

Holtz looks forward to Texas battle

SOUTH BEND, Ind. (AP)—Notre Dame Football Coach Lou Holtz can't think of a more intimidating place to play than Miami. But Saturday's trip to Texas will come pretty close.

"It's just a hard environment because there's an air of excitement and Texas plays very well at home," Holtz said.

Saturday's game will be the first time since 1952 that No. 8 Notre Dame has played at No. 6 Texas, and the enthusiasm has been building for months.

"When people look forward to a game, they don't make mistakes," Holtz said. "Texas will be very well-focused and enthusiastic."

"We're not a great defensive football team. We're a good defensive football team, but a good defensive football will not slow down Texas."

But Holtz isn't ready to surrender. Of the 11 starters on the Irish defense, five grew up in Texas and know exactly what's in store for them.

"Our players will not be intimidated," he said. "I think the team will react favorably. You come to Notre Dame to play these types of games."

Holtz's record in Texas, isn't stellar. When he was the Arkansas coach, Holtz took three top 10 teams to Austin and never won.

Pepin eager to face Big 12 competition

VINCE D'ADAMO
Staff Reporter

For many years, the Nebraska track and field teams dominated the Big Eight Conference. Now, with the dawning of the Big 12, the Cornhuskers are looking to continue their winning ways.

The Cornhuskers won the last three men's indoor titles and the last two outdoor championships. On the women's side, the Huskers have won 17 consecutive indoor championships and placed second in the outdoor meet last season after winning 16 straight titles.

"The women's streak was a tough one to lose," NU Coach Gary Pepin said. "But all is said and done. It's like that chapter is closed and the book is read. We're starting from scratch again."

The main returnees for the women include Janet Blomstedt, Angee Henry, Tashika Lewis and Tressa Thompson. For the men, the top returning athletes are Tom Fish, Willie Hibler, Alex Lamme, Scott Warren, Balazs Tolgyesi and Shane Lavy.

Nebraska's annual domination breeds high expectations. Pepin said

his athletes are aware that their success is a result of intense workouts.

"Some people have been competing all summer, as late as the Olympics," he said. "Some even beyond that. Those who haven't competed have been training individually."

Among other athletes, throwers Greg Armitage and Paulette Mitchell will be missed. Pepin said the departed seniors passed along a winning legacy. Nebraska's men placed second and the women fourth at the March NCAA Indoor Championships in Indianapolis.

"We had a very strong women's team and maybe our strongest men's team," Pepin said. "They were fine athletes with good leadership qualities. I hope the returning athletes have some idea of hard work and dedication."

With the conference expanding from eight teams to 12, Pepin said, this season presents bigger challenges. He said Texas is the strongest of the four former Southwest Conference schools.

"The conference meets will be like a miniature national championship," Pepin said.

"There won't be hardly any easy places to score. There used to be areas you could exploit."

Two Iowa stars commit to NU

BY TREVOR PARKS
Senior Reporter

The Nebraska volleyball team has picked up verbal commitments from a pair of Iowa's best high school players.

Nancy Meendering, of Hull Western Christian, and Jill McWilliams, of Grandview Park Baptist in Des Moines, said they will sign letters of intent in February to play for the defending champion Cornhuskers.

NU received its first commitment of the 1997 season from Ogallala's Angie Oxley earlier this month.

Western Christian Coach Tom Van Den Bosch said Meendering chose Nebraska over Michigan State and Minnesota because of her close relationship with the school.

"I think she had coming to Nebraska as her main option for quite awhile," Van Den Bosch said. "She wanted to check out some other schools, but nothing else was better for her than Nebraska."

Meendering, a 6-foot left hander who plays both middle blocker and right outside hitter, visited Lincoln Sept. 6 to attend the Huskers' match against Michigan State. She has also been to the last two summer Nebraska volleyball camps.

Visiting camps is not the only connection Meendering has to NU. As a high school freshman, she played with Nebraska All-American Lisa Reitsma at Western Christian.

Van Den Bosch said the transition for Meendering will be easier than Reitsma's.

"Lisa blossomed so much after she left high school," Van Den Bosch said. "Here, she used her pure athleticism and height to beat teams. But when she got to Nebraska, she needed some time to get better. Nancy, physically is much

further developed than Lisa."

"Nancy's strong, active and very vocal on the court. She plays very aggressive."

Meendering was named the Class 2A (second-largest class) player of the year last season after leading her team to the state championship. She averaged 5.5 kills per game and had a hitting percentage of .349.

This year, she is hitting .300 averaging 4.5 kills per game for 5-3 Western Christian.

"She's on a team now with not as many role players as we had last year," he said. "The weight of the team is on her shoulders, and it's been hard for her to focus making all these recruiting trips."

McWilliams, a 6-foot setter and outside hitter, averaged 5.8 kills per game as a junior. She is the four-year setter for her club team.

Dick McWilliams, Jill's father and the coach at Grandview Park Baptist, said his daughter was recruited primarily as a setter by Nebraska.

The elder McWilliams said his daughter chose Nebraska because it's close to Des Moines. She has been to Nebraska's volleyball camp for the last four years.

"She knows the coaching staff and players well," Coach McWilliams said. "She is comfortable over there, and they have a very good, quality program."

McWilliams chose Nebraska over Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas State and Wisconsin. She watched Nebraska beat Michigan State Sept. 7 — one night after Meendering's visit — and the next morning, McWilliams told NU coaches she wanted to attend Nebraska.

"When she was a little girl, she went to the Iowa State-Nebraska matches and she really enjoyed them," McWilliams said. "She always thought it would be neat to be a Cornhusker."

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