

SPORTS

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Volleyball team ready to devour Buffs

No. 1 Huskers hope to recapture Big 8 title tonight

By Mitch Sherman
Senior Reporter

Tonight in Boulder, Colo., the Nebraska volleyball team will try to hurdle the biggest obstacle standing between the Cornhuskers and another Big Eight title.

No. 1 Nebraska, 25-0, can clinch the Big Eight championship with a victory over Colorado in tonight's 8:30 p.m. match at the Coors Event Center in Boulder. Nebraska and Colorado are the conference's top two teams.

After 17 consecutive Big Eight titles, the Buffs dethroned the Huskers a year ago. Colorado has beaten Nebraska in three of the teams' past six meetings.

"It's everything right now," Husker setter Christy Johnson said. "It's by far the most important match of the year, at least so far."

Colorado's only chance to win a share of the league title is to beat Nebraska tonight. A Buffalo victory probably would result in a tie

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CHRISTY JOHNSON

Husker setter

for the league championship.

Johnson, averaging 13.8 set assists per game, said Nebraska would not be satisfied with a tie. "It's a matter of pride," she said. "It's a matter of tradition."

For No. 14 Colorado, the match is a matter of revenge. The 20-5 Buffs, who beat Nebraska in three games last year in Boulder and in five games at the Big Eight tournament in Omaha, were swept by the Huskers on Oct. 29 in Lincoln.

Nebraska coach Terry Pettit said the Huskers were traveling to Boulder at an opportune time, having been at home since Oct. 25.

"It's better to go on the road when we haven't been on the road for a while, because we are pretty fresh," Pettit said. "We've been

home for 2 1/2 weeks, so fatigue won't be a factor in this match."

He said Nebraska might be more well-rested than Colorado. The Huskers flew to Boulder on Tuesday afternoon and will practice twice before the match. The Buffs will have two regular days of classes on Tuesday and Wednesday.

"We'll certainly be as rested as Colorado," he said.

Nebraska is not only rested but also ready to play, Johnson said. An impressive sweep of Missouri on Saturday at the NU Coliseum, in which the Tigers scored a record-low six points, set the stage for tonight's big match.

"We really played well against Missouri," Johnson said, "which is something we haven't done for a while — play well against a weaker team."

Greater intensity in practice has been noticed, too. Johnson said the Huskers practiced well on Friday and Monday before making the trip.

"We were all very intense," she said. "It's kind of indicative of the match coming up."

Colorado's swing offense, which presents the Huskers with a different challenge than normal, probably won't be of great importance, Pettit said. Kansas and Kansas State have shown a similar offense this year, but he said neither team ran the swing with Colorado's

Nebraska vs. Colorado

Starters for tonight's 8:30 p.m. match in Boulder, Colorado..

Nebraska (25-0, 10-0)

S	Christy Johnson	5-8	Jr.
MB	Peggy Meyer	6-1	Sr.
MB	Allison Weston	6-0	Jr.
OH	Billie Winsett	5-11	Jr.
OH	Maria Hedbeck	5-10	So.
OH	Kelly Aspegren	5-11	Sr.

Colorado (20-5, 9-1)

S	Tracy Sailer	5-9	So.
QH	Janine Zumerchik	6-2	Sr.
QH	Leah Williams	6-0	Jr.
SH	Karrie Downey-Larsen	5-10	Sr.
SH	Rachel Wacholder	5-9	So.
SH	Shannon Parke	5-10	Jr.

efficiency.

"Colorado runs it better than those other teams," Pettit said, "but we'll be prepared. The offense isn't the key. It's the execution. When Colorado passes the ball to the setter, they are very effective. The systems won't make any difference in the match."

Boulder match blocks Huskers' path to title

By Trevor Parks
Staff Reporter

Nebraska's return trip to Colorado for tonight's 8:30 match against the Buffaloes might be a little rocky for the 25-0 Cornhuskers.

After Nebraska's three-game sweep of the No. 14 Buffaloes Oct. 29 at the NU Coliseum, Colorado coach Brad Saindon had a word of warning for the Huskers tonight.

"The good news for us is, unlike the football team, they have got to come to Boulder and play us there," Saindon said. "We're not going to give this title up without a fight."

Saindon was referring to the Big Eight title that his team is trying to defend.

Last season the Buffaloes dethroned the Huskers as Big Eight champions. Nebraska had won the Big Eight title for the past 17 years straight.

But the Huskers have the inside track against the Buffs for this year's title. Nebraska comes into the match 10-0 in the conference, while Colorado is 9-1. The Buffs' only loss was to Nebraska last month.

But Saindon didn't see all negatives about the trip to Lincoln. Colorado succumbed in the second game 15-12 to the Huskers.

In Boulder, Saindon said, the Buffs would have won that game. The Buffaloes jumped out to a 6-2 lead and led 11-7 late in the game. However, the Huskers outscored Colorado 8-1 to win the game.

"I felt we had a couple of swings where we could have put them away, but we didn't," Saindon said.

Taking the Huskers away from the NU Coliseum, where Colorado is winless, will be a plus for the Buffs, Saindon said.

"If you put that team in that arena, there are not many teams that are going to beat them," he said. "They are good, and (at home), they are great."

One Buffalo who has seen both the Colorado triumphs and struggles against Nebraska is senior swing hitter Karrie Downey Larsen.

Larsen agreed with Saindon that the outcome of tonight's match could be different than the match in Lin-

See COLORADO on 8



Nebraska outside hitter Billie Winsett goes for the dig against Missouri last weekend. Winsett and the Huskers will try to defeat Colorado tonight to raise their record to 26-0.

Berringer's work casts shadow on Frazier's stardom

The whispers first were heard on a Saturday afternoon, sometime in late October.

After Nebraska's pounding of Colorado, thousands of celebrating Cornhusker fans flooded out of Memorial Stadium with images of oranges and sandy beaches in January dancing in their heads.

And almost exactly two years after Tommie Frazier debuted as Nebraska's starting quarterback, the inevitable question was asked for the first time.

It probably started when a caller on a post-game radio call-in show said something like this:

"Hey, what a great game. Those Huskers sure are just a super team. I never thought they would be able to handle Colorado so easily without Tommie. But, well, I think, maybe that Berringer guy is a pretty good player. You know, now that I think about it, he might even be able to lead us to a national championship."

"Do you think our team could be better with him than it is with Frazier?"

Not much else was said about the

impending quarterback controversy — until Air Brook took another step toward immortality a week later against Kansas.

Berringer picked apart the Jayhawk defense. His shovel passes and use of the tight ends made him look incredibly similar to Dan Marino, as he throttled the Jayhawk secondary for 267 yards and led a balanced offense to an easy win.

The same caller was heard on a radio somewhere in Huskerland, only this time, Mr. Short-Term Memory was singing a new tune.

"Brook Berringer is the best passer I've ever seen! Did you see that shovel pass that went for 37 yards and that 5-yard 'hot read' that turned into a 64-yard touchdown?"

"I think he runs the offense way better than Tommie. When you think about it, Frazier couldn't even throw that well, and who needs a great running quarterback when we've got Lawrence Phillips?"

It was at this time that other fans started buying this ridiculous line of thinking. Suddenly, Brook could do no wrong, and Tommie was the for-



Mitch Sherman

gotten superstar.

It seems that some Nebraska fans fail to remember why Frazier, not Berringer, earned the starting quarterback job six games into his freshman season.

He runs the Nebraska offense like no one else. Before his injury, Frazier was well on his way to greatness. Husker fans were going to carry him on their shoulders all the way to the Heisman.

He was everyone's hero. The Orange Bowl Most Valuable Player was sent to Nebraska on a mission — a mission he was going to accomplish this year.

In less than two years, Frazier established himself among Nebraska's best signal callers of all time. And after a few weeks on the shelf, he shouldn't be forgotten.

At the same time, Berringer has proven himself beyond a shadow of a doubt. He has earned everyone's respect, and he could very well lead Nebraska to its first national title in more than 20 years.

But the fact is he was handed the quarterback job after Frazier was injured.

Following Nebraska's offensive masterpiece against Iowa State, I happened to be tuned in to the call-in show again.

One caller, apparently under the influence of a controlled substance, suggested that the Huskers move Frazier to wingback when he returned in the spring.

How quickly people forget. Let's take a quick look back into the past.

In his 23 games at the helm, Frazier led the Huskers to a 20-3 record. Only a junior, his 1,548 rushing yards ranked No. 2 all-time among Husker quarterbacks. His more than 2,000 yards passing ranked eighth all-time, and most of all, he proved he was a winner.

Next March, Frazier will be

healthy, and Berringer will be Nebraska's returning starter. In more than 20 years as the Husker head coach, Tom Osborne has applied a simple policy to this type of situation.

Rule 1a of the Osborne coaching handbook states that if a player is injured and he returns to be 100 percent healthy, under no circumstances does he lose his job. As a result, Frazier enters the spring as the No. 1 quarterback.

Period. The subject of who has the advantage next season should not be an issue. Both Frazier and Berringer will be given a fair look — like every year — and the man most suited for the job will emerge as the starter.

So relax, Husker fans, and savor the championship drive to Miami. Enjoy the present, and support the team, but look at everything in perspective.

And keep a grip on reality. Don't lose track of the past.

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