

# Reitsma trades fear for fire

By Trevor Parks  
Senior Reporter

Lisa Reitsma had to stand on the sidelines for most of last year's season-ending NCAA Midwest Regional final loss to Penn State.

No, she wasn't injured. Reitsma, a sophomore on the Nebraska volleyball team, didn't have the big-match experience needed to play, so she watched Nebraska lose in four games, one match short of the Final Four.

This year is different. Reitsma will not have to stand on the sidelines very much when the Cornhuskers play host to the Nittany Lions Friday night at 5:30 at the NU Coliseum.

Reitsma said it was difficult to watch last season's match after having four kills on four total attacks against the Nittany Lions.

"It was frustrating watching from the bench because I knew there was nothing I could do," Reitsma said. "It was the coaches' decision, and that was fine."

Now the coaches' decision is to play Reitsma all the time. She has

become a force this season in Nebraska's quest to make its first Final Four since 1990.

Reitsma is averaging four kills a game, second most on the team behind Allison Weston. Reitsma also is one of only three players to play in every game this year.

The Sanborn, Iowa, native said she has improved a lot since last season. She had only 29 kills all of last year, and she appeared in only 30 matches. After the first two matches of this season, Reitsma already had 35 kills.

"From last year, I have improved 85 percent," Reitsma said. "Also, as a team we have improved a lot, and we're at the level of being called a great team."

This year's team, like last year's, enters the regional on a roll. In 1994, the Huskers were 30-0. This year, Nebraska has won 26 straight matches on its way to a 27-1 record.

Reitsma said the way Christy Johnson, Billie Winsett and Weston have groomed the team to be in position for the national championship has

rubbed off on her. She said she realized that this could be her best chance to win the title.

"I definitely want to grab that chance this season," Reitsma said. "Hopefully we can get even more chances after that, but right now we need to win this one."

Reitsma said the team was where it needed to be to win the first national championship in school history.

One reason for her turnaround, Reitsma said, is her mentality on the court. Last season, she said, she was scared of the opposition, and in practice she was scared to go against the starters as a member of the scout team.

"Last year during practice and in matches I was scared of everyone," Reitsma said. "Now I am having so much fun and I'm not scared of anything."

That fearlessness is present throughout the team, she said.

"I don't think we are in fear of losing," Reitsma said. "If we play like we can, we know that won't happen."

# Williams finds home on defense

By Mike Kluck  
Staff Reporter

Nebraska's Jamel Williams was recruited as an I-back.

In 1993, the blue-chip athlete from Merrillville, Ind., thought he could contend for playing time at I-back behind Calvin Jones. Williams said he felt he had a good chance to step up and play until he tore his anterior cruciate ligament in a 1993 Indiana all-star game.

While Williams sat out his first season, he said the Nebraska coaches told him they wanted to switch him to a defense, to which he now has found a liking.

"I wanted to play offense, but I can make the sacrifice," Williams said. "I was kind of disappointed not playing offense, but I was an all-state safety."

It took Williams a while to find his home. After beginning last season as a rover, he moved to WILL linebacker midway through the season. He played in 10 games last season, including the national championship game against Miami, in which he recorded one assisted tackle.

After the season Williams had to have surgery to repair his right shoulder, forcing him to miss all of spring drills. Williams started this season fourth on the depth chart at the WILL linebacker position before moving to SAM during the season.

"I was thinking that this was going to be my breakthrough year, but at another position," Williams said. "As it turned out, SAM linebacker got me some playing time. Now, I've found a home at SAM linebacker."

He also found a home in the end zone against Oklahoma.

Williams could have been flagged for a penalty after intercepting a pass and high-stepping the final 10 yards for a touchdown.

"You really don't think what you're doing because you're so pumped up," Williams said. "You're just kind of out of control."

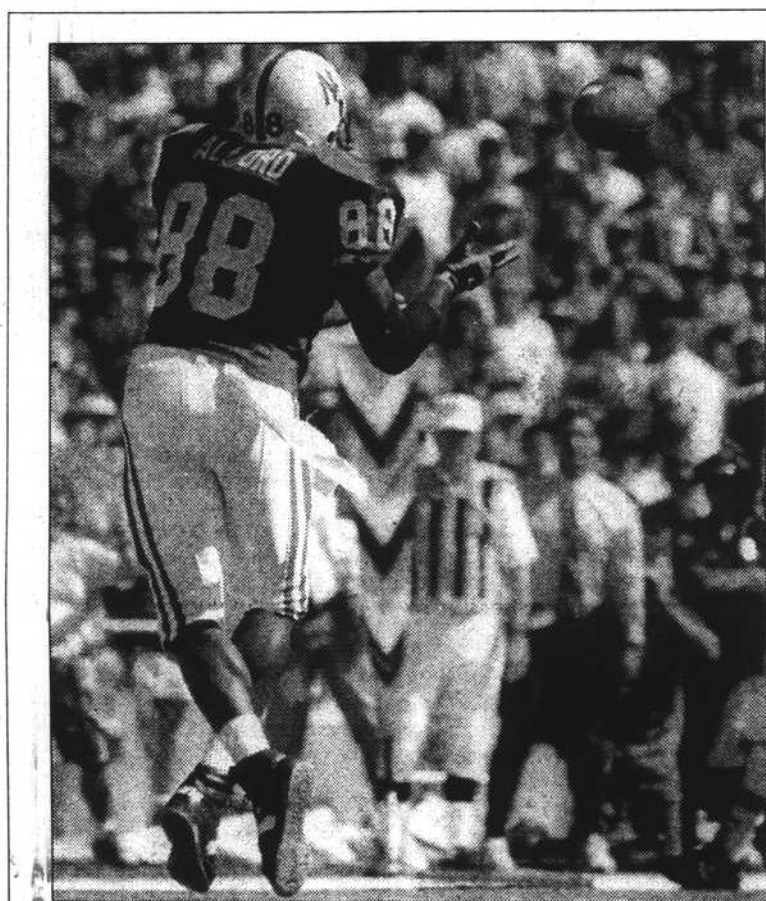
# Beck

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ever, was a team victory in which four players scored in double figures. Husker senior Pyra Aarden led Nebraska with 17 points and nine rebounds, while Kate Galligan and Anna DeForge contributed 12 and 10 points.

A meeting after Saturday's 89-65 loss to Oregon State, Beck said, helped Aarden to become more dominant in Wednesday's win.

"Pyra really established herself



DN file photo  
**Former Nebraska tight end Eric Alford is done catching footballs. Instead he wants to play basketball at Nebraska during the spring semester.**

# Alford

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could be a reason they could use me. I know I could help out rebounding."

Alford considered basketball once he arrived in Lincoln in 1993. He said he talked with Nee, but decided against it after the football season ended.

Last spring, Alford joined the Husker track team and competed in the long jump. But basketball is on Alford's mind now.

"I talked to Nee when I first got here, and he seemed kind of interested," he said. "But then I let football take priority and kind of forgot about it. But, my first year, I was still speculating going out after football was over."

"But that was my first year of

playing on turf and my legs were gone. I knew my legs wouldn't have been able to hold up for the whole basketball season. So I slowly forgot about playing basketball."

Alford said the only reason he didn't go out when the season began was his grades.

"Last spring, I was all caught up in the NFL hype and didn't have a good semester," Alford said. "But this fall, I'm getting my grades back to where they should be. I'll talk to Danny Nee about it. Hopefully, if I can play second semester, I could be back to old form by the time the Big Eight season came around."

Alford caught 14 balls for 271 yards and four touchdowns last season. He was signed as an unrestricted free agent by the New England Patriots, but quit the team to return to school.

tonight," Beck said. "We told her in the meeting that if only one person was guarding her, she should take the ball to the basket. She did that tonight."

The key for the Huskers, Beck said, was in the first half when Nebraska turned an eight-point Golden Flash lead into a one-point Husker advantage at halftime. And then the Huskers made all 15 free-throw attempts in the second half.


After Kent State took a 34-26 lead with 4:25 left in the first half, Nebraska outscored the Golden Flashes 13-4 to lead 39-38 at halftime. Sheila McPherson hit two 3-point shots,

while Kate Galligan had one. Aarden and McClain each scored a basket.

In the second half Nebraska led by three with two minutes remaining, but was a perfect 10 for 10 from the free-throw line the remainder of the game. The Huskers finished the game shooting 84 percent from the line on 16 of 19 attempts.

"We just took control the last three minutes," Beck said. "We did what we need to do, and we were able to keep their crowd out of the game."


Nebraska returns home for two games this weekend, playing host to Michigan on Friday and Nicholls State on Sunday.



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