

Huskers credit fans for sweep over CU

By Jeff Singer
Senior Editor

Nebraska's volleyball team kept alive its slim hopes for at least a share of an 18th-straight Big Eight title with a three-game sweep of Colorado on Saturday night.

But the Cornhuskers said most of the credit for their win over the Buffaloes should go to the crowd.

No. 12 Nebraska beat Colorado, 15-8, 15-8, 15-8, in front of a NU Coliseum record crowd of 4,557. It was the 10th-ranked Buffaloes' first conference loss.

Colorado coach Brad Saindon said the crowd worked against the Buffaloes, who beat the Huskers in five games two weeks ago in Boulder, Colo.

"The biggest difference was a couple of weeks ago we were in Boulder, and tonight we were in Lincoln," Saindon said. "I thought with the whole environment of this match, (Nebraska) was ready, they were jacked, and they were prepared. (The large crowd) is something we don't face very often."

The Buffaloes aren't usually outthit either, but that's exactly what happened against the Huskers. Colorado entered the match outthitting its opponents .221 to .184, but were held to a season-low .038 hitting percentage to the Huskers' .198.

Nebraska coach Terry Pettit said he was happy to see his team play as well as it did in front of the large crowd.

"What's fulfilling is to play well in front of a crowd like this," Pettit said. "When you see a crowd like this, you want to reward their efforts to come here, and I think we did that tonight."

The Huskers were able to control the match from the onset, jumping ahead 9-2 in the first game on a service ace by freshman outside hitter Maria Hedbeck.

The Huskers rebounded from a 0-4 deficit in game two, and a 12-2 run halfway through the game propelled

them to victory.

After the match, Pettit said he wanted to make sure his team didn't let up after the second game.

"We were in sync, and they weren't," he said. "We just said after the second game, 'let's go ahead now, let's push them on over.'"

Weston said the crowd was the main reason Nebraska — 6-2 in Big Eight play, 17-3 overall — wasn't going to let Colorado, 7-1 and 18-4, get back into the match.

"Playing on our home court and in front of our own fans gave us a lot of confidence, and I think it intimidated Colorado," Weston said.

But Stricker, who led the Huskers with a .333 hitting average and broke the Nebraska record for career assists, said the team's aggressiveness was the key to victory.

"Everybody was playing all out. Our team was really excited for tonight — I think that made all the difference," Stricker said.

Stricker's game-high 35 assists helped her break former Husker All-American Val Novak's school assist record. Stricker racked up her 3,304th career assist in the third game.

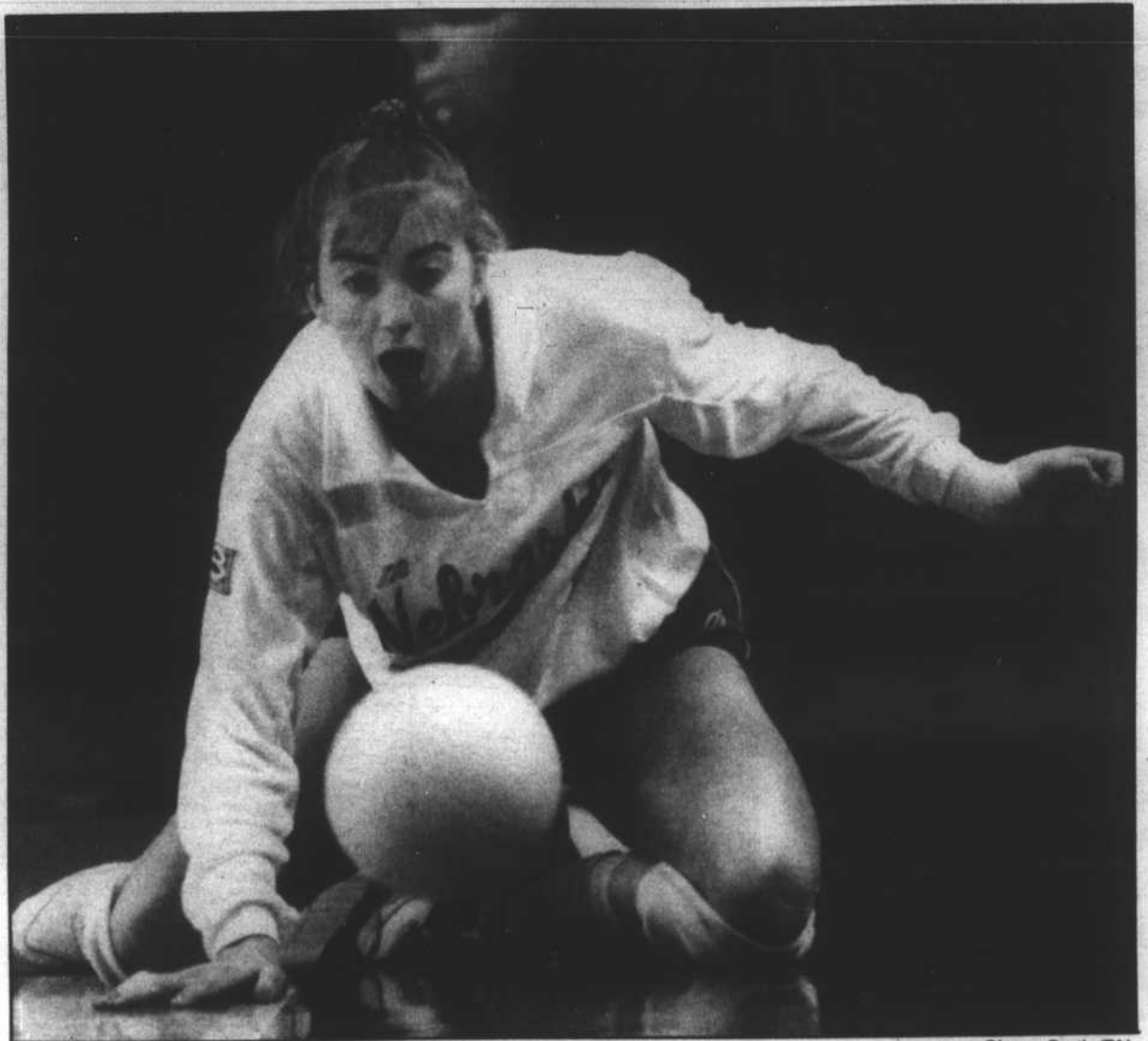
Nebraska outside hitter Kelly Aspegren, who had five kills and nine digs, said the team's outlook made the difference.

"Our attitude could sum it up," Aspegren said. "In Boulder, we weren't running down balls, we weren't being as aggressive; and tonight, there wasn't a lot hitting the ground."

The Huskers still need help to claim even a share of the league title. Specifically, Colorado must lose one of its five remaining conference matches.

But Weston said the Huskers were optimistic even though this is one of the first times the league race is not in Nebraska's control.

"It's definitely a change from past years. Usually we've been on top no matter what," she said. "It is a challenge, but I think we're up to it."



Nebraska outside hitter Billie Winsett attempts a dig during the Cornhuskers' three-game sweep of Colorado Saturday.

Shaun Sarin/DN

Freshmen help in volleyball win

By Shane Gilster
Staff Reporter

Nebraska's freshmen volleyball players got their first taste of a big-time home match Saturday night.

And both Maria Hedbeck and Stephanie Clerc excelled as the freshman duo helped No. 12 Nebraska to a three-game sweep of Big Eight-leader Colorado in front of an NU Coliseum record crowd of 4,557.

Hedbeck led all the Husker outside

hitters with a .250 average on 11-for-28 hitting as well as a team-high 12 digs in the victory. Clerc started the match in the backcourt for Nebraska, contributed seven digs to the Husker cause and added a key service ace in the second game.

Hedbeck, a native of Sollentuna, Sweden, said Saturday's crowd helped inspire her play.

"The biggest crowd I have ever

played for was 50 people," Hedbeck said. "Playing in front of a crowd at Nebraska is great."

Clerc said her teammates had helped her and other freshmen players throughout the season.

"Everyone on the team has a great personality and has really helped me and the other first-year players learn and contribute," said Clerc, a native of Bellevue.

NU women take Big Eight crown in cross country

By Derek Samson
Staff Reporter

After winning the Big Eight Championships Saturday in Columbia, Mo., the Nebraska women's cross country team showed its conference what to expect in two weeks.

That's when Nebraska's cross country teams will compete in the NCAA District 5 Championships Nov. 13 at Southern Illinois.

All Big Eight schools except Colorado are placed in District 5.

Theresa Stelling led the Nebraska women, finishing second to Oklahoma's Kay Gooch with a time of 17:46.

Nebraska had four other women in the top 20, including Kris Ellenbecker, who finished 10th with a time of 18:28.3.

The Cornhuskers needed the good showing heading into districts, Stelling said.

"With everybody (except Colorado) in our conference in our same district, it gives us a good idea of where we are," Stelling said. "I think we have a good chance to go to nationals, but we still have to run very well."

Iowa State took the title on the men's side, with Nebraska coming in fourth.

David Iteffa and Kevin Miller placed 18th and 19th, respectively, to lead the Husker men.

Coach Jay Dirksen said the fourth-place finish was positive for the men's team.

"I thought the men ran just as well as the women, if not better," Dirksen said. "I was really pleased at the performances both teams gave, and I'm really looking forward to the District 5 Championships in two weeks."



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