

## Sports Opinion



**Vince D'Adamo**

### NU soccer team overcomes odds to lead Big 12

Saturday, the Nebraska football team is looking to rebound from its first regular-season loss since the George Bush administration. But the Cornhusker state is not void of an unbeaten Division-I team.

The Cornhusker futbol team — OK, I'll be more conventional and call them the soccer team — will try to extend its unbeaten streak to nine games Friday and Sunday against Texas and Texas A&M.

The 10th-ranked Husker soccer team has been in existence for only three years. So far, it has not acted its age. Five-year plan? Forget it.

"We're a little ahead of schedule," Coach John Walker said.

And it looks like the Huskers have gained their deserved respect in the USA Today Coaches' poll. Last week, the team played less than its best in victories over Colorado College and Vanderbilt but climbed from 13th to 10th.

Two weeks ago, Nebraska outscored Oral Roberts and Loyola Marymount 14-1 — and the Huskers fell from 12th to 13th in the polls. It's an outrage!

First of all, Walker can play as many as 15 players without a dropoff in performance. Secondly, each player in Walker's rotation accepts her role whether starting or coming off the bench. To a Husker, starting is not the issue.

Walker and his staff have done a colossal job of recruiting, especially last year. Freshmen Lindsay Eddleman, Isabelle Morneau and Jenny Benson have wasted no time making an impact. They have helped take the pressure off the veterans like Kristen Gay, Kim Ratliff and Kari Uppinghouse, the nation's seventh-leading scorer who this week was named to the Soccer America team of the week.

On Tuesday, Walker fought off back spasms to appear as a guest at Tom Osborne's weekly press conference. Sunday's game, he said, will be a good barometer for the program.

It's the biggest game in the history of the program. If Nebraska wins, it takes over the top spot in the NSCAA Central Region ratings, which are used to determine seedings for the NCAA Tournament.

The Husker offense has been like an octopus. If one arm doesn't wrap you up, the other will.

However, it's easy to overlook the Husker defense. One reason Nebraska scores so often is because of its defensive pressure. Like most good teams, the Huskers take as much pride in defense as offense.

And after Sunday, they may be taking pride in their new seat atop the Big 12 Conference.

D'Adamo is a senior broadcasting major and Daily Nebraskan staff reporter.

# NU eyes mental rebound

**COLORADO STATE brings a high-octane offense to Memorial Stadium.**

**By MIKE KLUCK**  
Senior Reporter

Nebraska has prepared this week to face two opponents Saturday at Memorial Stadium: Colorado State and the Cornhuskers' own football mentality.

Following last Saturday's 19-0 loss to Arizona State, the No. 8 Huskers (1-1) play CSU (2-2) at 11:38 a.m. The game will be televised by Fox Sports Net on Channels 10/11 and 3. Saturday will be a chance for NU to learn about the stability of its team follow-

ing a loss for the first time in 27 games.

"It's about mind frame and the kind of mental attitude you have come game time," I-back Damon Benning said. "That's an area we failed. Mentally, we weren't as prepared as we should be."

It wasn't the fault of the coaching staff, Benning said, but the Huskers were unprepared for Arizona State. The senior co-captain said each Husker must take it upon himself to be ready for Colorado State. CSU has lost this season 48-34 to Colorado and 35-28 to Oregon.

On Saturday, Nebraska will try to recapture the desire it possessed the past two seasons. "It's important we're ready or else we will be back here next week talking about the same thing," Benning said.

"When you're out there driving and



hit one of those speed bumps in the road, you don't stop. You keep on going or take a different path."

He said Saturday's game will be a test of the Huskers' resiliency and character, which has been a major factor in the team's success the past three seasons.

Center Aaron Taylor said the offensive line also did not perform up to standards against ASU. That should change against Colorado State, he said.

"We feel with the game coming up that we are all going to give more effort in order not to have that happen again," Taylor said. "We have to come out with a change of attitude."

Through two games, the Huskers are averaging only 157 yards per game rushing after averaging nearly 400 yards last season.

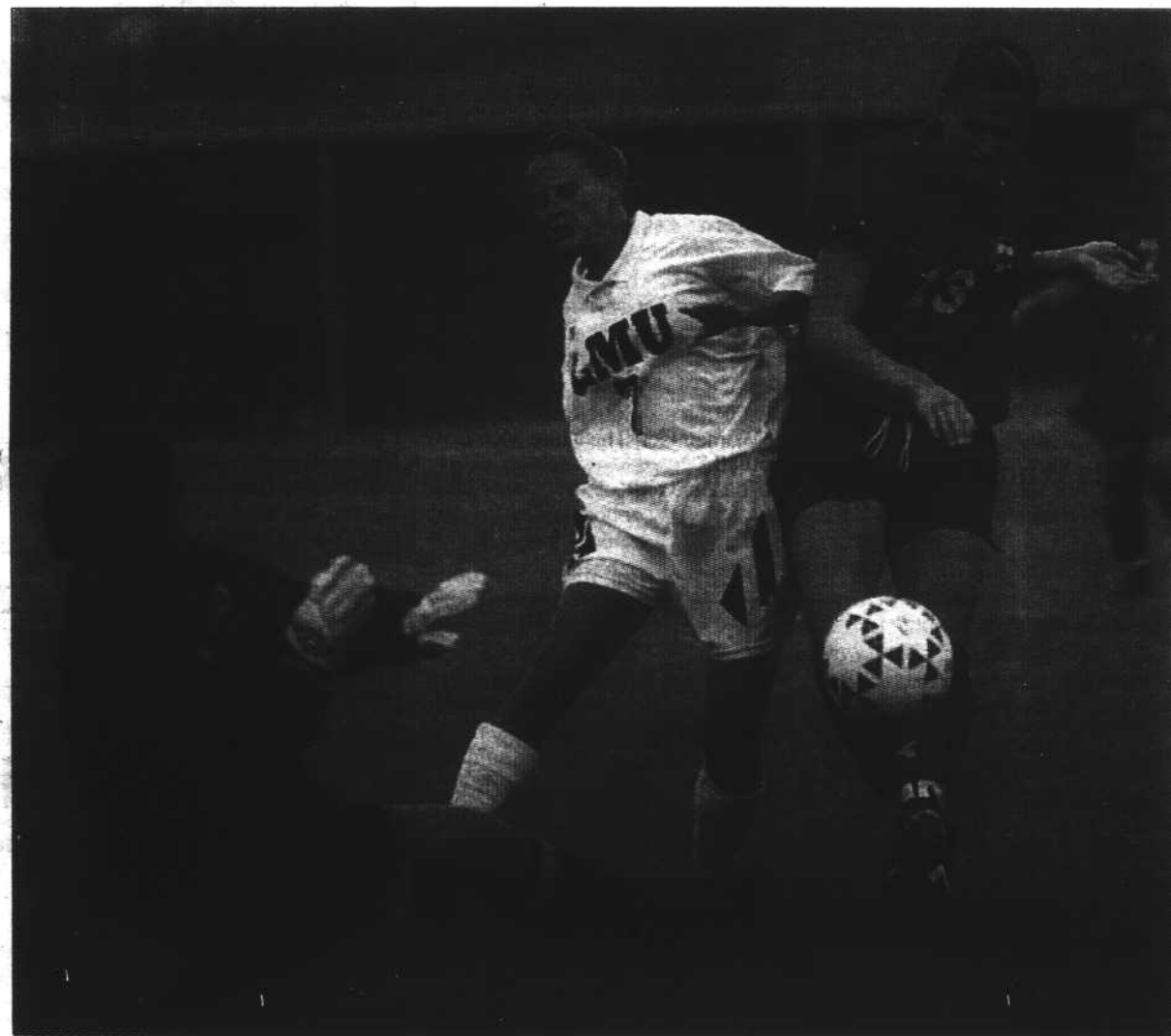
Against Colorado State, however, Nebraska should have an easier time running the ball. The Ram defense ranks 110th out of 111 Division I-teams.

It's the Husker defense, however, that may be the most challenged Saturday, NU Coach Tom Osborne said. Colorado State likes to run a spread attack with no backs and throw the ball a lot, Osborne said.

CSU has scored 158 points this season in four games and average eight yards per play.

"I believe they are a very good foot-

Please see CSU on 10



MATT MILLER/DN

LINDSAY EDDLEMAN (right) breaks away from Vanderbilt's Ginger Harrelson. Eddleman, a freshman, played the game last Sunday with a sprained ankle.

## Huskers face biggest test

**By VINCE D'ADAMO**  
Staff Reporter

The 10th-ranked Nebraska soccer team encounters its biggest barrier yet this weekend at the Abbott Sports Complex.

The Cornhuskers take on Texas at 7 tonight, and on Sunday at 1 p.m., the Huskers will take their shot at Texas A&M. The 8-0 Aggies bring to Lincoln a No. 6 ranking in the USA Today Coaches' poll.

Texas A&M and Nebraska head the class in the NSCAA Central Region. The Aggies are ranked first, followed by the No. 2 Huskers.

Junior defender Stephanie Vacek broke her tailbone Sunday in NU's 3-2 double-overtime win over Vanderbilt, but she will remain in the lineup this weekend, Coach John Walker said.

"We feel good about where we're at," Walker said. "We have a long way

to go, and we should have a better idea of where we're at this weekend."

For Texas A&M, junior forward Bryn Blalack leads the nation with 32 points, including 13 goals. Kristen Koop has provided support with 19 points and a team-best seven assists. The Aggies biggest victory came over eighth-ranked Florida, a 2-1 triumph in College Station, Texas.

Walker said the Aggies — who have outscored their opponents 39-6 this year — pose many problems for the Huskers.

"They're very fast and experienced," Walker said. "They're an offensive powerhouse. It could be a high scoring game. They're an attacking team, and if anything, they're probably underrated in the polls."

Nebraska striker Lindsay Eddleman said the Huskers must not look past Texas (3-2-2) in anticipation of Sunday's game against A&M.

"Granted, they're the 6th-ranked team," Eddleman said. "But we can't

## Soccer

About Sports Complex

Texas, today, 7 p.m.

overlook Texas. They have a strong defense."

Eddleman suffered a sprained ankle before scoring a pair of goals in Nebraska's 5-2 win over Colorado College Friday. She played Sunday against Vanderbilt.

Despite winning twice last weekend, the Huskers said they did not play up to their potential. Nebraska yielded four goals after only surrendering two in the season's first five games.

"We cannot let that happen," Eddleman said. "We came out lethargic."

### Volleyball

NU Coliseum

Kansas, today, 7:30 p.m.

Kansas St., Saturday, 7:30 p.m.

## 'Developing' Huskers face KU, K-State

**By SAM MCKEOWN**  
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska volleyball team is currently under construction.

That's a good phrase for what team Coach Terry Pettit describes as "still developing."

"We're developing as a team every day," Pettit said.

"We do a lot of things well, but we still have a lot to work on."

The No. 7 Cornhuskers (8-2) continue their homestand at the NU Coliseum Friday and Saturday with matches against Big 12 rivals Kansas (6-8) and Kansas State (12-1), two teams against which Nebraska owns a 108-0 all-time record.

Both matches begin at 7:30 p.m.

The Wildcats are off to their best start in school history and looked impressive in last week's First Bank Invite. KSU was a focus for Nebraska this week in practice.

"We watched them last weekend," outside hitter Jaime Krondak said, "and they looked very good. We focused a lot this week on what they would do and their sets."

Despite beginning conference competition, setter Fiona Nepo said, this weekend is like any other.

"We just have to be mentally focused and play our game," Nepo said.

Krondak welcomes the return of a fiery coliseum crowd after smaller attendance figures last week because of a time conflict with Nebraska's football game on Saturday.

"I hope the crowd is a factor again this week," she said. "Any time a team comes into this atmosphere with a full crowd, it's tough for them to win."

Nebraska has won 20 straight home matches and 65 of its last 67 in Lincoln.

Pettit said the NU offense is beginning to take shape alongside an already

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