

Sports Opinion



MITCH SHERMAN

McFadden misses thrill of final year

NORMAL, Ill. — Five days a week this summer, Jen McFadden awoke at 6 a.m.

By 6:30, she was on the volleyball court — jumping, spiking, diving and preparing for her senior season.

In mid-July, McFadden was in the best shape of her three-year NU career, which had been marred by knee, back and ankle injuries.

Then, near the end of July — McFadden doesn't remember the exact morning — it happened.

She felt a twinge of pain in her lower back.

"I was hoping it wasn't going to be this," said McFadden, who recovered from back surgery in March 1994. "But I just had to know for myself. I couldn't handle playing like that again."

McFadden returned to her home in Dubuque, Iowa, with a doctor's order to undergo an MRI on Aug. 2. Five days later, she returned to Lincoln with the news. Bad news. Two herniated disks.

One day before fall camp opened, McFadden told Husker Coach Terry Pettit that his team leader — the player whose on-court electric personality sparked a sweep through last fall's NCAA Tournament — would not return.

Surgery is not an option. Her volleyball days are over.

She said her back is like a jelly doughnut. When she jumps or sits in one place for too long, the ligaments press against the nerves in her lower back.

In addition, she said, when she moves too much, the ligament bulges and stretches, causing her near-constant pain.

This weekend, she traveled to her former teammates' first tournament of the year in Normal, Ill. Friday, before the season's first match, she visited them in the locker room.

"I couldn't help but think I should be out there," she said. "That's what I should be doing."

Watching was hard. She stayed in her seat Friday for the first game before roaming the concourse of Redbird Arena, watching the Huskers come from behind to win.

On Saturday, Nebraska lost. But McFadden was at peace. The young team will survive, and they will do well; they may even win the Big 12, she said, without her leadership.

"I felt like I kind of left a void, and I felt like something was going to be missing. But they're fine," she said with a regretful giggle. "And that's comforting."

McFadden is gone, not forgotten. And, by her teammates, she is missed.

Sherman is a senior news-editorial major and the Daily Nebraskan sports editor.

No. 1 Hawaii hammers Nebraska

FIFTH-RANKED NU loses for the first time in 365 days and 33 matches.

By TREVOR PARKS
Senior Reporter

NORMAL, Ill. — The championship match of the State Farm/NACWAA Volleyball Classic has been a learning experience for Nebraska the past two seasons.

A year ago, the Cornhuskers dropped a four-game match to No. 1 Stanford in the first annual Classic at the NU Coliseum. It was the only match NU lost all season.

That match supplied motivation for a 32-1 season and the school's first national championship.

Saturday night, in front of a crowd of 3,657 fans at Redbird Arena on the campus of Illinois State, Nebraska lost to top-ranked Hawaii 15-12, 16-14, 15-9.

The loss—NU's first in 365 days—snapped a school-record 32-match

Hawaii	15	16	15
Nebraska	12	14	9

winning streak. It was Nebraska's third defeat in its last 67 matches and the first three-game defeat since Notre Dame beat Nebraska in the second round of the NCAA Tournament on Dec. 5, 1995.

Despite season-ending injuries to Jen McFadden and Denise Koziol, the Huskers learned Saturday that this team, with nine freshmen and sophomores on its 12-player roster, has the

potential to live up to its preseason ranking.

With the way his team played, Coach Terry Pettit said he can see a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

"The things that Hawaii did better than us was that they were organized better," Pettit said, "and you have to anticipate that because they are a more experienced team."

"But player for player, we were competing here, and another six weeks down the road, I think we have the

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MATTHEW WAITE/DN

SOPHOMORE OUTSIDE HITTER Jaime Krondak digs an Illinois State smash Friday night. Krondak, an all-tournament selection, had 21 kills in the NU four-game win.

Osborne: NU still needs more work

By MIKE KLUCK
Senior Reporter

A good fall camp doesn't necessarily mean the two-timemational champions are ready to defend their title.

Nebraska finished its two-a-day practices Saturday with a scrimmage at Memorial Stadium, but Coach Tom Osborne said the Huskers aren't ready to begin competition.

"Overall, I've been pleased with what they've done, but we're certainly not ready to play a game," Osborne said. "We're going to have to be pretty soon."

Despite his concern about the preparation for the Sept. 7 season opener against Michigan State, Osborne remains optimistic.

"I feel generally good about the team and the effort's been good," Osborne said. "At the end of all these two-a-days, you're not going to be jumping up and down enthusiastically. But I think they want to be good, and they want to play well."

Today, the Huskers welcome their nonscholarship athletes and begin practicing once a day.

Before Sept. 7, the Huskers have plenty to work on in trying to fill back-up positions, Osborne said.

At quarterback, it's not the backup Osborne is trying to find, but someone to play third team. Junior Scott Frost has emerged as the Huskers top



RYAN SODERLIN/DN

QUARTERBACK Monte Christo tries to elude defenders Chad Kelsay (No. 57) and Mike Rucker during Saturday's scrimmage.

signal caller, and senior Matt Turman will relieve Frost.

In Saturday's scrimmage, Frost completed both of his passing attempts for 36 yards, while Turman hit 4 of 10 passes for 90 yards and two touchdowns. The first touchdown was a 59-yard strike to split end Jeff Lake. The other touchdown was a four-yard pass to tight end Sheldon Jackson.

Frost rushed for 29 yards on seven carries, and Turman gained five yards on nine rushing attempts.

"Right now, we have two quarterbacks who appear to be fairly ready to play," Osborne said. "Scott Frost is very good. Matt Turman will come in there and do a very good job, and we're still looking for a third."

Although Turman is disappointed that he won't start, Osborne thinks the former walk-on can get the job done.

In the scrimmage, the first offense

moved the ball against the defense. Turman said the offense success should give it confidence.

"A lot of things looked pretty sporadic, but the No. 1 offense actually looked pretty good," Turman said. "If we can move the ball on them, I think we can move it on anybody."

Battling for the third spot are redshirt freshmen Jeff Perino and Frankie London, sophomore Monte Christo and true freshman Clint Finley.

Osborne said several freshmen could play a key role on this year's team, if not as starters then as second- and third-team players.

"Over the fall camp, we have been pleased with a few young guys," Osborne said. "Ralph Brown at (right) corner(back) certainly has done some good things. And Mike Brown has played well, but he's had

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Bufs strive to reach NU level of success

By TREVOR PARKS
Senior Reporter

Losing to Nebraska has given Colorado a pain around the fingers.

"I'm sick of losing to them," CU linebacker Matt Russell said. "The seniors, we have no rings yet. And they've got about 15 of them. They are wearing all of our rings. Hopefully, we'll come out on top this year."

The Cornhusker-Buffalo series has been lopsided since Colorado beat NU in 1989 and 1990. Since a 19-19 tie in 1991, Nebraska has blasted the Bufs by a combined score of 141-52 in the

Please see CU on 14

This is the first of an 11-day series on football in the Big 12 Conference.

Colorado