

## Top volleyball squads face off in Lincoln

### NU to collide with Penn State

By Trevor Parks  
Senior Reporter

When Nebraska and Penn State meet tonight, Coach Terry Pettit knows the match won't be anything like the first time the two teams met in the season opener.

In fact, Pettit called that a preseason match. Both teams had only nine days of practice before the Cornhuskers defeated the Nittany Lions 15-4, 15-3, 15-6 in the semifinals of the State Farm/NACWAA Volleyball Classic Aug. 25 at the NU Coliseum.

But after scoring only 13 points in that opening match, Penn State has improved and comes into tonight's 5:30 match at the NU Coliseum with a third-place finish in the Big 10 and a 27-7 record overall.

The Nittany Lions are coming off a sweep of Georgia Tech in the NCAA second round.

The Aug. 25 match against Nebraska marked the first time Penn State's freshman setter Samantha Spink took the court. Now, she has the experience of playing in the Big 10, a conference that has four of the final 16 teams remaining in the tournament.

But the Huskers also have improved. Nebraska comes into the match with a 28-1 record and is the top seed in the Central Regional. Nebraska has won 27 matches in a row since losing to Stanford the day after the Penn State match.

The Huskers are coming off a win over George Mason in the second round of the NCAA Tournament in which they defeated the Patriots 15-2, 15-5, 16-14. In the third game Nebraska struggled, but Pettit said that was going to happen in the NCAA Tournament.

"It's unrealistic to think that any team in the NCAA Tournament is going to have some moments in every game when you are not tested," Pettit said. "I was happy to see in the third game we cleaned it up and did what we needed to do."

One team that has tested the Huskers a lot in the NCAA Tournament is Penn State.

Nebraska and the Nittany Lions have met five times in the NCAA Tournament, with the Huskers winning four of those matches. The only match the Nittany Lions have won was last season in four games at the NCAA Midwest Regional final in Lincoln.

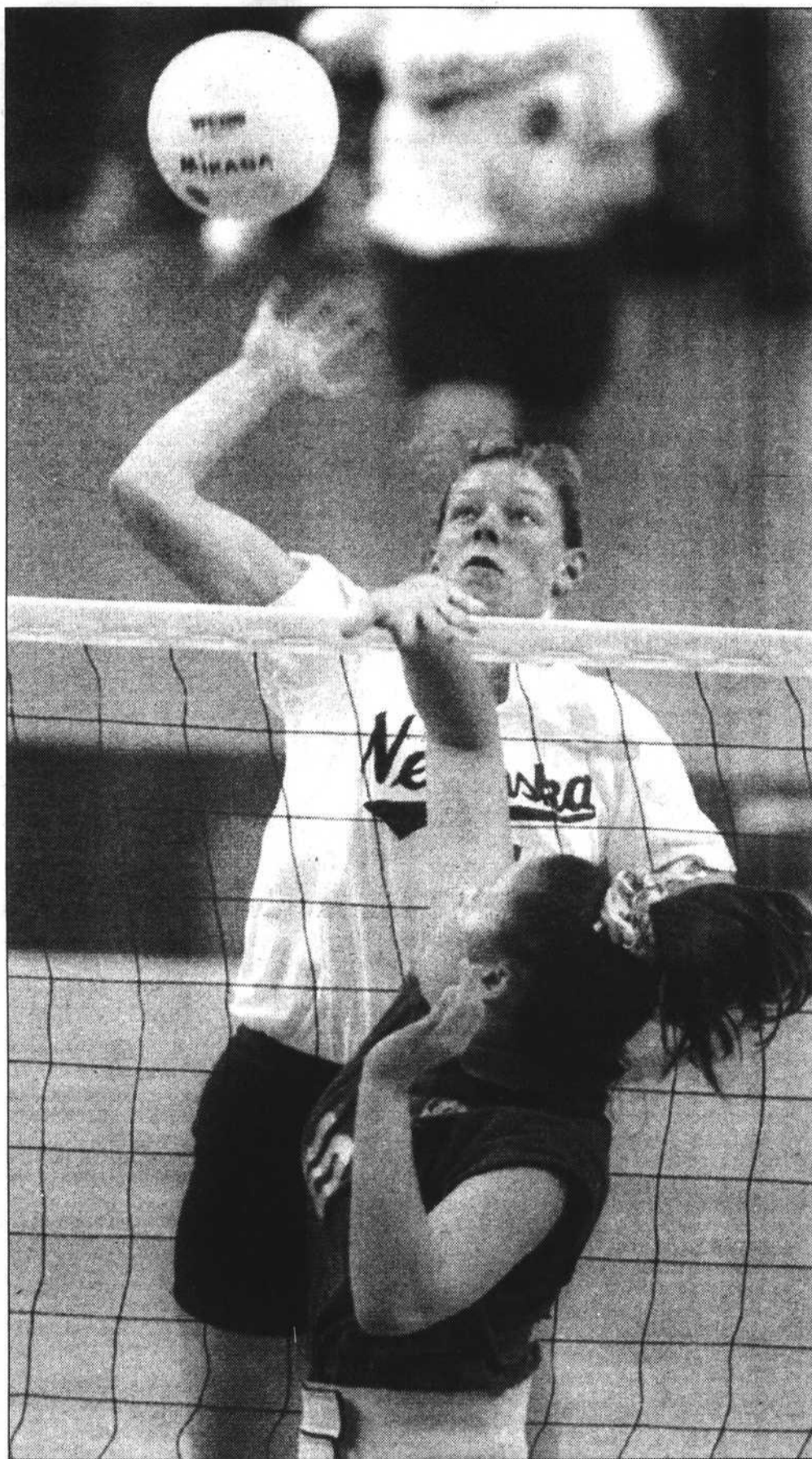
Pettit said both teams had turned it around since that first meeting, and another match like last season's could occur.

"Penn State has never not had a good team at the end of the year, and this year is no different."

One reason is that Nittany Lions coach Russ Rose always has had his team ready to play Nebraska, although he has always downplayed the match. Thursday, Rose was fogged in at the Kansas City airport and couldn't attend the press conference.

Penn State in an underdog role just as it was

See NCAA on 11



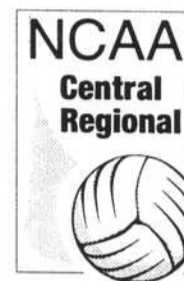
Scott Bruhn/DN

Nebraska middle blocker Allison Weston wants to close her career with a national title. To achieve that, the Huskers must get by Penn State tonight.

### Tough teams fill Central Region

By Todd Walkenhorst  
Staff Reporter

Sixteen teams remain in the NCAA Volleyball Tournament. Four of them will fight it out in Lincoln for a berth in the Final Four next weekend.



Top-ranked Nebraska will seek revenge against Penn State at 5:30 tonight at the NU Coliseum. Ohio State and UCLA will square off after the Cornhusker-Nittany Lion match. The two victors will compete on Saturday night for a trip to Amherst, Mass., and a chance at the national championship.

Even though the Huskers defeated Penn State in three games back in August at the State Farm/NACWAA Classic, Nittany Lion assistant coach Erin Tomblin believes her players can use that to their advantage.

"We're familiar with Nebraska, having played them in August," Tomblin said. "Last time we scored 13 total points, so we'd like to score more than that."

Fellow Big 10 conference member Ohio State will put its 22-7 record on the line against UCLA. The Bruins raised their record to 22-8 after defeating Ball State in three games on Wednesday.

Bruins coach Andy Banachowski is pleased to be included in the final 16 teams of the tournament. Last year, UCLA advanced to the championship game of the whole tournament, where they were defeated by Stanford 3-1.

"We're excited to still be alive," Banachowski said, "and with the prospects of going on."

The Central Region is considered by many as the toughest region this season. All four teams are ranked in the top 10. The Huskers are No. 1, UCLA's No. 7, Ohio State's ranked eighth and Penn State holds the ninth spot.

"It's a very outstanding regional," Banachowski said. "It's well-represented by the Big 10 schools. I think we fit right in there."

"You're looking at schools that have been ranked seventh, eighth and ninth all year long, and of course you have Nebraska who's been ranked No. 1 for most of the year, so certainly there are some good teams."

All of the teams will get a shot to see the top-ranked Huskers from either on the floor or on the bench. Ohio State coach Jim Stone is excited to finally get a chance to see the No. 1 team in the nation in person.

"We're looking forward to seeing Nebraska play," Stone said. "I haven't had a chance to see them play all year."

## Wuerffel focuses on Fiesta Bowl game

By Mike Kluck  
Staff Reporter

Maybe sometime later, Florida's Danny Wuerffel will get a chance to sit back and reflect on the past two weeks.



Wuerffel

But not right now. For the present, the junior quarterback is on a whirlwind tour that started Nov. 25, when the Gators defeated in-state rival Florida State, and will end Jan. 2, when Florida and Nebraska battle for the national championship.

Since Nov. 25, Wuerffel's tour

has stopped in Atlanta, where he led the Gators to their third-straight Southeastern Conference championship with a 34-3 win over Arkansas. Wuerffel was named the game's most valuable player as he completed 20 of 28 passes for 276 yards and two touchdowns.

On Saturday, Wuerffel's tour stops in New York City at the Downtown Athletic Club, where he, along with Nebraska quarterback Tommie Frazier, will await the announcement of this year's Heisman Trophy winner. Other candidates for the award include running backs Eddie George of Ohio State, Troy Davis of Iowa State and Darnell Autry of Northwestern.

"All of this is exciting, and I'm just glad to be part of that," Wuerffel said. "I'm glad to be going up there, but I really don't think much about it. I've got the rest of my life to re-

flect on it."

Heisman voters, however, have been reflecting on Wuerffel's season and career. This season Wuerffel set both the Florida and SEC records for touchdowns thrown in a career with 75.

He also rewrote the NCAA Division I history book by throwing a touchdown pass after every 10.8 attempts and after every 6.68 completions.

"I really owe so much to my teammates," Wuerffel said. "My teammates have been encouraging me throughout the season, and if it wasn't for our offensive line or backs or receivers, I wouldn't have had the success I've had. God blessed me."

Senior wide receiver Chris Doering said Wuerffel deserved all

See WUERFFEL on 11

## Florida's Wuerffel edges Frazier for O'Brien Award

By The Associated Press

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — Florida's Danny Wuerffel received the Davey O'Brien Award on Thursday as college football's top quarterback, defeating Tommie Frazier of Nebraska and Tennessee's Peyton Manning.

The award was one of nine presented during a live ESPN broadcast of the Home Depot College Football Awards Show at Walt Disney World.

Wuerffel, who led the Gators to a 12-0 season record and a Fiesta Bowl meeting against Nebraska for the national championship, praised God, his offensive line and his coach, Steve Spurrier.

Wuerffel and Frazier are candidates for the Heisman Trophy being awarded Saturday. The Nebraska quarterback edged out Wuerffel on the All-

America football team announced Wednesday by The Associated Press.

Wuerffel, whose favorite team as a schoolboy was Nebraska, passed for 3,266 yards and 33 touchdowns this year. He had the best passing-efficiency rating in football history.

Jonathan Ogden of UCLA, a 6-foot-8, 310-pound senior and top NFL prospect, received the Outland Trophy as the nation's best interior lineman.

Ogden beat out Jason Odom of Florida and Orlando Pace of Ohio State.

Receiving the Jim Thorpe Award as the best defensive back was Greg Myers of Colorado State, who was also a finalist last year. His competitors for the award this year were Washington's Lawyer Milloy and Chris Canty of Kansas State.