

SPORTS

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NU volleyball team earns top seed in NCAA regional

By Trevor Parks
Staff Reporter

Nothing shocked Nebraska volleyball coach Terry Pettit when the NCAA on Sunday released the pairings for the NCAA volleyball tournament.

The Cornhuskers are the No. 1 seed in the Midwest Regional, and Nebraska will play host to the winner of the Wisconsin-George Washington match.

As long as Nebraska keeps winning, it will play host to the regional semifinals and finals on Dec. 8-11.

Only Nebraska, Stanford, Florida and Long Beach State will have that advantage.

In the Midwest region, the top four seeds are 29-0 Nebraska, 28-3 Penn State, 32-3 Notre Dame and 22-7 Colorado.

"I anticipated that," Pettit said. "Beyond that it is hard to predict."

The 21-11 Wisconsin Badgers and the 31-3 George Washington Colonials will play on Wednesday at Washington, D.C.

Pettit said the two teams were strong.

George Washington has a player from Russia who is one of the top players in the country, Pettit said.

Former Nebraska assistant John Cook is the Wisconsin coach, and the Badgers have a good setter and middle blocker, Pettit said.

Nebraska setter Christy Johnson said she expected to play Wisconsin, which should present the Huskers with a formidable opponent.

Nebraska could have the chance to play Colorado for the fourth time this season in the regional semifinal.

The Buffaloes play host to the Rider-Northern Iowa winner.

Johnson said she expected to meet up with Colorado again.

"We'll be more fired up to play them more than we ever have been," Johnson said.

Pettit said he was happy to see another Big Eight team gain a good seed in the tournament.

"I anticipated that we would meet Colorado," Pettit said. "I hope we're

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■
TERRY PETTIT

NU volleyball coach

fortunate to do the things we need to do to get the opportunity to play them here in Lincoln again."

Of the 48 teams in the NCAA tournament, seven are from the Pacific 10 Conference, and six are from the Big 10 Conference. Four of those teams — Penn State, Iowa, Illinois

and Wisconsin — are in the Midwest region.

Pettit said this was a good bracket, but it was not the most difficult.

"I'm not going to say that there is an easy region," Pettit said. "I've been through it enough, and it's tough to do no matter where you are."

Huskers get by Colorado to seize Big Eight title

By Mitch Sherman
Senior Reporter

OMAHA — For the third time this season, the Nebraska volleyball team had the opportunity to gain revenge on defending Big Eight champion Colorado.

And for the third time this season, the Cornhuskers did just that.

Before a season-high crowd of 5,038 at the Civic Auditorium in Omaha on Saturday night, the Huskers turned the Buffs away 15-6, 13-15, 15-6, 15-8 in the Big Eight tournament championship game.

"It was a very intense match," Nebraska coach Terry Pettit said. "We had control of the first, third and fourth games, but it didn't feel that way. Colorado did a good job of making some adjustments."

No. 1 Nebraska improved to 29-0. Colorado fell to 22-7.

Colorado coach Brad Saindon said the Buffaloes' goal coming into the match was to challenge Nebraska, something the Buffs had failed to do in two previous losses to the Huskers.

"We wanted to see if we pressed Nebraska, how they would respond," Saindon said. "Because they have not really been pressed this year. We wanted to see if cracks would occur. We were able to test them, but they passed the test."

Nebraska didn't crack, Pettit said, in large part because of the play of national player-of-the-year candidate Allison Weston.

The 6-foot junior from Papillion, who was named Big Eight player of the year last week, pounded a career-best 37 kills and hit .600 for the match. Thirty-seven kills is a Nebraska record for a four-game match.

"When Ali gets in a rhythm," Husker setter Christy Johnson said, "she's unstoppable. She makes me look good, because when you get

her the ball, she puts it down."

Nebraska never was challenged in the first game. The Huskers led 9-1 before allowing the Buffs to score five of the game's next six points. But the Huskers answered with a 5-0 run to take the game.

The second game, however, was a different story. Colorado stayed close and took a 7-6 lead on a service ace by Leah Williams. Nebraska came back to take a 10-8 lead, but the Buffs scored three straight points to go ahead 11-10.

A kill by Husker outside hitter Billie Winstett tied the game at 11, but Colorado scored four of the next six points, winning the game on an ace by Janine Zumerchik.

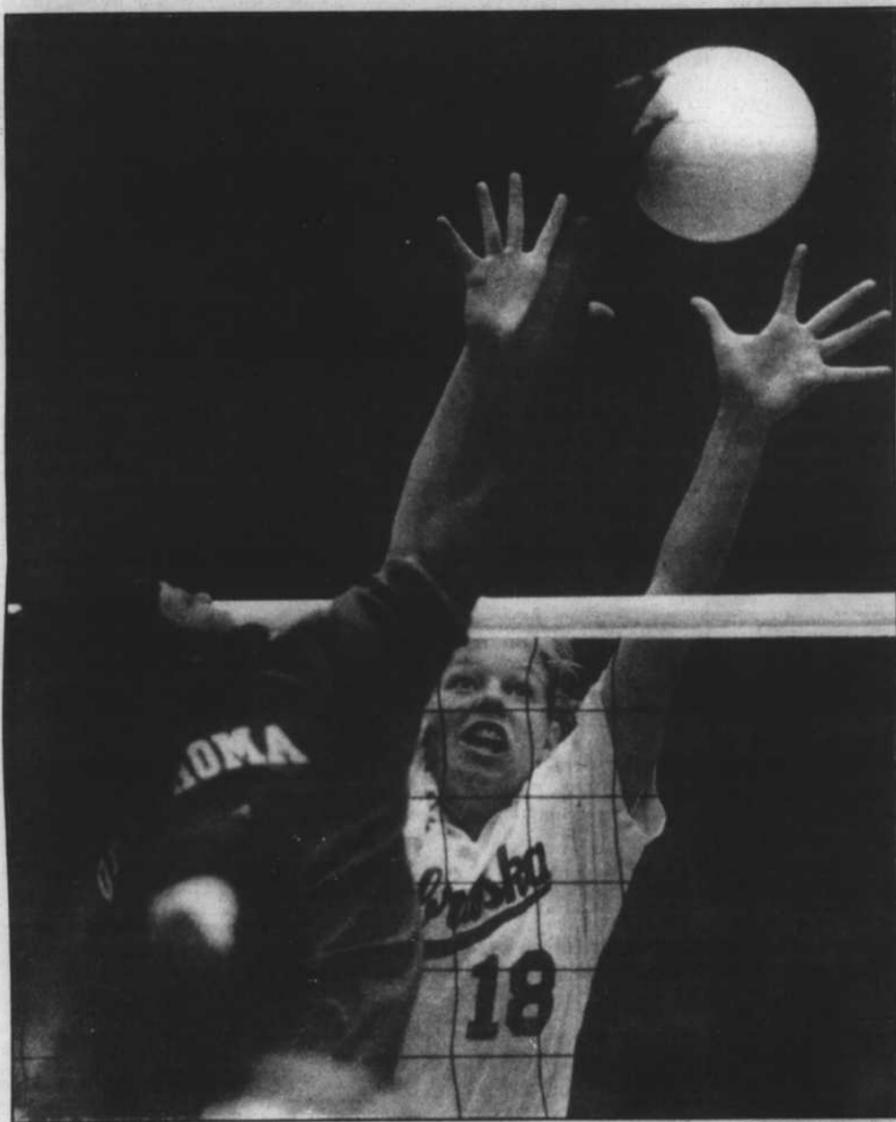
"I thought Colorado was playing harder than we were in the second game," Pettit said. "And I haven't had that feeling much this year. It cost us a game, and when you look at the statistics, it wasn't Colorado's offense. It was our passing that broke down."

The Buffs stayed competitive in the third game, closing to within 8-6. Nebraska then looked to Weston — who posted 12 kills in Game 3 — and cruised to a 15-6 win.

"It was sometime in the third game," Saindon said, "when one of our assistant coaches turned to me and said, 'It's the Allison Weston show.' If I was Christy Johnson, I'd set her the ball every time, too."

Colorado tied the fourth game at 8, but Nebraska didn't surrender another point. With Weston serving the last of five consecutive points, the Huskers won the match on a long hit by Colorado swing hitter Karrie Downey.

"It's always tough to play a good team a third time," Pettit said. "The third time, it's always easy to make adjustments."



Shaun Sartin/DN

Nebraska middle blocker Allison Weston goes up for a block against Oklahoma during the first round of the Big Eight tournament. The Huskers defeated the Sooners in three games and Colorado in four to win the title.

Basketball team takes third in tournament

From Staff Reports

The Nebraska men's basketball team opened its season with a third-place finish at the San Juan Shootout in Bayamon, Puerto Rico.

The Cornhuskers defeated College of Charleston 74-72 on Sunday in the third-place consolation game.

Nebraska was led by Melvin Brooks, who had 16 points. Brooks scored 13 of those from the free-throw line.

Coach Danny Nee said he was pleased to see the lone senior on the team have a big game.

"Melvin came up with some big numbers," Nee said on his post-game KLIN radio show from Puerto Rico. "I think what we saw him do tonight he can do every night."

With 3:30 remaining, Nebraska led 72-66 after an Erick Strickland 3-pointer.

The Cougars then cut the deficit to only 72-70 on two free throws by Stacey Harris and Rodney Conner.

College of Charleston had a chance to tie the game with 33 seconds remaining, but Marion Busby missed the first of two foul shots, and Nebraska still led 72-71.

Nebraska's Jaron Boone was fouled with 18 seconds left and made the second of two free throws for a 73-71 lead.

Strickland fouled Busby with seven seconds left. However, Busby only was able to pull the Cougars within one after making one of two free throws.

Brooks made one of two free throws to give Nebraska a 74-72 lead, and Tom Wald ended the game by intercepting an inbound pass from Harris.

The entire game was close, up until the end.

At the end of the first half, Chris Sallee's tip-in with one second remaining gave Nebraska a 43-42 advantage.

Nebraska led for most of the first half before Harris made a 3-pointer to tie the game at 39.

The Huskers led by 10 twice in the game. In the first half, two Boone free throws gave

Nebraska a 21-11 advantage, and in the second half, a Boone three-pointer gave the Huskers a 65-55 lead.

Nee said a win against a ball club like the Cougars was a good step for his team.

"I thought it was a real quality win," Nee said. "It's a name school that we don't hear about in the Midwest."

In the semifinal on Saturday, the Huskers lost to Virginia Tech 87-81.

The Huskers had a 47-36 halftime lead over the Hokies, but Virginia Tech outscored Nebraska 26-11 to start the second half.

Ace Gustis led the Hokies with a career-high 30 points. Gustis scored 20 of those in the second half.

Strickland led the Huskers with 19 points against Virginia Tech.

In the opening game of the tournament, Nebraska defeated Northeast Louisiana 99-77.

Six minutes into the season opener, Nee was ejected for protesting a no call when Wald apparently was fouled.

Tommie

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then he would get the job done, but we were just concentrating on who was in the game at the time. Brook was in the game, so we had to work with him, and that's what we did."

But neither quarterback was as willing to talk about the situation.

Frazier did not talk to reporters after the game, while Berringer brushed off questions about the subject.

"I never even thought about it," Berringer said when asked if he thought Frazier might replace him in the second half.

Berringer said later that sideline conversations did not change between him and Frazier.

"There is always encouragement," Berringer said. "But we don't sit around and talk about defenses or what's going on out there."

Osborne said he expected Frazier to be recovered for the Orange Bowl.

"I kind of thought he'd be there, and I think he'll be ready to play January 1," Osborne said.