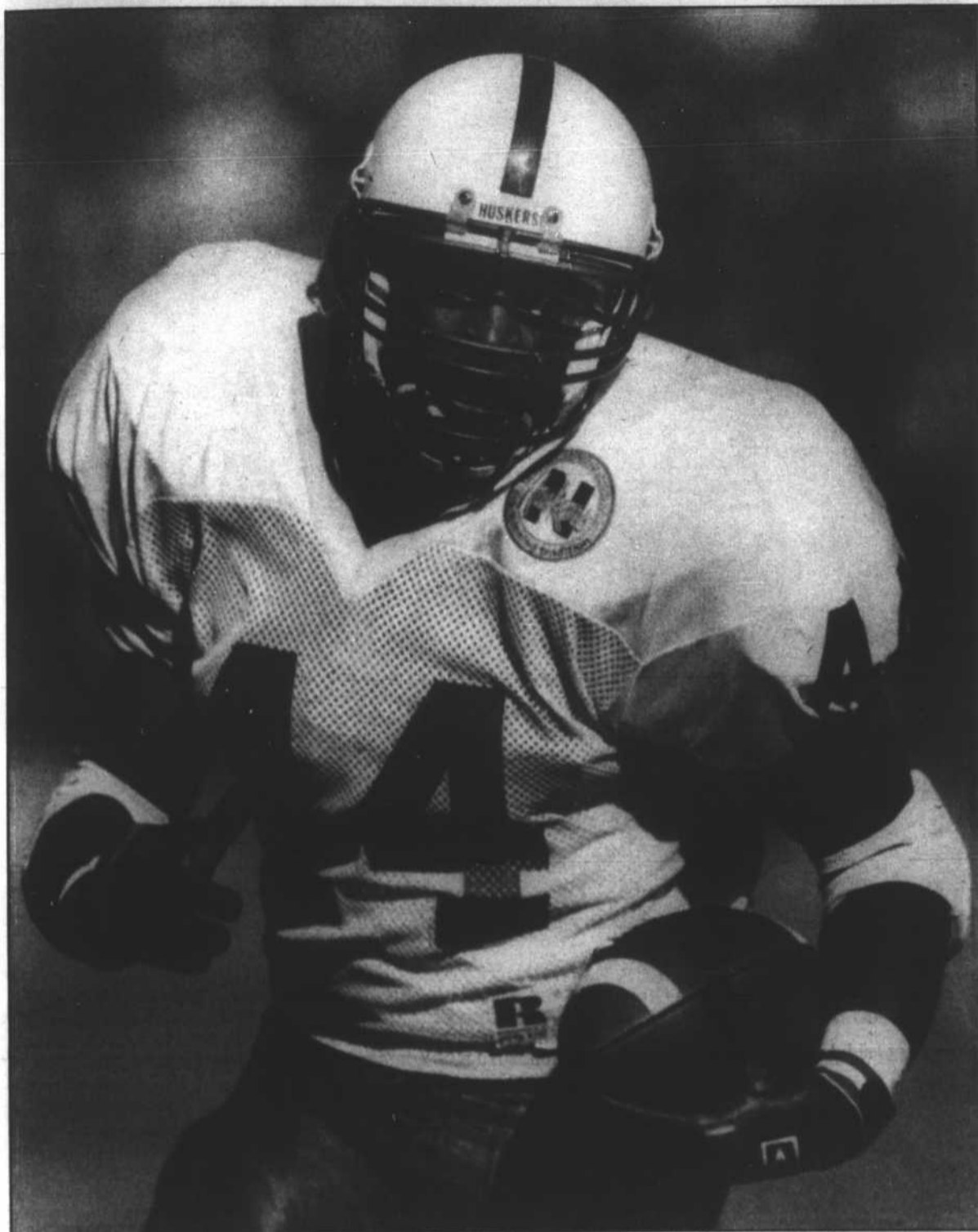


Numbers favor NU, but Kansas still concerns Osborne



Travis Heying/DN

Nebraska I-back Calvin Jones and the undefeated Cornhuskers will face Kansas Saturday in Lawrence, Kan. Jones is questionable for the game Saturday after missing most of this week's practices because of a virus.

By Jeff Griesch
Senior Reporter

Despite Kansas' 4-5 record, Nebraska football coach Tom Osborne said he was worried about a Jayhawk surprise in Lawrence, Kan., on Saturday.

"Kansas is a very, very good football team right now," Osborne said. "The last four weeks they have been playing much better. From a coaching standpoint, we are probably just as concerned about this game as about last week's game with Colorado."

Last week, Osborne and the Cornhuskers had to worry about stopping Colorado's balanced attack.

Nebraska held the Buffaloes' passing game to only 115 yards, but Colorado running back Rashaan Salaam ran for 165 yards against the Husker defense.

Osborne said Kansas would rely on a strong offensive line to control the ball on the ground and try to surprise the Husker defense with an occasional pass.

"Our greatest concern is the strength of Kansas' offensive line," Osborne said. "They have a strong running game, and they are going to try and run it right at us and control the ball. Then after they hammer at you six or seven times, they come with the play-action pass and then go for the home run."

Along with his concern about Kansas' offense, Osborne said he was concerned about the health of the Huskers.

Quarterback Tommie Frazier has an injured shoulder, running back Calvin Jones has been fighting illness for much of the week and left guard Rob Zatechka has a sore ankle.

Nebraska's injuries on offense may put more pressure on the Husker defense to shut down the Jayhawks.

Kansas enters the game with the Big Eight's third best rushing offense, averaging 218.6 yards per game. But Kansas is sixth in the conference in passing, throwing 147.6 yards per game.

The Jayhawks are sixth in the conference and 78th in the country in scoring offense, managing 20 points per game.

While the Jayhawk offense has struggled to put points on the board, the Husker defense leads the conference.

Nebraska has allowed an average of 16.5 points per game. The Huskers are first in rushing defense, passing efficiency defense and total defense, giving up 309.3 total yards per game.

Kansas also has struggled on defense.

The Jayhawks are fifth in the league in scoring defense and total

See HUSKERS on 8

KU coach gets deja vu when watching NU films

By Derek Samson
Staff Reporter

For Kansas, the Nebraska game is a bridge it hasn't been able to cross for the past 24 seasons.

For Kansas coach Glen Mason, his five meetings with the Huskers have resulted in disaster.

This year, Mason said, the Cornhusker teams of the past are still around.

"I don't see much difference in those (Nebraska) teams year in and year out," he said. "Sometimes I wonder if they have the same players and just change the numbers."

In Mason's five years at Kansas, his team has lost by an average of 40 points per game to Nebraska. While he hopes the result will be different Saturday in Lawrence, Kan., Mason

said he knew Nebraska wouldn't change.

"To be honest, when you put the film in and start watching, you have to check the film and make sure it is the right year," he said. "They don't change much. The numbers change, but the results don't."

However, the Jayhawks' numbers have come almost full-circle since their 8-4 finish last season.

After being blown out 42-0 in this season's opener against Florida State, Kansas has struggled to raise its record to 4-5 and 2-2 in the Big Eight.

The Jayhawks have had to overcome injuries to 20 players. Of the 20, 11 players have been starters. Eleven players also were lost for the season.

See JAYHAWKS on 8

Huskers to get preview of national competition

By Tim Pearson
Senior Reporter

The NCAA Volleyball Championships are almost a month away, but the Nebraska volleyball team will get a taste of NCAA-tournament play a little early at the Texas Challenge this weekend in Austin, Texas.

The Cornhuskers, who are 17-3 overall and 6-2 in the Big Eight, will face No. 2 Texas, 20-2, and 12-13 Houston. Houston is on a six-match win streak.

Sophomore middle blocker Allison Weston, who leads the Big Eight in hitting percentage and kills, said the Longhorns would be tough to beat at home.

"We have nothing to lose by going down there," she said. "Texas will be the biggest team we've faced all year. Their setter is 5-11, and everybody else is over 6-foot."

"We're a more balanced team offensively and defensively. They'll come at us but I think we'll win the battle."

But sophomore outside hitter Billie Winsett said the Huskers could not be concerned with what Texas and Houston did this weekend.

"We have to have more concentration on our own side of the net," she said. "The emphasis in preparation is on ourselves."

The two matches on the road are a much-needed break from Big Eight-conference action, Winsett said.

"You get tired of playing the same teams over and over again," she said. "This will show us where we stand. We have the opportunity to play one of the highest ranked teams in the country."

The Huskers have won their last three meetings with the Longhorns, but Texas leads the series 8-5.

The Cougars and Huskers have met six times, with Nebraska winning the last four times and sporting a 4-2 series lead.

Nebraska's win over Colorado on Saturday at home helped the Huskers get back in the race for the Big Eight title, but they're going to need some help to win their 18th consecutive title.

The Buffaloes are 8-1 in the conference after defeating Oklahoma in five games Wednesday night.

The Huskers have to win their four remaining conference matches, and they need Colorado to lose one of their three remaining Big Eight matches against Kansas, Iowa State, and Missouri to tie for the title.

"The Colorado win told the rest of the Big Eight that we're not out of it," Weston said.

Anything can happen in the Big

Texas Challenge

Nebraska (17-3, 6-2)
Vs.

Houston (12-13) Friday 6 p.m.
Texas (20-2) Saturday 7 p.m.
at Austin, Texas

Nebraska Probable Starters

S	Nikki Stricker	5-10	Sr.
S	Stephanie Clerc	5-6	Fr.
OH	Billie Winsett	5-11	So.
OH	Maria Hedbeck	5-10	Fr.
OH	Kelly Aspegren	5-11	Jr.
MB	Allison Weston	6-0	So.

Chris Hopfensperger/DN

Eight, or this weekend, for that matter, Winsett said.

"Volleyball's a game of momentum, and I think we've gained momentum," she said. "You can tell in practice."

The last month of the regular season is of critical importance to the Huskers as they prepare for the NCAA Tournament Dec. 2-4, Winsett said.

"This is the time where you start separating the good teams from the bad teams," she said. "Coach (Terry Pettit) told us that out of the 230 volleyball teams, 215 have gone south."

"The 15 others really start improving. Coach told us that we're one of those 15."

Coach says no wins certain at triangular

By Tony West
Staff Reporter

The winner of the Texas Challenge between Texas, Houston and Nebraska this weekend in Austin, Texas, may be anyone's guess.

Texas is No. 2 in both volleyball polls, and Nebraska is ranked ninth and 14th. But Lady Longhorn volleyball coach Mick Haley said no victories were guaranteed.

Haley said the Lady Longhorns were not favorites, even though they are 20-2 and have the Southwest Conference championship already locked up.

"I wouldn't let the rankings fool you," he said. "I think there's not really a clear definition for who's the better team. From the fans' and the teams' standpoint, every game is a mystery."

Texas and Houston both realize that Nebraska may be struggling to capture its 17th-straight Big Eight championship this season.

But Haley and Houston Cougar coach Bill Walton also know how dominant the Cornhuskers have been

“I think Nebraska needs to just not take Houston very lightly. Every time I see (the Cougars) play, they play better.”

— Haley

Texas volleyball coach

over their teams in the past few years. Nebraska has won four consecutive matches against Houston and three consecutive matches against Texas.

"Nebraska has done really well against us," Haley said. "and they're going to probably be pretty confident."

Walton said confidence was something that may be lacking this season for the 12-13 Cougars.

"It's been a struggle for us so far," he said. "There's still that mystery

See TEXAS on 8