

SPORTS

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No Buff too tough as Huskers take Big Eight

From Staff Reports

After being dethroned as Big Eight volleyball champions one year ago, Nebraska returned the favor to Colorado Wednesday night.

The Huskers swept the Buffaloes 15-13, 15-5, 15-2 before a record crowd of 3,685 at the Coors Event Center in Boulder, Colo.

No. 1 Nebraska, which posted its 21st sweep of the season to clinch the conference championship, improved to 26-0 overall and 11-0 in the Big Eight. Colorado, ranked No. 13 coming into the match, fell to 20-6 and 9-2 in the conference.

The Cornhuskers were challenged by the Buffs only in the first game, but even then, Colorado got no closer than a 7-7 tie, before a 6-0 run by Nebraska.

"We were a little bit tight, and they were a little bit tight," Nebraska coach Terry Pettit said on KLIN's post-match radio show. "but I think one of the differences was our setter. (Colorado coach Brad Saindon) yanked his starting setter right away, and I don't know what went on there."

After the Buffaloes trimmed Nebraska's 13-7 lead to 13-10, Colorado setter Tracy Seiler hit a ball into the net, which gave the Huskers their first game point.

A sideout returned the serve to Colorado, and the Buffs scored three straight points to make the score 14-13. But a kill by Nebraska's Kelly Aspegren and a wide hit by Colorado's Leah Williams gave the Huskers the first-game victory.

"Last year's team really played hard and

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Travis Hoying/DN

Nebraska outside hitter Maria Hedbeck digs the ball in a recent match. The Huskers clinched the Big Eight title with a win over Colorado Wednesday night.

Basketball team signs two players

By Mitch Sherman
Senior Reporter

In the final days of the fall signing period, the Nebraska men's basketball team signed two in-state players to avoid having to save its three available scholarships until the spring.

Wednesday was the last day of the fall signing period.

Alvin Mitchell, a guard from Omaha Burke High School, and Bernard Garner, a forward from Western Nebraska Community College in Scottsbluff, signed national letters of intent to play for the Cornhuskers next year.

Mitchell, a 6-foot-2 senior who averaged 24 points and earned second-team all-state honors despite playing only 11 games last year, signed on Wednesday morning. Burke coach Gary Graner said Mitchell chose Nebraska over Temple, Syracuse and California.

"He fits into their system well," Graner said. "They play an up-tempo style, similar to us. He has excellent quickness and good shooting range. On top of being a good scorer, one of the best points of his game is his passing."

Graner said Mitchell played a key role in the Bulldogs' drive to the state championship game in 1992. And last year as a junior, he scored 44 points, including 10 three-pointers, in Burke's first-round loss at the state tournament.

Mitchell will be suited to play a one- or two-guard position at Nebraska, Graner said.

"One of the main things he likes about Nebraska is their emphasis and commitment to academics," Graner said. "That was real important to Alvin."

Mitchell was the leading scorer on the North Omaha Bears team, which played in a tournament in Los Angeles last spring. Two years ago, he was the only sophomore to get all-tournament honors while playing on the Nebraska Valentino's all-star team in Las Vegas, Nev.

"He's matured a lot," Graner said. "He still needs to put on some muscle, but every year, we see improvement from him. We rely on him for leadership a lot."

Graner said Mitchell still was awaiting his college entrance exam results. Western Nebraska coach Dave Campbell said Garner, a 6-foot-7, 220-pound forward originally from Many, La., had invested a lot of work in the weight room since arriving in Scottsbluff prior to last season.

"His body chemistry has changed since he's been here," Campbell said. "He came in here at about 235-238 pounds. He's lost some weight and

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Frazier's medical checkup reveals no new blood clots

From Staff Reports

Doctors examined Nebraska quarterback Tommie Frazier on Wednesday, and the results came back good, Coach Tom Osborne said.

The junior from Bradenton, Fla., who practiced on Tuesday for the first time since being diagnosed with a second blood clot almost a month and a half ago, participated in noncontact drills again on Wednesday.

"They checked him, and they didn't find any problems," Osborne said. "He seems to be making good progress, but he's still a ways away yet."

Frazier, who played in Nebraska's first four games this season, still is being treated with

blood thinners. Osborne said it had not been determined how much longer treatment would continue.

Osborne said "there might possibly be" a chance Frazier would be cleared to play in a bowl game, but it did not appear likely.

"We'll have to wait and see," he said. "They'd have to clear him and take him off the blood thinners. That's so far out, I haven't really thought much about it."

Regardless, Osborne said, the fact that no new clots have formed is good news.

"They did examine the vein, and they didn't find any problem with the vein or any blood clots," he said.

College football's Super Bowl to solve mythical dilemma

Eleven down, two to go.

That's the current state of football in Nebraska. And if everything goes according to plan one week from Friday, the story will be 12 down, one to go.

A win against Oklahoma would put Nebraska in the driver's seat for the mythical national championship. All that the beloved Huskers would have to do then would be to beat Miami on its home field in the Orange Bowl.

History says that's not such a good thing. But then again, history doesn't seem so intimidating lately, ever since a pack of Huskies sent the Hurricanes spinning earlier this year.

And if the Huskers do snap their seven-game bowl losing streak, finish 13-0 and give Tom Osborne his first mythical national championship, then what of 12-0 and second-ranked Penn State?

The Nittany Lions have roared this year, looking impressive and

racking up the yards with an offense that features two legitimate Heisman Trophy candidates in Kerry Collins and Ki-Jana Carter. In all likelihood, Penn State will win the rest of its games.

It would be a shame to deny a mythical national championship to either one of these unbeaten, untied teams. But that's exactly what will happen on Jan. 3, 1995.

There's only room for one team at the top of the polls. It's a shame, and I'll say it.

Major college football has no playoff and no real champion. It seems ridiculous that the NCAA's most lucrative sport is its only one without a real method of deciding who's No. 1.

Why not? The money is there. The athletes and coaches are there, too. The logistics just aren't there.

As we cheer our favorite teams and put the stars on pedestals, we forget that college students are play-



Matthew Woody

ing the game. And college students have to take final exams, which at most schools are held sometime in December — after the end of the regular season and before the bowl games.

You can't please everyone, no way, but it seems that an eight-team playoff somehow could be fit in over three weekends.

Here is one modest proposal: All regular-season and conference championship games are completed on the final weekend of November. An NCAA committee announces the eight-team field Sunday morning (or how about Sunday evening for a TV selection show?).

The next weekend, the first in December, four quarterfinal games are played. One week later, the semifinals. This year, those games would take place on Dec. 3 and 10.

The final two teams get to survive the rest of December. The relentless hype builds day after day until ... a New Year's night national championship showdown. College football's very own Super Bowl.

What's that in the air? Oh, just the smell of money for the television rights.

Just think, each and every year, the two teams that earned it on the field would play for the right — the honor — to be called the best in the land.

Oh, yeah. Meanwhile, back in the real world Nebraska and Penn State are left to wonder why, if both finish the season with perfect records, why only one of them should get the glory.

And down in Birmingham, Ala.,

Gene Stallings and Co. may have more to wonder about than either the Huskers or Lions. The Crimson Tide could roll the rest of the way to a 13-0 record via victories in the Southeastern Conference championship game and the Sugar Bowl, and not be No. 1 anywhere outside of Dixie, let alone Alabama.

A few years ago the powers that be created a bowl coalition, an agreement that all but guaranteed a national championship game.

This is one of those "all but" years. Even if this was 1995, the first year of a new-and-improved coalition, Penn State and Nebraska would not meet on the field. One thing remains very clear: we need a playoff in Division I-A football.

Change won't come easily to this tradition-rich sport, but worry not, it will come.

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