

# Penn State seeks trip to Final Four

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semifinals, Nebraska extracted revenge with a four-game win over Penn State.

Although PSU is making its third straight regional trip to Lincoln, Rose said he doesn't mind returning to Lincoln, where he was an assistant under Pettit in 1977.

"The players would have a lot more distractions if they went to Honolulu or down to Gainesville or even Palo Alto," Rose said. "Being here in Lincoln is probably the best of the four sites for teams to be focused on volleyball."

Rose said he watched on television as NU defeated Texas in four games last month. Rose was impressed.

"Nebraska reloads," he said. "It's not the type of program that loses two or three kids and goes down too far. You don't get good in one year, you don't get bad in one year. Any team with (Lisa) Reitsma on it has the potential to win it all."

While Nebraska has the All-American Reitsma, Penn State has second-team All-American Terri Zemaitis. Zemaitis a 6-2 junior from Downers

**“We were not playing our best volleyball down the stretch of the Big Ten.”**

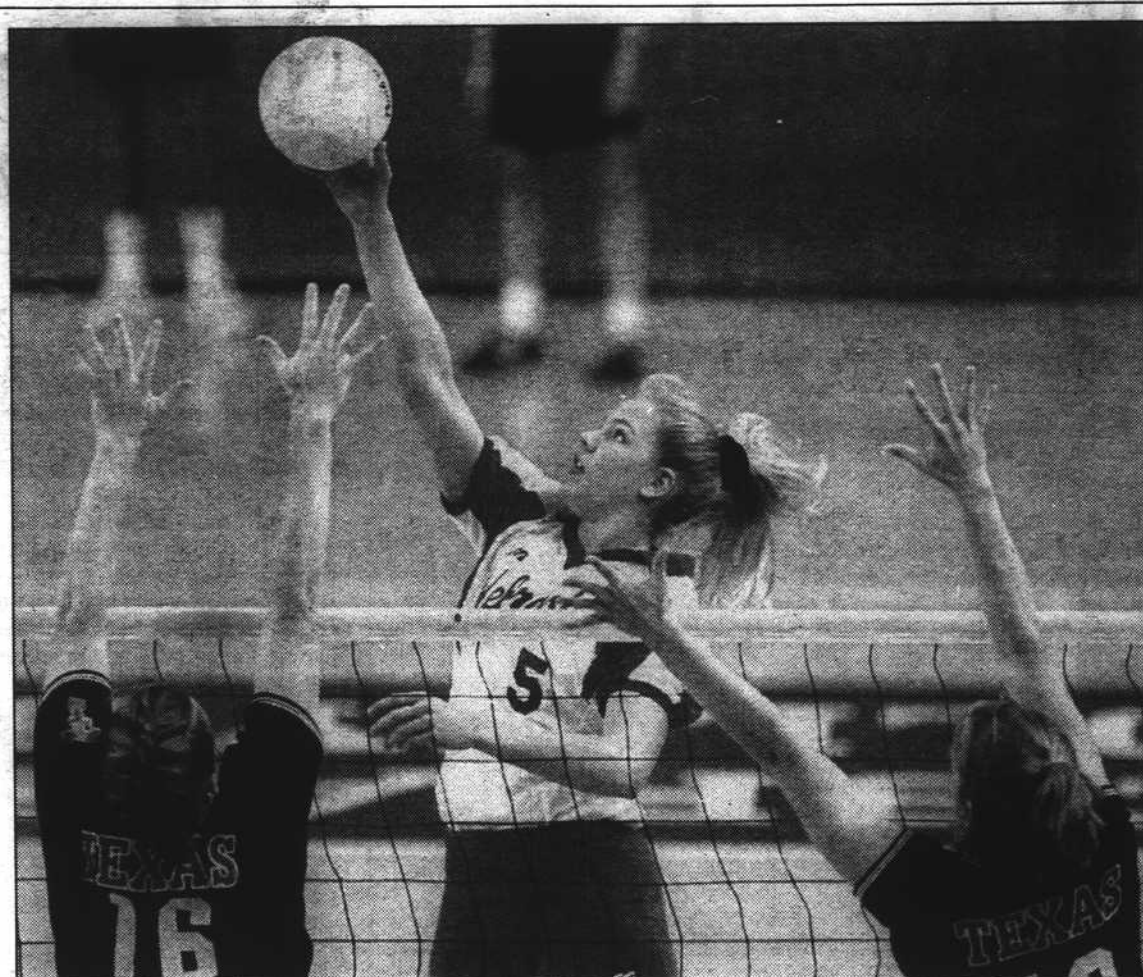
**RUSS ROSE**  
PSU volleyball coach

Grove, Ill., leads the team with 4.86 kills per game.

While Zemaitis' numbers have not jumped greatly this season — she has 75 fewer kills and 220 fewer attacks than last year — Rose said she has become a better player.

"Zemaitis is the player that gets most of the attention," Rose said, "but I agree with John and Terry that we have more than one player to go to."

"She's a key player. She's a Reitsma. You need players, who late in a match against a big block, have the mentality that they are going to get after it."



SCOTT BRUHN/DN

**MEGAN KORVER**, Nebraska's sophomore middle blocker, hits over a Texas Tech block attempt earlier this year. NU will play host to Louisville tonight.

# Nebraska braces for war

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"Louisville is probably the biggest team, physically, we have played all year," Pettit said. "People and coaches in volleyball know they are a very good team and capable of beating anybody in this regional."

First-year Cardinal Coach Leonid Yelin said he likes his team's underdog roll this weekend. Yelin replaced Don Hardin, who left to coach at Illinois.

"This is not a surprise," Yelin

said. "We set up this goal early in the season. It's a good dream that went through."

Pettit also is not surprised by the success of the Cardinals, who won the Conference USA title under the direction of Yelin. Yelin was named the AVCA national coach of the year last season after leading Barry University to the Division II national title.

Before coming to the United States in 1989, Yelin coached and played for the Uzbekistan National Team in the former Soviet Union.

At Louisville, Yelin inherited a program that returned four starters from last year's 29-6 team, which lost to Hawaii in the NCAA Tournament. Yelin also added 6-5 Sonia Gubaidulina and Sinichenko, both of whom played at Barry last season, to the Louisville lineup.

"This is not a turnaround program," Pettit said of the Cardinals. "This is a program that was very good — that was probably going to have it's best year ever. Then (Louisville) got a coach that also brought his two best players with him."

# Underdogs savor experience against Huskers, Penn State

**Louisville and Wisconsin face tall tasks tonight.**

BY SHANNON HEFFELFINGER  
Staff Reporter

**Underdogs.** That's the term being used to describe the Louisville and Wisconsin volleyball teams this weekend. And why not?

Both the Cardinals and Badgers are facing difficult challenges in their NCAA Tournament matches against national powerhouses Nebraska and Penn State tonight at the NU Coliseum. And both coaches realize that their teams have been overlooked in the high-profile East Regional.

Leonid Yelin of Louisville and Wisconsin's John Cook were given less than a week to prepare their teams to battle Penn State (30-2) and Nebraska (28-3), both of which have played in every tournament since 1982.

But neither underdog is backing down.

"We've never beaten Penn State, and Louisville's never beaten Nebraska," said Cook, who coached under Nebraska's Terry Pettit from 1988 through 1991. "But our team is certainly not shy about playing Penn State again."

The No. 17 Badgers (25-7) are faced with the daunting task of upsetting PSU tonight at 5. Penn State is one of only four teams to compete in all 16 NCAA Tournaments and has posted six victories over ranked teams this sea-

son. The Lady Lions defeated Wisconsin twice during their Big Ten Conference championship run this fall.

Both Cook and Pettit said they are impressed with third-ranked Penn State, which is 14-0 all-time against Wisconsin.

"They might be the best team in the country right now," Cook said. "They certainly proved it by being the Big Ten champion."

Wisconsin's hopes for an upset will rest on the shoulders of a pair of All-Big Ten selections. Senior setter Laura Abbinante commands the Badger offense, averaging 13.5 assists per game while ranking fourth on the team defensively with 2.4 digs per game.

Heather Dodaro, a 6-foot-1 middle blocker, ranks second in the Big Ten and seventh nationally with 1.7 blocks per game. The junior from Oak Lawn, Ill., is pounding 3.5 kills per game with a .324 hitting percentage.

Both players will have to be at their best tonight against Penn State's frontcourt, which leads the nation in blocking and ranks second in hitting.

"Based on stats and the past," Cook said, "I'm sure we're the big underdog."

Louisville's Yelin faces a similar challenge in preparing his team for tonight's match with No. 4 Nebraska. Yelin said his team's approach to the match will not differ from the attitude with which it has competed all season.

"I will just tell the team to go out and get them," Yelin said of facing the defending national champions in a hostile environment.

That fighting mentality has propelled the Cardinals to their second straight Conference USA champion-



**Cook** and **Yelin** ship and sixth consecutive tournament appearance.

Facing Nebraska in regionals is a dream come true for his team, said Yelin, who won the AVCA national coach-of-the-year award last year while leading Barry University to the Division II national title.

Yelin, who delivered pizzas in Miami after leaving Russia for the United States in 1989, coached the Cardinals to a 26-4 record this season.

"I like his (Yelin's) attitude," Penn State Coach Russ Rose said. "That's probably why his team is here."

The 22nd-ranked Cardinals played only three ranked foes this season, defeating Maryland and losing to Hawaii and South Florida.

Advancing to the NCAA Tournament's round of 16 represents a step for both the Louisville and the Wisconsin programs, their coaches said. But both know that the road to Saturday's 7:30 p.m. regional final will be a difficult path.

"To go to the Final Four and to be successful, you're probably going to have to go through Lincoln at some point," Cook said. "That's something we've been telling our players for the last several years."

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