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# Huskers express appreciation for fans both on, off the road

By Derek Samson  
Senior Reporter

When Nebraska plays Arizona State Saturday, it will be in some unfamiliar territory — Memorial Stadium.

Last year, the Cornhuskers opened with two games on the road.

This year, however, the Huskers have plenty of time to get reacquainted with their home stadium, since the next road game isn't until Oct. 28 at Colorado.

Senior I-back Clinton Childs may get his first career start Saturday, but said he was just excited to play at home.

"Nebraska is a great place to play," Childs said. "I'm looking forward to seeing all the red again. We can finally have the whole crowd with us

for a while. But we get a pretty good crowd on the road, too."

And Coach Tom Osborne said he had a pretty good team on the road as well.

"It'll be nice to get back to Lincoln, but this is a good road team," Osborne said. "I feel good about their chemistry and attitude. I wouldn't hesitate to take them to any environment and play. I wouldn't say we'd always win, but I know we wouldn't be intimidated. That's good to know."

Outside linebacker Jared Tomich credited the tremendous support Nebraska received on the road for its success.

"It helps a lot when we walk out on the opponent's field and see splotches of red all over the stands," he said. "We always have a lot of fans wherever we are."

For Nebraska defensive back Mike Minter, Saturday is extra special.

The junior from Lawton, Okla., tore his anterior cruciate ligament during the Texas Tech game last season. He missed the rest of the season — including all the home games — and hasn't played in Memorial Stadium since Nebraska beat Oklahoma on Nov. 26, 1993.

"It'll feel good for me, especially because it's been so long since I've played there," Minter said. "It will be nice to get in front of the Big Red fans again. I'm really looking forward to it."

Even the most unlikely of players are missing Nebraska.

"There is no place like Nebraska," defensive tackle Christian Peter said. "I bet people never thought they'd hear me say that, but it's true."

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## Diggin' defense



Nebraska outside hitter Maria Hedbeck lunges for the ball during last weekend's First Tier Invite. Because of a shoulder injury, Hedbeck has been confined to the back row.

## New season sets Husker in new role

By Trevor Parks  
Senior Reporter

Maria Hedbeck hasn't gotten upset that her playing time has been cut by more than half this season after playing almost all the time last year.

This year Hedbeck has stepped in as a back row substitute for middle blockers Stacie Maser and Jen McFadden, and is limited to three substitutions a game.

The 5-foot-10-inch junior said at times she missed not playing all the time, but with a chronic right shoulder problem, she didn't mind the move.

"It's a lot more fun to play all the time because you want to be on the court as much as possible," Hedbeck said. "But I feel I couldn't do as much as I could do because of my sore shoulder."

Hedbeck said her shoulder injury had persisted since her first year at Nebraska, and she had seen some improvement recently because of her diminished playing time.

The native of Sollentuna, Sweden, said her shoulder had held up well so far this year.

"It feels much better," Hedbeck

said. "I don't know if it is getting much better, but at least I can sit at home at night without feeling any pain."

Last year, despite the shoulder problems, Hedbeck averaged 1.52 kills a game and had 150 kills on 443 total attacks. After six matches this season, Hedbeck does not have a kill and only has one attack.

To help ease the pain last year, Hedbeck spent much of her practice time working on her defense. That work has paid off this season because Hedbeck is sixth on the team in digs with 33.

"Last season I would barely hit in practice, maybe just once a week, and I did all my hitting during the games," Hedbeck said. "That was not enough practice time to play well in matches because I never got to practice."

Hedbeck said both she and Coach Terry Pettit agreed that this move was the best situation for the team.

The addition of outside hitter Jaime Krondak and the emergence of Kate Crnich have helped Hedbeck adjust to her new role, she said.

"Last year Kate wasn't quite ready to play outside, so we didn't have much of a choice last year,"

Hedbeck said. "This year, now that we have a bunch of good outside hitters, I think it's best for the team that I play back row."

Crnich has 29 kills on 85 attacks and Krondak, a freshman, has seven kills on 24 attacks. All of last season, Crnich had 35 kills.

Hedbeck has had to adjust to serving right away after substituting into a game. Hedbeck said after six games she hadn't quite made a total adjustment to her new role.

"I'm still having trouble because I'm not used to it," Hedbeck said. "You come in from the bench and start serving right away, and that's different."

This season, Hedbeck has made eight service errors, which puts her third on the team behind Allison Weston and Lisa Reitsma. Hedbeck also has six service aces this season after having 33 last year.

Hedbeck said even though she liked the idea of playing only in the back row, she wished she could be out on the court more.

"It's hard staying on the sidelines because you can't be in there all the time, and you know you can only go in three times," Hedbeck said. "No matter what happens, you have to stand on the sidelines and watch the others."

## Zatechka

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Mangurian said even though Zatechka had many things to learn as a professional football player, he still may have the opportunity to play this year.

"He's probably going to get an opportunity to play a little down the road this year if somebody gets nicked up," Mangurian said. "People don't jump into starting roles as a rookie in this league. He's just preparing, and he's coming along fine."

Mangurian said he had been

pleased with Zatechka's skills as a run blocker, but he still needed to work on skills as a pass blocker.

Zatechka admitted pass blocking was one area he knew he needed to improve on, but he said Nebraska coaches did a good enough job preparing the Husker offensive linemen to pass block.

"They teach them at Nebraska what they need to know to win at Nebraska, and they've done a great job with that," Zatechka said. "If you look at numbers of linemen in the NFL, we're right up there."

Nebraska offensive line coach Dan

Young said Husker linemen had not received the respect they deserved in the NFL. Young said Husker offensive linemen spent half of their practices working on pass blocking.

The Huskers work on blocking for play-action passes, Young said, while the NFL linemen block for drop-back passes.

Young said he had not been surprised by Zatechka's success in the NFL because Zatechka was always a motivated and smart athlete. He said he felt Zatechka possessed all the physical tools to maintain a professional career.