

Healthy volleyball team drives for postseason

By Tim Pearson
Senior Reporter

The season-ending shoulder injury to senior outside hitter Laura Luther hit Nebraska first.

Then, junior middle blocker Kim Tonniges had to recover from off-season shoulder surgery.

Freshman outside hitter Maria Hedbeck's shoulder has been hurting all season.

And freshman middle blocker Jen McFadden missed five matches with a sprained ankle.

But now, as the regular season winds down, Nebraska's volleyball team is healthier than it has been all season, Cornhusker coach Terry Pettit said.

With three regular season matches left, Pettit said his No. 13 Husker team, 20-4 overall and 8-2 in the Big Eight, must be healthy. Nebraska faces Iowa State tonight in a 7:30 match at the NU Coliseum.

"Obviously we need to be healthy," he said. "We're approaching being real healthy. Kim's more healthy and Maria's better."

Pettit said the injury to McFadden hurt the Huskers, but it also strengthened the team.

— “*Our practices are quicker, faster and more intense. We're working on all levels of our game. The players are excited and working hard.*

— Pettit
Nebraska volleyball coach

McFadden said she's coming along well, and Pettit said both McFadden and her replacement while she was injured—junior Peggy Meyer—will play tonight.

"We need them both," Pettit said. "In a long match, both of them will play. Both are very good players, but they're different players."

"Jen is more physical, and Peggy is more experienced. We'll be more comfortable with Peggy in certain situations because of her experience."

Pettit said Meyer did a good job at middle blocker in place of McFadden.

"The injury to McFadden gave us more flexibility," he said. "Now we have another confident player in Peg."

Iowa State enters the match with a 8-17 record and a 4-6 Big Eight mark. The Cyclones are battling Kansas for the fourth and final Big Eight

tournament spot. The Jayhawks are 4-7 in the conference.

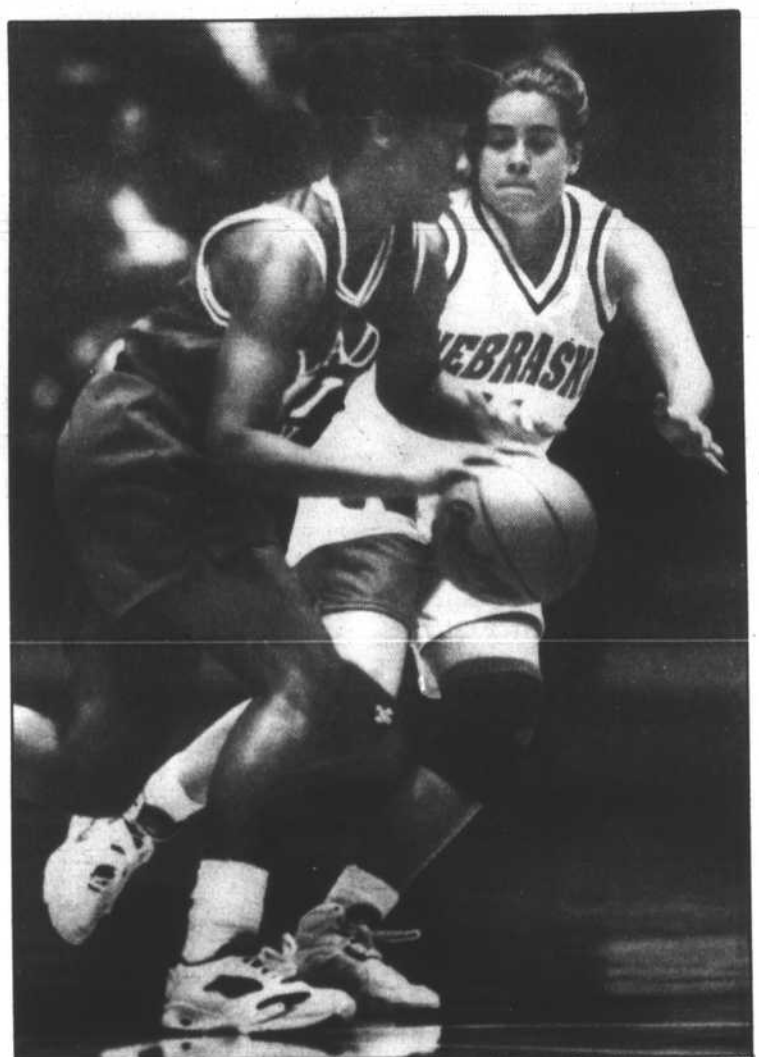
Pettit said the Huskers would use the Cyclone match to gear up for post-season play.

"Our practices are quicker, faster and more intense," he said. "We're working on defense and ball-handling."

"We're working on all levels of our game. The players are excited and working hard."

NOTE:

• Four Huskers were named to the Academic All-Big Eight volleyball team Tuesday. Setter Nikki Stricker was named for the third straight season. Sophomores Allison Weston and Billie Winsett and junior Kelly Aspegren were also named to the first-team. Tonniges and Meyer were named to the honor roll.



Sandy Summers/DN

Nebraska guard Kate Galligan (right) tries to defend St. Louis Hoopster guard Angie Rougeau during the first half of the Cornhuskers' 80-61 victory in their season opener at the Bob Devaney Sports Center Tuesday night.

Beck

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high 24 points, hit two consecutive baseline jump shots during the stretch.

"I see a lot of potential here," Beck said. "Nafesah Brown looked really good at times, and I thought Meggan Yedsena played really well at the point."

Pyra Aarden and Brown led the Huskers in rebounding with nine, while Yedsena had a game-high 11 assists.

Before the game ended, every Husker had scored.

"That's what I wanted to accomplish," Beck said. "I was looking for a lot of different combinations. And I was getting a good look at everyone."

St. Louis Hoopsters ... 23 38 — 61
At Nebraska 41 39 — 80

Nebraska — McClain 4-7 0-0 8, Haselip 2-5 5-6 10, Brown 8-15 7-24, Galligan 1-4 0-0 3, Yedsena 4-9 1-4 9, Upthegrove 0-3 1-2 1, McEwen 1-1 0-0 2, Dillavou 2-3 0-1 4, Bynum 0-0 3-4 3, Thompson 3-5 1-2 7, Aarden 2-3 3-6 7, Rose 0-1 2-2 2. Totals 27-56 23-34 80.

St. Louis — Jackson 6-18 1-2 13, Sanbothe 4-7 2-3 10, Johnson 0-7 5-8 5, Rougeau 4-12 3-4 11, Bolden 2-10 1-2 6, Covington 3-9 2-2 8, Rogliardi 0-0 0-0 0, Cramer 4-8 0-0 8. Totals 23-71 14-21 61.

Three-point goals — Nebraska 3-5 (Galligan 1-1, Haselip 1-1, Brown 1-1, Yedsena 0-1, Dillavou 0-1), St. Louis 1-7 (Bolden 1-3, Rougeau 0-3, Jackson 0-1). Rebounds — Nebraska 46 (Brown, Aarden 9), St. Louis 46 (Jackson 13). Assists — Nebraska 22 (Yedsena 11), St. Louis 10 (Rougeau 4). Total fouls — Nebraska 14, St. Louis 23. Turnovers — Nebraska 18 (Yedsena 5), St. Louis 18 (Rougeau 7).

Win

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"I thought our senior leadership with Johnson and Piatkowski was very evident out there," Nee said. "They took charge out there and played selflessly."

Johnson, a senior from Elkhart, Ind., scored 13 points and added eight assists.

The biggest surprise of the night came from the play of 6-11 freshman Mikki Moore.

Moore saw his first playing time as a Husker with 5:23 remaining in the first half.

It didn't take long for Moore to get his first points, scoring with 4:29 left in the half.

Before the half was over, Moore was Nebraska's leading scorer in the half with 11 points, including the Huskers' first dunk of the season.

Moore finished the game with 14

points on 100-percent shooting from the field and free throw line, six rebounds, one assist and one blocked shot.

Sophomore guard Erick Strickland said the game helped the players find out what they needed to work on for a successful season.

"It was good for us because we learned where we're at and where we need to be," Strickland said. "The teams will get better as we play, and we'll get better, too. I think, right now, we might even be ahead of where we should be."

Spartak Club ... 25 34 59
at Nebraska ... 58 64 122

Nebraska — Chubick 5-6 3-5 13, Piatkowski 9-12 0-0 21, Badgett 2-5 2-2 6, Johnson 6-9 1-1 13, Boone 10-13 0-0 23, Jaeger 0-0 0-0 0, Newton 0-0 0-0 0, Strickland 7-11 3-3 18, Glock 2-3 1-2 7, Moore 5-5 4-4 14, Best 2-4 1-1 5, Brooks 1-4 0-0 2. Totals 49-72 15-18 122.

Spartak Club — Roms 0-5 1-2 1, Hivrenko 2-4 0-0 4, Chursin 9-20 2-2 24, Orlov 0-0 0-0 0, Savizki 1-8 1-2 3, Vasiliev 0-10 0-0 0, Bryanzev 7-20 9-16 27. Totals 19-58 13-22 59.

Moore

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he played (Tuesday) proved that we can use him."

Moore first excited the crowd after he dunked a rebound off a Jaron Boone miss with 2:32 left in the half. Less than one minute later, Moore converted a three-point play after he followed another Husker miss. Moore led the team with 11 points at half.

Moore again brought the crowd to its feet in the second half when he was fouled on an alley-oop dunk from Piatkowski for another three-point play.

"I was pleased that a freshman like Mikki Moore could come in and contribute like this," Nee said. "It should significantly improve his confidence."

Moore said his confidence had already been boosted by his teammates, especially the seniors.

"They told me not to be frightened and just go out and play," Moore said.

As far as pleasing the crowd, Moore said, it was just another nice first-game surprise.

"It was shocking to me," he said. "I didn't think the crowd was going to be like this. I see that the crowd is behind me, and I see that the team is behind me. Now I finally feel at home."

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