

# SPORTS

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Page 7

## Offensive lineman reflects on career as a Cornhusker

By Derek Samson

Senior Reporter

Zach Wiegert came to Nebraska unsure of what he could accomplish.

But after five years as a Cornhusker, the offensive tackle finally is seeing some results from the efforts he put in on the offensive line.

Wiegert was named one of four finalists for the Lombardi Award last week and remains a favorite for the Outland Trophy.

"I came in here, and I was just a scared freshman like everyone else," Wiegert said. "I was on scout team my first year, and I was going against guys like Mike Croel, and I thought, 'Geez, I'm never going to be able to play with these guys.'"

"As the year went on I got better and better and just improved every year. Hopefully, everyone will remember me as a great player."

The 300-pound senior from Fremont undoubtedly will earn his third All-Big Eight selection this season after playing in all but two games in his four years at Nebraska.

Wiegert said he had no second thoughts after choosing the Cornhuskers, especially after receiving so much playing time as a redshirt freshman in 1991.

"I thought for a while about going to Washington to school just because my mom was moving to Seattle," he said. "She just moved for a year and came back, so it's a good thing I stayed here. Ever since I committed to Nebraska I've been happy. This was a perfect school for me."

Having Wiegert in a Nebraska uniform is just as important to the Nebraska coaches as it is to Wiegert.

"Zach has meant an awful lot to this foot-

ball team," offensive line coach Milt Tenopir said. "If there is a guy that you can't have get hurt, it'd be Zach. He's an intense football player and one that the team rallies around."

Nebraska's chances of landing Wiegert were improved by his older brother, Erik, an all-class, all-state Nebraska athlete and an All-Big Eight offensive guard for the Huskers, lettering in 1989, 1990 and 1991.

"He (Erik) helped quite a bit to get adjusted," Wiegert said. "Not so much on football, but just off-campus stuff. He helped me quite a bit just settling into things and letting me concentrate more on football. I was able to worry about the game of football more than on paying my rent or something like that."

Wiegert, who is expected to be a first-round selection in next April's National Football

League draft, said he was only a few injuries better than his brother.

"I've had more publicity, but Erik played guard and I play tackle, and he was a great lineman in his own right," he said. "The only thing that kept him from playing in the pros was that he had a lot of injuries."

For now, Wiegert doesn't want to talk much about the pros.

"I don't know what they (pro scouts) want, and I'm not too worried about that right now," he said. "I just try to go out and play good each week. I think mostly they just see if you have good feet or not because you can always teach someone how to pass block, as long as they can move their feet good. But right now, the only thing I'm thinking about is our last three games."

## Reitsma sparks NU to win over Kansas

Huskers raise record to 24-0; defend No. 1 position in rankings

By Mitch Sherman

Senior Reporter

The Nebraska volleyball team came away a winner Wednesday night in its first defense of the nation's No. 1 ranking.

The Cornhuskers rolled over Kansas 15-13, 15-7, 15-4 before a crowd of 3,070 at the NU Coliseum to improve to 24-0 overall and 9-0 in the Big Eight.

Kansas dropped to 5-18 and 2-7 in conference play.

Weston said. "We can't seem to get it down. It's very frustrating."

In the first game, Kansas stayed even with the Huskers until a four-point spurt gave Nebraska a 9-4 lead. But the Jayhawks came roaring back, eventually tying the game at 13 after a long hit by Weston.

"Kansas played stronger than they did down at Kansas," Nebraska coach Terry Pettit said. "We were trying some things out, so I stayed with some things longer than I might have in some situations."

With Kelly Aspegren serving, Weston put home a kill on a set by freshman middle blocker Lisa Reitsma to give the Huskers a 14-13 lead. On the next serve, a Reitsma kill ended the game.



Jay Calderon/DN

Nebraska outside hitter Billie Winsett waits to dig the ball in Wednesday night's sweep of Kansas as Kelly Aspegren and Peggy Meyer look on.

*"Despite Lisa's lack of experience, she doesn't allow it to affect her. She still makes aggressive moves. And if she makes an error, it won't affect her next play."*

TERRY PETTIT

Nebraska volleyball coach

Despite the sweep, the top-ranked Cornhuskers were not pleased with the way they played during the match, especially during the first game, in which Nebraska hit only .149.

"We played real sloppy and very poorly in the first game," said Allison Weston, who led all players with 20 kills. "We just didn't play very aggressively."

She said the Huskers' biggest problems came on defense.

"It was defense and pursuit,"

Weston said the experience of being in a close game could help Nebraska down the road.

"Unfortunately the teams we're playing down the road — if we are tied 13-13 — are going to be a lot stronger than Kansas," she said. "It really didn't give us a true test of what we can do."

Nebraska jumped out to a 7-2 lead in the second game, but again, Kansas came back and cut the lead to 9-

7. It was at that point, Husker setter Christy Johnson said, that Nebraska began to turn things around, in part due to the play of the Reitsma and sophomore Kate Crnich.

"Lisa really gave us a lift," Johnson said. "I thought she did a really good job. I thought Kate did a really good job. The subs were ready to play."

Seven consecutive points, with the final kill coming from Peggy Meyer, gave Nebraska a two games to zero

lead.

Pettit said the subs played a major role Wednesday night, even though backcourt specialist Stephanie Clerc sat out the match with the flu.

He said the play of Reitsma, who contributed 5 kills and hit .714, gave Nebraska a needed lift off the bench.

"Despite Lisa's lack of experience," Pettit said, "she doesn't allow it to affect her. She still makes aggressive moves. And if she makes an

error, it won't affect her next play. I think you can tell the team enjoys playing with her, because she's an exceptional athlete."

Kansas did not have enough left to mount another challenge in the third game.

Much like the first two games, Nebraska established a 7-2 lead. After six sideouts, it was the Huskers who took control, quickly scoring eight of the next 10 points and ending the match on a block by Reitsma.

## Pettit's expectations will push NU to 'take the Eight'

At Tom Osborne's press conference on Tuesday, he had a question for Nebraska volleyball coach Terry Pettit.

Osborne wanted to know how Nebraska's success in volleyball this season might affect Pettit.

Pettit responded, "When you work here long enough and when you are as successful as the football coach, you get an office like that one up there."

Now Tom Osborne's office is nice, with footballs and mounted fish, but Pettit is not the mounted fish type of guy.

He's a guy that would have someone go out and catch a fish for him and then expect that person to mount it for him.

That is how he is, and that is how he appears on the court. He has great expectations, not only of himself but

also of his team.

He expects his team to win. It's not anything he does. It's not anything his assistant coaches do. It's something his players must do.

"Volleyball is execution more than it is one big play that gets you seven points or a home run," Pettit said.

That execution occurs on the court, and Pettit has no control over what might happen.

However, one thing Pettit can control is a distraction many teams across the country would like to have.

The Cornhuskers are ranked No. 1 in the Volleyball Monthly poll and the American Volleyball Coaches Association poll.

So for the first time since 1990, the Huskers are in the top spot.

And for the first time, there are two undefeated No. 1 teams on campus.



Trevor Parks

For those who may only follow volleyball, the other one is the football team.

But Pettit knows that being No. 1 in football carries a lot more weight than the top ranking in volleyball.

"There is no working toward a bowl game," Pettit said. "We're working for the NCAA tournament, where you have to win 6-7 matches straight to win a national championship."

But Pettit's Huskers already have won 24 straight matches. What's six or seven more?

The ranking is nothing but an indication of how everyone perceives

the Nebraska team, he said.

Pettit is cautious partly because of his team's easy schedule.

Or maybe it's easy because Nebraska has whipped up on everyone.

Only losing five games all year is impressive for any sport.

For now, though, the Huskers are concerned with winning back the Big Eight title they held for 17 years.

And guess which team took it from the Huskers last year.

The Colorado Buffaloes.

Way to go Bill McCartney! Another sport, another rivalry. Well, at least Colorado beat Nebraska at something a year ago.

On the horizon lurks another showdown against the Buffaloes in Boulder — with the Big Eight title on the line.

Pettit said his team was focused on dethroning the Buffs.

"At the end of practice, the play-

ers hold hands and say 'Take the Eight,'" Pettit said. "They take a lot of pride in this conference; that's their goal."

Seventeen years of volleyball championships. And then poof! Gone.

But a new foundation for another championship string could be laid in less than seven days, when the Huskers try to make it 18 for 19 against the Buffs.

If the Huskers lose, which they won't, they will end in a tie for first with Colorado.

I'm sure Nebraska would live with that, but who would want to live with Colorado?

If they do lose, though, the Huskers still can hold their heads high, and who knows, maybe someday Pettit will get an office like Osborne's.

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