

Kansas State gets last laugh

By Jeff Griesch
Senior Reporter

With a win over Oklahoma on Saturday, Kansas State not only broke a 22-game losing streak to the Sooners, the Wildcats also took the next step to becoming a legitimate Big Eight contender.

The Wildcats were ripped and ridiculed in the Oklahoma media before their game with the Sooners, but Kansas State got the last laugh with a 21-7 win against Oklahoma at Manhattan, Kan.

The Oklahoma press showed no respect for the Wildcats and referred to Kansas State as Kmart instead of K-State.

"Everyone was making fun of us," Kansas State free safety Jaime Mendez said after Saturday's game. "They'd call us Kmart. Well, if we're Kmart, then we just ran a blue light special."

By the time the game was over, the Wildcats had earned the respect of the Oklahoma media, players and coaches.

"Kansas State is a good football team," Oklahoma coach Gary Gibbs said Monday during the Big Eight coaches' weekly teleconference. "They got the job done and we didn't."

With Nebraska on top in the conference at 4-0, the Wildcats' hopes of winning a league title are slim, but Kansas State has moved into position to finish second.

Kansas State coach Bill Snyder said the win over Oklahoma was a big step for the Wildcats' budding program.

"It obviously means a great deal to our program," Snyder said. "Any time you beat a University of Oklahoma football team, it is a great accomplishment."

Snyder said he was happy for his players because they finally experienced a win against one of the top Big Eight teams.

"They have worked extremely hard and now our fifth-year seniors have won one of those games against one of the teams that have been judged one of the top three teams in the conference," Snyder said.

BIG 8 CONFERENCE Round-up

	Conference Games				All Games			
	W	L	T	Pct.	W	L	T	Pct.
Nebraska	4	0	0	1.000	8	0	0	1.000
Kansas State	2	1	1	.625	6	1	1	.813
Colorado	2	1	1	.625	4	3	1	.563
Oklahoma	2	2	0	.500	6	2	0	.750
Kansas	2	2	0	.500	4	5	0	.444
Missouri	2	2	0	.500	3	4	1	.438
Iowa State	1	3	0	.250	2	6	0	.250
Oklahoma State	0	4	0	.000	3	5	0	.375

Saturday's Results

Missouri 37, Iowa State 34
 Kansas State 21, Oklahoma 7
 Kansas 13, Oklahoma State 6
 Nebraska 21, Colorado 17



DN graphic

Defensive play quiets critics, Darlington says

By Mitch Sherman
Staff Reporter

In the past few years, Nebraska defensive backs coach George Darlington has taken a great deal of verbal abuse regarding the play of his secondary.

Darlington and his defensive backs have been criticized several times, including after this year's 45-28 victory over Kansas State, in which Wildcat quarterback Chad May threw for a Big Eight-record 489 yards.

However, Darlington said, this year's team has had the ability to silence some of the critics.

"The thing about (the Colorado) game, which has been a characteristic of this team, is that they just kept scrapping and playing," he said. "This group of kids expects to be criticized, and they're going to play hard. I think, ultimately, that's going to help us."

On Saturday, the defense, which was led by the secondary's three interceptions, proved to be the heroes in the Husker's 21-17 victory over the Buffaloes, Darlington said.

Free safety John Reece sealed the victory by picking off Colorado quarterback Kordell Stewart's pass at the Nebraska 30-yard line to squelch the Buffs' last-minute drive.

The Huskers, who improved to 8-0 overall and 4-0 in the Big Eight, have been able to win under adverse circumstances unlike some previous Husker teams, Darlington said.

"We are really proud of our players, because they give you a 100-percent effort," he said. "That is all you can ask of them. If they don't get it done, it isn't because of lack of effort."

The coaches will now try to ensure that a letdown does not occur after a big victory this season, Darlington said.

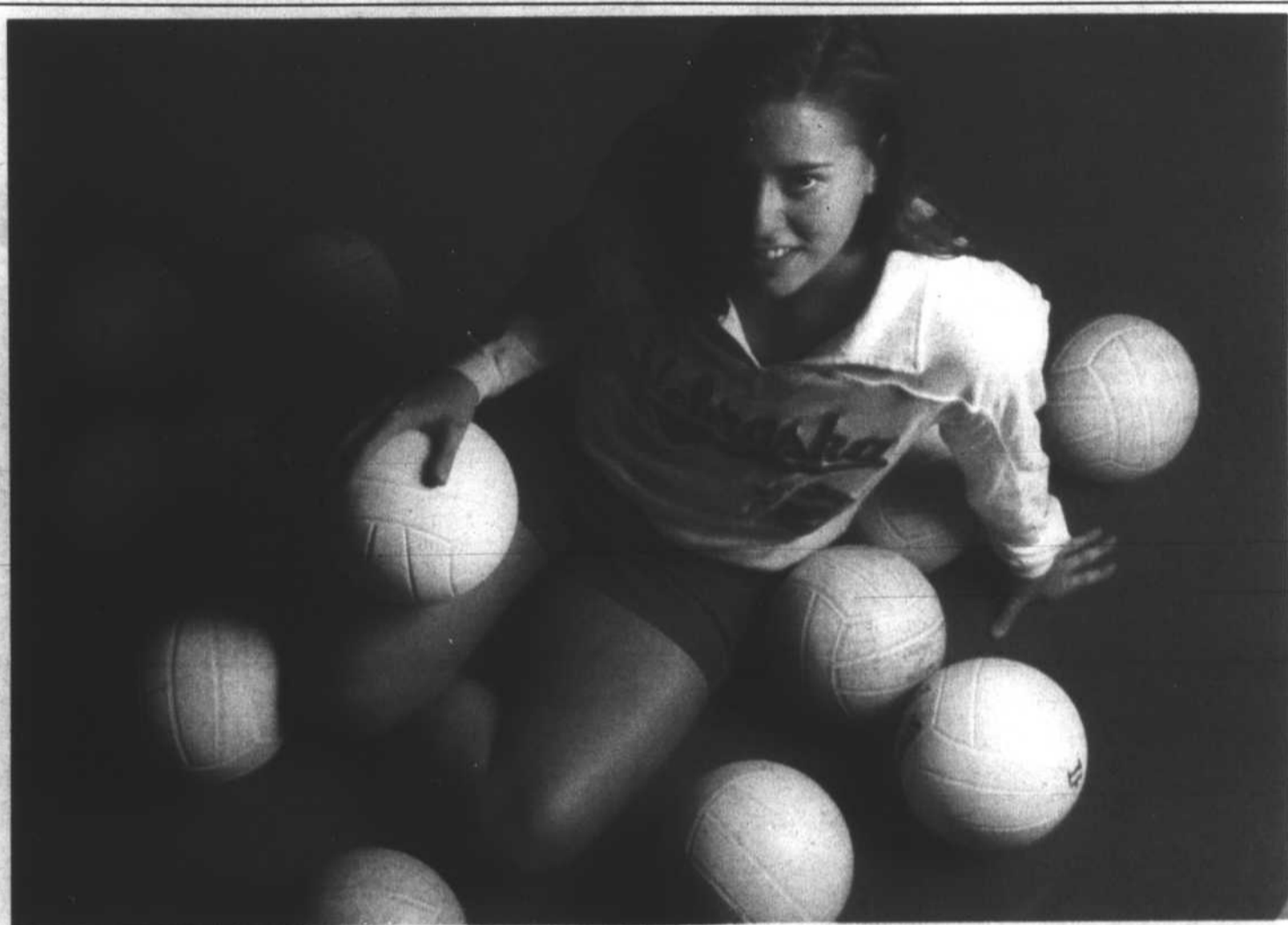
The Huskers have not forgotten last year's game at Iowa State, he said. After blowing out Colorado and Kansas in consecutive weeks, Nebraska was upset 19-10 in Ames, Iowa.

"The memory of Iowa State is constantly spoken about," Darlington said. "I think our players will give a heck of an effort this week."

Darlington praised Kansas, 4-5, and said the Jayhawks were not the same team that lost 42-0 in the Kickoff Classic to Florida State on Aug. 28.

"Kansas is a better football team than Kansas State," he said. "In the last few games, I would say Kansas runs the ball better than any team in the Big Eight. That includes (Nebraska), and that includes Colorado."

"They just line up and come at you. We are anticipating a tremendous battle."



Shaun Sartin/DN

Nebraska's Nikki Stricker, who broke the all-time career set assist record Saturday against Colorado, is leading the Cornhuskers through one of their toughest conference seasons.

Setter supreme

Senior Stricker sets NU assist record, leads team in race for Big Eight title

By Jeff Singer
Senior Editor

Nobody has had more assists in the career of a Nebraska volleyball setter than Nikki Stricker.

But then again, no Cornhusker setter has had to lead her team through a season like Nebraska's this year.

Stricker, who broke former All-American Val Novak's school career assist record with her 3,304th assist in the Huskers' three-game sweep of Colorado last Saturday, is leading a young Nebraska team that is in jeopardy of not winning the Big Eight title for the first time ever.

However, the Husker captain said she needed to be optimistic and not worry about the Huskers' string of 17-straight league

titles ending.

"I can't think about that," Stricker said. "If it's out of my hands, I can't do anything about it anyway. We just need to finish out the season strong and play our best volleyball at the end."

Stricker, a 5-foot-10 senior from Lincoln East, has led No. 12 Nebraska to a 17-3 overall record and a 6-2 league mark — one game behind the Buffaloes. Colorado must lose one of its last five matches for Nebraska to contend for at least a share of the conference crown.

Nebraska's run for another Big Eight title will come without the help of experienced leaders. Stricker is the only senior on the Husker roster after outside hitter Laura Luther's career ended with an offseason shoulder injury.

While it can be difficult being the only Husker with much experience — three Nebraska starters had never started before this season while the other two are sophomores — the team is growing up fast, Stricker said.

"It's kind of lonely sometimes," she said. "But the players around me are improving so much and are playing like juniors and seniors. It hasn't made me feel like it's all dependent on me."

After breaking the all-time Nebraska record for assists, Stricker said being placed in the same class as former All-American setters Novak, Lori Endacott and Tisha Delaney was pretty overwhelming.

"I guess that's why I try to avoid it and not think about it," she said.

Husker-bashing, Cornhead-calling columnist mistaken

Nebraska: The Good Life. As I was riding back from Boulder after Nebraska's 21-17 win, it was heartwarming to see the sign welcoming me into the Cornhusker state.

Or as Denver Post columnist Woody Paige calls it: the Cornhead state.

Woody, I heard almost no complaints about the treatment of Husker fans in Boulder last Saturday.

Paige refers to Nebraskans as Cornheads — making out all Nebraskans to be a bunch of bumpkins still living off the land.

Woody, the truth is that Nebraskans have a lot more class than you.

In his annual Husker-bashing column, Paige slammed all Nebraskans in a plea for good treatment of Nebraska fans.

Then after bashing Nebraska fans, Paige turned around and slammed Bill McCartney and the Buffs.

Some examples: "Take the Cornheads to lunch at Cliff Young's. They've never been in a restaurant without a trough."

When Paige comes to Lincoln, he most likely travels on I-80, past truck stops and cafes. But, Woody, if you looked deeper into Nebraska, you'd



Tim Pearson

find that Nebraska's restaurants, especially those in Omaha and Lincoln, rank right up there with, oh my, Denver's famous eateries.

"Take the Cornheads to the Denver Art Museum so they'll see there are ways to draw without crayons and ways to paint without numbers," Paige

writes.

I can't believe he found out about my dot-to-dot book and my water-paint book. I'll always remember No. 2 as the color mahogany.

Paige then almost guaranteed a Colorado win against the Huskers.

Wrong again.

"Console the Cornheads after their team fails to beat Colorado ... and tell them how much fun they'll have in El Paso, Texas, at the John Hancock Bowl."

Too bad the Huskers spoiled that plan. With a 4-3-1 record, the Buffs could struggle to even get a bowl

berth. Have a nice time at the Aloha Bowl, Woody.

And next year, all you Cornheads, bring out the combines, put on the overalls and bring out the cows and chickens for Woody. Show him what a real Cornhead looks and acts like.

Let's put on a class act for the Coloradans. But next time, I sure hope Woody thinks twice before he puts his pen to the paper.

Pearson is a sophomore news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan senior reporter.