be focused.

"I think we're going to be more motivated for this tournament than anything we've been motivated for this season," she said.

Shannon, Thater notch new records

By Jeremy Fitzpatrick
Staff Reporter

Nebraska volleyball seniors Eileen Shannon and Stephanie Thater both reached milestones in their careers over the weekend.

Neither knew it at the time. Shannon became Nebraska's all-time kill leader Friday against Texas Tech. Thater became the all-time block leader Saturday against Texas, besting Virginia Stahr's career total of 555.

Thater said she was unaware that she had been approaching the blocking record.

"I'm excited about it," Thater said, "but tonight when they announced it, I didn't have a clue that I had it."

"It was nice, but honestly I didn't even know."

Shannon said she was aware that she was closing in on the all-time kill record — previously held by Stahr with 1,395 — but was unaware exactly how close she was.

"Somebody had told me about a week ago that I was so many kills away," she said. "I hadn't really thought about it — I didn't know I did it at the time."

Although Shannon finished the weekend with 1,413 career kills, breaking the record hadn't been her goal, she said.

"I think it's a really great honor; I think it's nice," she said, "but I never thought about it, I never really planned on doing it; it just kind of happened."

Miami climbs to top — again

By The Associated Press

Miami, which has lost the No. 1 ranking twice this season, regained the top spot again in Sunday's Associated Press college football poll.

The Hurricanes had the weekend off, but moved up a notch after then-No. 1 Washington lost to Arizona 16-3 Saturday.

Miami is only the fourth team to be No. 1 three different times in one season. The others were Notre Dame (1947), Tennessee (1951) and Alabama (1962).

The Hurricanes (8-0) received 61 first-place votes and 1,549 points from a nationwide panel of sportswriters and broadcasters. The other first-place vote went to Alabama (9-0), which

rose one spot to No. 2 after beating LSU 31-11.

If Miami and Alabama go 11-0, they will meet in the Sugar Bowl for the national title. Miami is trying to become the first team to win consecutive championships since Alabama in 1978-79.

"I feel pretty good, but the season isn't over yet," Miami receiver Horace Copeland said. "We still have to play Syracuse and San Diego State. I'm not too happy yet."

Miami lost its No. 1 ranking for the first time after struggling to beat Arizona 8-7 in late September. But Arizona helped the Hurricanes on Saturday by ending Washington's 22-game winning streak.

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