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Haley: Texas will improve

Texas coach is not discouraged by the three-game loss to NU.

By DAVID WILSON
Staff Reporter

The Texas volleyball team came to Lincoln Saturday seeking revenge from the Cornhuskers, who defeated the Longhorns in last season's national championship match.

And though they didn't return home with a win, UT coach Mick Haley said, the match was a step in the right direction for Texas.

"Basically, it was a positive match for us," Haley said after Nebraska's 17-15, 15-5, 15-10 win. "Nebraska won this match, but we didn't lose it. They earned it."

Eighth-ranked Texas, which defeated Colorado Friday in Boulder, fell to 12-4 and 6-2 in the Big 12.

Haley said this year's Texas team is a much different group than the 1995 Longhorns, who also lost a three-game match to Nebraska in the regular season.

"Our stats would indicate that we are not any better than we were at this time last year," Haley said. "And we were not good last year at this time. That's why I'm optimistic, because I think we'll get a lot better."

Nebraska downed UT 15-4, 15-13, 15-4 on Nov. 4 in Austin, Texas.

Texas recorded 11 straight victories after the loss, including four NCAA Tournament matches, before falling to NU in four games at the Final Four.

Big 12 Conference play will help Texas improve and possibly meet with the Huskers again in the postseason this year, Haley said. But Nebraska, which is 16-2 and leads

No Contest

Nebraska and Texas have each won nine matches in their all-time series. But the Huskers have dominated lately, winning seven of the past eight matches.

Date	Winner	Score
11/3/90	Nebraska	3-1
11/2/91	Nebraska	3-0
11/7/92	Nebraska	3-0
11/6/93	Texas	3-0
11/5/94	Nebraska	3-0
11/4/95	Nebraska	3-0
12/16/95	Nebraska	4-1
10/19/96	Nebraska	3-0

* National Championship Match

NU's Rucker hits new level

RUCKER from page 7

It wasn't just Rucker who knew he had to get stronger. Nebraska Coach Tom Osborne and Rush Ends Coach Tony Samuel both said Rucker's dedication during the off-season has helped him earn more playing time this year.

"He knew all along you had to work hard to play here, and that got translated into action," Osborne said. "Over

the winter and summer, he has really laid it on the line a lot better."

Rucker's improvement has helped to make the 1996 rush end position one of the strongest in Osborne's 24 years as head coach. Throughout the season, Osborne has called Wistrom and senior Jared Tomich the best pair of rush ends ever to play at Nebraska.

However, when Rucker and sophomore Chad Kelsay replace the two starters, Osborne said, the Huskers don't lose a lot.

"He has a lot of potential," Samuel said. "He has made some key plays for us this season, and has had some crucial sacks."

As long as his mom continues to help him set his goals, Rucker said he knows he can improve every game.

Even OU has a shot at title

SOUTH from page 7

Texas Tech and Texas. "If we want to win the conference," OSU Coach Bob Simmons said, "we'll have to win the rest of our games. We have to win at least seven if we want to go to a bowl game."

Meanwhile, Oklahoma, Texas A&M and Texas Tech have rebounded from rocky starts. Oklahoma (2-4 and 2-1) goes for its third-straight win Saturday, playing Kansas State in Manhattan, Kan.

Despite OU's recent success, Sooner Coach John Blake said the team must not get ahead of itself.

After winning its first three games, Baylor (3-3 and 0-3) has lost three straight. The Bears play host to Iowa State Saturday.

"Somebody is going to have to step up in the south to win it," Baylor Coach Chuck Reedy said. "It's wide open right now. It's going to take someone getting hot and winning out the rest of the season."

Oklahoma State (4-3 and 1-3) snapped a two-game skid with a thrilling 28-27 win over Iowa State Saturday.

The Cowboys, who play at Missouri this week, have already lost to

more Chad Kelsay replace the two starters, Osborne said, the Huskers don't lose a lot.

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Tennis players compete for NCAA spots

By JAY SAUNDERS
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska men's tennis team is hoping to find out what it's made of this week.

Thursday through Sunday, five players will compete for a spot at the NCAA Championships at the Region Five Rolex Championships in Wichita, Kan.

The tournament features 64 singles' players and 32 of the top doubles' teams in the region. Only the finalists of the singles' draw and the champions of the doubles' competition advance to the NCAA Championships later this fall.

"We would like to let people know that we have a stronger team than we did last year," Cornhusker Coach Kerry McDermott said.

To let the rest of the region know NU has improved, the Huskers will have to qualify a player for NCAA Championships, something they haven't done since 1991.

"It would be good to see someone take that next step," McDermott said. "It would be a huge confidence builder for the whole team."

The Huskers' best hopes for an NCAA bid could rest on the shoulders of junior Marcus Bergheim and sophomore Dinko Verzi.

Bergheim is the team's No. 1 seed and has taken the nation's eighth-ranked player to three sets twice in the last year. Verzi went three sets with Wichita State's No. 1 player, who is a returning All-American. Bergheim and Verzi team up to form the Huskers' No. 1 doubles team.

"It would be nice to see two guys in the quarterfinals and try to make some things happen," McDermott said. "We have had some good and some not so good practice days."

"We are trying to teach the kids it is what you do Monday through Friday that sets the tone for matches on Saturday and Sunday."

The Nebraska women are also in action this week. They are participating at the Rivera All-American Championships in Los Angeles, today through Sunday.

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