

Sports Opinion



Trevor Parks

Pettit backs Texas' Haley for U.S. post

Texas Volleyball Coach Mick Haley and Nebraska Coach Terry Pettit have a combined 46 years of coaching experience.

Together, they have a 1,401-319 record with three national titles and 31 conference crowns.

So when U.S. National Team Coach Terry Liskevych announced he would leave his job this fall after 12 years, Haley and Pettit immediately became logical candidates for the job.

Last December, Haley and Pettit met at the pinnacle of college volleyball—the NCAA championship match in Amherst, Mass. Pettit won, and had Nebraska's coach wanted to become the next coach of Team USA, he probably would have won that battle, too.

But Pettit didn't want the job. Haley does.

The Texas coach of 17 years has been offered the job of leading the next U.S. Olympic Team into action four years from now in Sydney.

All that's left is for Haley to figure out a contract that is best for his family.

So when the USA Volleyball committee offered Haley the job after Pettit refused to apply, who did Haley call for advice? His friend, Terry.

"People think that Terry and I are great enemies," said Haley, whose Longhorns will play Nebraska at the NU Coliseum Saturday night. "Yes, we do fight on the court like a son-of-a-gun, but we have great respect and admiration for each other and each other's programs."

Pettit was part of the committee that picked Haley.

"He's been active in all levels of volleyball," Pettit said, "and he's been successful at all those levels. He has strong public relations skills, strong organizational skills, and he can see the big picture."

"He brings more than one thing to the package."

But so does Pettit. So why not take the nation's most prestigious coaching post?

"I think there are parts of the job that would be intriguing," Pettit said, "but they don't outweigh the parts of the job that I would not be enthusiastic about."

Pettit's love for his 2-year-old daughter, Emma, was the main reason he did not apply.

"I wouldn't enjoy being over in Europe for more than four or five weeks at a time," Pettit said. "I have some interests beyond volleyball."

"For one reason or another, that has not been one of my dreams. And I think it has been (Haley's) dream." Haley or Pettit? Regardless, the U.S. National Team was in good shape.

Parks is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan senior reporter.

Two stars brace for war

NU star Reitsma has a history of playing well in big matches.

By Trevor Parks
Senior Reporter

All-American Lisa Reitsma was benched.

Well, sort of.

In Sunday's three-game Nebraska sweep of Oklahoma, Cornhusker Volleyball Coach Terry Pettit removed his star player from the court at the end of the first game because Reitsma was playing poor defense.

She remained on the sidelines for the rest of the game.

The 6-foot-4 junior from Sanborn, Iowa, said the benching served as a wake-up call.

That awakening could be bad news for No. 10 Texas A&M and the eighth-ranked Texas. Both teams visit the sixth-ranked Cornhuskers at the NU Coliseum this weekend.

Reitsma, who was named Big 12 player of the week Tuesday, has a history of stepping up in big matches, dating back to her first extensive playing time last season.

"It just seems to happen that way," Reitsma said. "I'm not scared. I want the ball and I always seem to step it up."

NU Coach Terry Pettit said the reason Reitsma becomes superhuman at a crucial time is she recognizes when her team needs her to perform even better.

"I anticipate the same thing will happen this weekend," Pettit said. "Sooner or later, she's going to be there when we need her."

Reitsma's left hand has been like a Texas Chainsaw massacre for Longhorns.

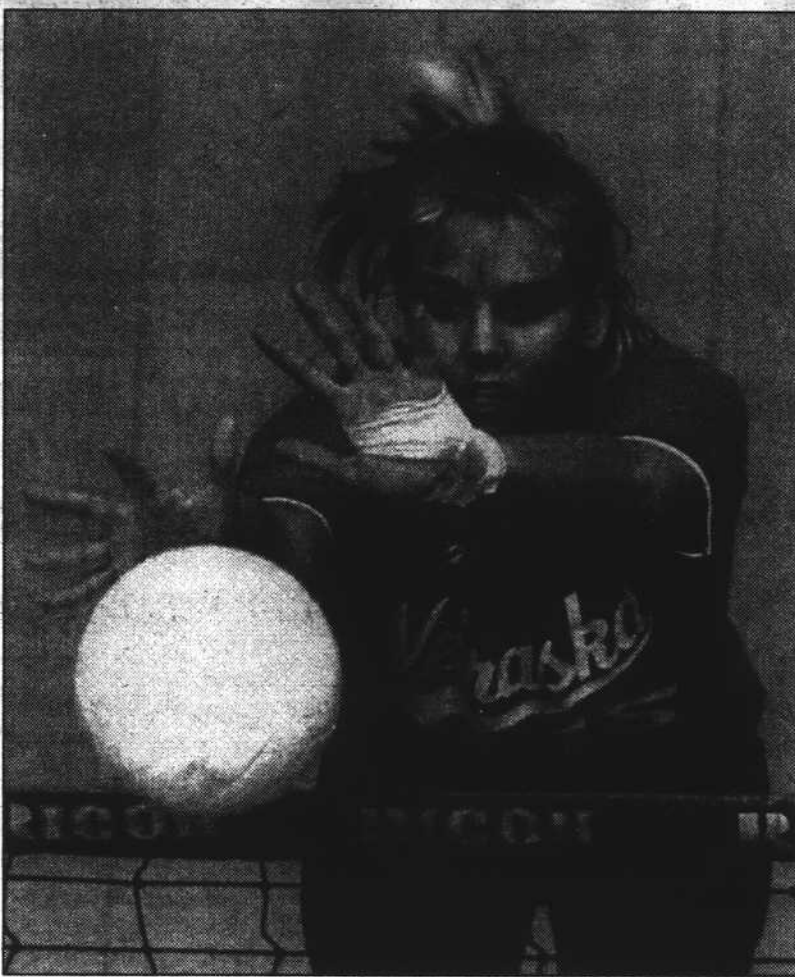
In two career matches against Texas, Reitsma has 35 kills in seven games, good for hitting percentages of .485 and .484.

In Amherst, Mass., during the NCAA championship match last December against the Longhorns, Reitsma had 16 kills and only one hitting error.

A year ago, Reitsma was one of many offensive options, which included three-time All-American Allison Weston, Jen McFadden and Billie Winsett.

This year, Reitsma is NU's top gun on a young team that starts a first-year setter and two middle blockers with little experience in a Husker uniform before August.

"I don't think you do too much special to stop her," Texas Coach Mick



SCOTT BRUHN/DN

LISA REITSMA, Nebraska's junior All-American, will battle Demetria Sance Saturday in a rematch of last season's national championship match.

Haley said. "You just have to deal with her. She's doing a lot of things to help their team."

"They have to deal with (Demetria) Sance and we have to deal with Reitsma."

In Reitsma's second career start, she had 24 kills against Stanford, bursting onto the college volleyball scene. Against teams ranked in the top 15 last year, she averaged 17.6 kills per match. Her big-match efforts were highlighted with a 37-kill effort in a five-game win over Florida last season.

Playing against conference rival Colorado earlier this month, Reitsma had 29 kills, breaking her school record for a three-game match.

"Things are starting to come around," Reitsma said, "not only for me but for the rest of the team."

The national championship rematch will draw a lot of interest Saturday, but to Reitsma, December seems like years ago.

"It's distant, but yet it's right there," Reitsma said. "It's something you will never forget."

Texas standout Sance says last year's match is forgotten.

By Trevor Parks
Senior Reporter

Demetria Sance — the Lisa Reitsma of the Texas volleyball team — has blocked a snowy December day in Amherst, Mass., out of her mind.

"That memory is over with," Sance said of Nebraska's 11-15, 15-2, 15-7, 16-14 win over Texas in the national championship match.

In that match, Sance, a sophomore from San Antonio, showed why she was selected as the national freshman of the year with a team-high 20 kills on 66 attacks.

So when eighth-ranked Texas visits the NU Coliseum Saturday night to play the sixth-ranked Cornhuskers, Sance said, the idea of revenge will not be at the forefront of her mind.

What will be more important, she said, is trying to get back in the chase for first-ever Big 12 championship. Texas, 11-3 overall and 5-1 in the conference, trails Texas A&M — which swept the Longhorns on Sept. 25 — and Nebraska by one match.

Texas plays at Colorado Friday. Two Longhorn wins, coupled with a loss by the Huskers and the Aggies, will leave three teams tied for first place.

"We've gradually gotten better as the season has gone on," said Sance, a 6-foot outside hitter. "We are pretty much a step ahead of where we were last year, and things are going very positive right now."

For the second straight year, Sance has had a tremendous season.

Last year as a freshman, she was an AVCA second-team All-America selection. She set four school records: Most kills in a match (30); most attempts in a match (72); most kills in a season (565); and most attempts in a season (1,472). She also had 435 digs last year.

In 14 matches this season, Sance has 223 kills, averaging 4.7 per game with a hitting percentage of .311. Her season-high 27 kills came in a five-game win over Oklahoma.

Please see **SANCE** on 13



Demetria Sance, a returning second-team All-American, has recorded 28.3 percent of Texas' kills this season. Lisa Reitsma, a first-team All-American last year, has 30 percent of Nebraska's kills this year.

Demetria Sance

Kills per game	4.7
Digs per game	3.5
Blocks per game	0.5

Lisa Reitsma

Kills per game	4.5
Digs per game	2.6
Blocks per game	1.0

Hanspard: I'm just an average back

By Mike Kluck
Senior Reporter

The scariest aspect of Texas Tech tailback Byron Hanspard may not be his 1,306 rushing yards this season.

Instead, Hanspard strikes fear into the hearts of opposing coaches because he says he hasn't even reached his potential yet.

The Nebraska defense is faced with the task of slowing Hanspard — something no team this season has done — when the

“

God has not allowed me to reach my potential.”

BYRON HANSPARD
Texas Tech tailback

Cornhuskers play the Red Raiders Saturday at 2:30 p.m. in Lubbock, Texas. 217.7 yards.

"God has not allowed me to reach my potential," Hanspard said. "I still have a lot of improvement to make. I'm still just an average running back. I need to improve on my speed, quickness and moves."

"I don't think I've looked faster this year. To me, I'm still kind of slow."

But this 6-foot, 193-pound junior from DeSoto, Texas, leads the nation in rushing, and through Tech's first six

games of the season, he is averaging

Hanspard also has the nation's highest yards-per-attempt average and is a Heisman Trophy and Doak Walker Award candidate.

But Hanspard, who is also an ordained minister, said he couldn't have achieved the success this season by himself.

"Everything I have received is a result of the Lord blessing me," Hanspard said. "The Lord has blessed

me with an offensive line to run behind."

However, Hanspard and the Red Raiders offensive line may need help from above this week, facing a Cornhusker defensive unit that is allowing 61.6 yards per game rushing, the nation's third best total.

NU has allowed 55 yards rushing on 58 attempts to its two Big 12 opponents, Baylor and Kansas State.

The last time Hanspard was held in check was against Texas A&M last season, a game in which he ran for just 61 yards on 20 attempts.

The reason the Aggies were able to stop him was their fast defense, Hanspard said, and they worked hard to stop the run.

"God has given me the ability to

Please see **HANSPARD** on 13