

# Pettit sees benefit in Huskers' loss to Texas

By Tim Pearson  
Senior Reporter

Last Saturday's loss to Texas may turn out to be a blessing in disguise for the Nebraska volleyball team.

The second-ranked Longhorns gave the 18-4 Cornhuskers their first three-game loss of the season last weekend.

Husker coach Terry Pettit said he hoped the match would help Nebraska prepare for post-season play.

"Losses are never good," he said. "But playing good competition helps you."

"The Texas match pointed out some things that we need to work on."

Pettit said the loss to the Longhorns was a result of preparation — lots of it on Texas' part and not enough on the Huskers' part. "Some of the problems were phys-

ical and some were mental," he said. "It wasn't a matter of the system or personnel. We just did not play well. They were ready and we weren't ready."

"But I feel certain that we'll do better and we have a chance to improve against Kansas."

Kansas comes into the match against Nebraska with a 15-10 record and a 4-5 mark in the Big Eight. Earlier in the season, the Huskers defeated the Jayhawks in three games: 15-4, 15-5, 15-10.

Kansas coach Frankie Albitz said her team played well in the first match against Nebraska in Lincoln.

"We did a little better as far as points scored against Colorado last week," Albitz said. "But I thought we played better against Nebraska."

But she said the Huskers probably had improved since their first match

against her team. "We all improve unless injuries happen," Albitz said. "Usually the ball handling gets stronger as the season goes on."

Albitz said she didn't think the Huskers' loss to Texas would have any bearing on tonight's match.

"Normally it might be an advantage for us," she said. "But it depends on how a team reacts, and I think Nebraska has a lot of confidence in themselves."

Pettit said his team's final five regular-season matches were crucial.

"The last five matches are real important," he said. "The remaining matches will determine what level and what seed we'll be at in the NCAA tournament."

"We're getting down here to the end of the season, and some teams get better and some don't. I think

we'll get better." The Huskers are going to need some help from Iowa State or Missouri to win the Big Eight title.

But even if the Huskers don't win their 18th-straight conference title, Pettit said, they have their sights on the Big Eight tournament and the national tournament.

"Obviously, winning the Big Eight is one of our goals," he said. "We have a lot of pride in winning the Big Eight championship, but that doesn't keep us from having an exceptional season."

Pettit said the Huskers would get another shot at the Buffaloes in the Big Eight tournament.

"One way or another we're going to play Colorado again, maybe twice more," he said. "The key is to push on through our next seven matches before the NCAA tournament."

## Probable starters

Nebraska (18-4, 6-2)

Vs.

Kansas (15-10, 4-5)

8 p.m. Allen Field House, Lawrence Kan.

### Nebraska

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.

### Kansas

S	Lesli Steiner	5-9	So.
MB	Cyndee Kanabel	5-9	Sr.
OH	Shelby Lard	5-10	Sr.
OH	Katie Walsh	5-8	Fr.
OH	Tracie Walt	5-10	So.
MB	Erin Kramer	5-10	Sr.

DN graphic

## Parity

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week and, of course, Nebraska, 19-10, last season.

"They played an awfully good football game (against Kansas State)," Osborne said. "The interesting thing was that they were very dominant. It wasn't a fluky win. They were really the dominant team, particularly in the later stages of the game."

Osborne said the continuity of the coaches had led to consistency in the conference.

"I think most everybody has been here 5, 6 years or more," Osborne said. "So nobody's lost a recruiting class. Usually, if you change coaches, you lose a recruiting class or at least most of the recruiting class."

"Some of those teams were changing coaches every four years, and they were in a constant state of flux, and they never did settle down."

The parity has caused the top teams' records to not be as glamorous as in past years, Osborne said. He said the reputation of the conference has been based on the past weakness of Big Eight competition.

"I think that our national reputation fell considerably below the level of play you see in the conference right now," he said. "I just really think that legitimately right now, we're on a par with most of the better conferences in the country."

## Season stats

Nebraska's team leaders after nine games.

OFFENSE					
RUSHING					
	Games/Starting	ATT	Net yards	Yards/Game	TD
Calvin Jones	7/7	134	753	107.6	10
Tommie Frazier	9/9	98	542	60.2	5
Lawrence Phillips	8/0	85	473	59.1	5
Damon Benning	8/2	48	283	35.4	3

  

PASS RECEIVING					
	Games/Starting	No.	Yards	Longest	TDs
Abdul Muhammad	9/8	22	348	41	2
Corey Dixon	9/9	17	320	60	2
Trumane Bell	9/3	11	161	33	2
Gerald Armstrong	7/7	9	117	31	4

  

PASSING					
	Games/Starting	Comp./Att.	Comp.-%	Int.	Yds. TDs
Tommie Frazier	9/9	68/135	50.4	3	1034 10

  

DEFENSE				
TACKLES				
	Games/Starting	Unassisted	Assists	Total
Trev Alberts	9/9	42	42	84
Toby Wright	9/9	38	30	68
Ed Stewart	9/9	28	34	62
Mike Anderson	9/8	19	31	50
Ernie Beler	9/8	18	28	46
John Reece	9/8	21	22	43

  

INTERCEPTIONS				
	Games	No.	Avg. Ret. yards	TD
Toby Wright	9	2	33.5	2
Kareem Moss	9	1	42	0

DN graphic

## Kansas' road to tourney must go through Huskers

By Tim Pearson  
Senior Reporter

The Big Eight volleyball tournament is less than three weeks away, but the four tournament spots are still up for grabs.



Albitz

Only four of the seven Big Eight teams will participate in the tournament in Omaha, Nov. 26-27.

And as the regular season closes down, Kansas is hoping to be one of them. But nothing has been decided yet.

The Jayhawks, who play host to Nebraska on Wednesday at 8 p.m. in Lawrence, Kan., are battling Iowa State for the fourth and final spot in the tournament. Colorado, Nebraska and Oklahoma are the front-runners for the other three spots.

Colorado is on top of the Big Eight at 9-1, with Nebraska right on their heels at 6-2. In order to get back into the race for the conference title, Nebraska needed Kansas to defeat Colorado on Saturday.

But the Jayhawks couldn't. They lost to the Buffaloes in four games. After facing Colorado, Kansas' job

is equally tough — if not tougher — Wednesday night, Kansas coach Frankie Albitz said.

The Jayhawks need a win to stay in fourth place. The Huskers also need a win to stay in the battle for first.

But that is where the similarities end.

Kansas needs Iowa State, which has won three matches in a row, to lose to Colorado in Ames, Iowa, Saturday to regain sole possession of fourth place.

But the Cornhuskers need a Cyclone win over the Buffaloes to stay in the race. If Colorado loses, it would have a 9-2 record in the conference. If Nebraska wins against Kansas, the Huskers would have a 7-2 conference mark.

Albitz said the race could go down to the end. She said both Colorado and Nebraska are good teams but they are different teams.

"Colorado runs a much fancier offense," she said. "They have a unique blocking system where they use only one blocker."

"That gives them five diggers." Albitz said Nebraska coach Terry Pettit uses a system that isn't as complicated as the Buffaloes'.

"Terry's a more keep-it-simple type coach," she said. "But they have a lot of confidence in themselves as a team."

## Alberts

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game rallies by UCLA and Colorado in the final quarter of both games. And Alberts and the Blackshirts were given a true test last Saturday at Kansas.

After Kansas scored a last-minute touchdown, the Jayhawks went for two points and the win on the conversion. However, Alberts chased Jayhawk quarterback Asheiki Preston as he rolled to the right side, and the pressure forced Preston to throw an incomplete pass and preserve Nebraska's perfect season.

Alberts said the close score in Lawrence, Kan., shouldn't have been too surprising.

"When you're 9-0 and ranked as high as we are, you have every team shooting for us — that's part of the game," he said. "We should expect teams to be playing over their heads."

Another team, he said, that might play over its head — and over its 3-6 record — is Iowa State this Saturday. The Cyclones will be coming into Memorial Stadium looking to spoil the Huskers' perfect 5-0 Big Eight

record, just as they did last year in a 19-10 upset at Ames, Iowa.

Alberts, who hails from Cedar Falls, Iowa, said he and his defensive teammates wouldn't have any problem getting fired up for the Cyclones.

"Being from Iowa, I've never had any trouble getting up for this game," Alberts said. "It won't be hard getting up for a team that beat us last year."

"Last year, we were the first Husker team to get beat by them in so many years, and we don't want to make those kind of marks."

Alberts, who earlier this year became Nebraska's all-time sack leader with 28.5 sacks for 195 yards lost, said that despite Nebraska's 9-0 record, no one had seen the Huskers at their best.

He said he hoped the Huskers reached their peak on New Year's Day.

"We're not putting it all together," Alberts said. "The offense is having great days and then the defense is having better days. It sure would be nice if we could play every game putting it all together."

"But you never know -- we might save that for the big one."

## Recruits

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to undefeated records the past two seasons.

Surles chose Nebraska over Iowa, Central Michigan and California.

Reed said Nebraska was the best place for Surles.

"He got along with Danny Nee very well, and he especially liked (Nebraska assistant coach) Jimmy Williams," he said. "He has great

ballhandling skills. He can play the point or the two or three position.

Surles, who is awaiting his latest ACT results, scored a 16 on his first attempt. A score of 17 is required in order to play under NCAA guidelines. Reed said Surles' first test score was not a concern.

"He had a 16 the first time without studying," Reed said. "He studied a great deal for the second one. I'm not worried about that at all. He'll get the score. It's not even a concern."

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