MARNI SPECK/DN

JOHN WALKER is entering his third year as Nebraska's soccer coach. Uppinghouse said. "It makes it more This fall, he hopes to elevate his program to a new level by qualifying comforting knowing the people off the for the NCAA Tournament.

NU eyes NCAA Tournament

By VINCE D'ADAMO Staff Reporter

In its third year of existence, the Nebraska soccer team is poised to challenge for a bid to its first-ever NCAA Tournament.

Uppinghouse

The nucleus of last year's squad is solidly in place. Six of the top seven point scorers return, and John Coach Walker's team enters the season ranked 18th in the nation by

College Sports Magazine.

'We've come a long way in just a short time, but we understand preseason rankings don't mean a lot," Walker said. "The returning players have come back in great shape. This will be the fastest team since I've been

Midfielder Kari Uppinghouse leads the way. Strikers Becky Hogan and Kristen Gay, midfielders Tanya Wright and Sandy Smith, along with defenders Heather Brown and co-captain Kim Ratliff figure to lend support.

"I'm excited about this year," bench can do just as good a job.'

Uppinghouse is not hiding the team's objectives.

One of our goals is to win the Big 12 championship," she said.

Walker said it's a relief to know what the team has in place instead of wondering what to expect.

"Training camp is so much different," he said. "My first year, I had 40 players and didn't know any of them. We don't have to start from scratch.'

Midfielders Stephanie Vacek and Tanya Franck, who is also an NU cocaptain, missed last season with knee injuries. Both are back and at full strength. Walker said their return should give the team a lift.

While experience is a strength, vouth is a bonus, too. Lindsay Eddleman, the 1996 Colorado high school player of the year, and Cana-

dian national team member Isabelle Morneau lead Walker's strongest group of recruits.

Jenny Benson, the California Interscholastic Federation defensive player of the year last year; 1996 All-California midfielder Jill Nelsen; five-time British Columbia provincial all-star Sharolta Nonen; and all-state goal keeper Jackie Erdkamp from Papillion-LaVista round out NU's imposing group of newcomers.

The Huskers open their season Aug. 30 against Oklahoma at the Abbott Sports Complex in northeast Lincoln. They will then play road games at Iowa State on Sept. 1, at North Carolina State on Sept. 6, and at Duke on Sept.

Nebraska 1996 **Soccer Schedule**

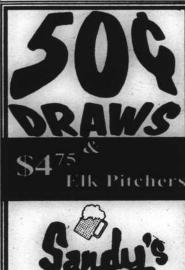
Below is the 1996 Nebraska soccer schedule, listing the date and time of the games and the opponents.

Date	Opponent	Time
Aug. 30	Oklahoma	7 p.m.
Sept. 1	at Iowa St.	2 p.m.
Sept. 6	at N.C. St.	3:30 p.m.
Sept. 8	at Duke	2 p.m.
Sept. 13	Oral Roberts	7 p.m.
Sept. 15	Loyola Marymount	1 p.m.
Sept. 20	Colorado College	7 p.m.
Sept. 22	Vanderbilt	1 p.m.
Sept 27	Texas	7 p.m.
Sept. 29	Texas A&M	1 p.m.
Oct. 4	Tulsa	7 p.m.
Oct. 6	Alabama	1 p.m.
Oct. 11	Oklahoma St.	7 p.m.
Oct. 13	Colorado	1 p.m.
Oct. 18	at Missouri	3 p.m.
Oct. 20	at Kansas	1 p.m.
Oct.25	at Baylor	3 p.m.
Oct. 27	at Texas Tech	1 p.m.
Nov. 2-3	SMU Puma Classic	
Nov. 2	TCU	1 p.m.
Nov. 3	SMU	3 p.m.
Nov. 8-11	Big 12 Tournament	



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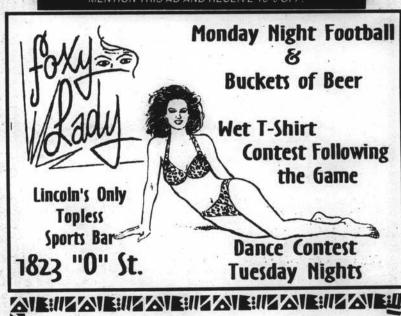
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