

Sports Opinion



David Wilson

Sims keeps attitude positive

Jay Sims exemplifies the word athlete.

He's extremely talented, hard-working and when things don't go his way, he keeps his mouth shut and his head high.

One of the best athletes in Nebraska history, Sims, who owns the top performance-index score in school history, has never started a game in his four-year playing career with the Cornhuskers. And as the oldest player on the team in his senior season, it is unlikely Sims will ever get his chance to start for Nebraska.

At 28 (Sims' age has been, a subject of debate - the NU media guide says he's 26), he isn't a bitter old man. Nowhere near.

And his will has been tested. Since walking on the Nebraska football team in 1994, Sims has been overshadowed by other "high-profile" backs and has also had to deal with his share of injuries.

The 6-foot-1, 220-pounder could have starred at another university - and he knows it. But Sims firmly stands behind his decision to play football for the Huskers.

He has worn a smile longer than he has kept his braided hair in a ball on top of his head. Sims not only sports the best haircut on the team, but has one of the best attitudes as well.

"It's not a matter of how bad the situation is," Sims said. "It's how you deal with the situation. I could sit around moaning and groaning or I could make the best of the situation."

When Sims went down with a knee strain during two-a-days last month, he didn't wonder how long he'd be out. He wondered how quickly he'd return. His doctor told him five weeks. Sims said he'd be back in three.

Sims was right. He returned to practice Monday and should be ready to go against Central Florida on Sept. 13, where he will be thrown into the mix of backs fighting for playing time. But Sims won't go down without a fight.

"The very moment I start to get a little bit worn down for maybe not playing as much as I like ... the competitiveness in me keeps me pushing forward."

Despite his desire to be better than the rest, Sims has a reputation of being one of the friendliest players on the team.

Maybe they realize he is the epitome of athlete. Or maybe they just like his hair.

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

Huskers hope to dominate invite

■ **Seventh-ranked Pacific is the team to beat for NU volleyball team.**

By SHANNON HEFFELFINGER
Assignment Reporter

The Nebraska volleyball team suffered disappointment for the first time this season after suffering a five-game loss to second-ranked Florida last Saturday. The Cornhuskers (2-1) hope for a quick and painless recovery this weekend when they play host to the First Bank Invite at the NU Coliseum.

Skillful players and talented teams await the Huskers, who face No. 25 Arkansas at 7:30 p.m. Friday and No. 29 George Mason Saturday at 11 a.m. before facing seventh-ranked Pacific at 7:30 Saturday night. However, the matches provide the Huskers with an opportunity to pick up their first victory over a top 10 team.

But defeating Pacific will not consume NU as it prepares for the invite. Nebraska has not lost a match

in the tournament in five years and owns a 21-1 all-time record in the First Bank Invite.

"I think it's important that we win all our matches this weekend," NU junior setter Fiona Nepo said. "Even though we're ranked high, we're Nebraska and we have tradition. We have to beat teams whether they're top five or not."

Nebraska's game plan should benefit from the depth on the squad. Thirteen players contributed during a two-day span that included three matches in Florida last weekend, and NU coach Terry Pettit will use a similar strategy Friday and Saturday.

"We have the depth to play a lot of people," Pettit said. "There are some people that we want on the court at all times, and you have to stay organized, but you don't want to fatigue your team."

The Huskers will start out fresh against Arkansas (4-0) Friday. Arkansas, which fell to Nebraska last year in four games in the NCAA Regionals, returns five starters from a team that finished 26-11 last season. George Mason (2-1) will battle Pacific Friday at 5 p.m. before moving on to the Huskers Saturday. The Patriots boasted a 26-3 record in 1996 but half the starters completed their eligibility with an NCAA Tournament second-round loss to Wisconsin.

First Bank Volleyball Invitational



Invitational Schedule

Lincoln, Neb. (Coliseum)

Date	Teams	Time
Sept. 5	George Mason vs. No. 7 Pacific	5 p.m.
	No. 5 Nebraska vs. No. 25 Arkansas	7:30 p.m.
Sept. 6	No. 5 Nebraska vs. George Mason	11 a.m.
	No. 7 Pacific vs. No. 25 Arkansas	1 p.m.
	George Mason vs. No. 25 Arkansas	5:30 p.m.
	No. 5 Nebraska vs. No. 7 Pacific	7:30 p.m.

ing on to the Huskers Saturday. The Patriots boasted a 26-3 record in 1996 but half the starters completed their eligibility with an NCAA Tournament second-round loss to Wisconsin.

Pacific offers the toughest challenge for NU. Sophomore Tracy Chambers leads five returning starters for the Tigers (3-0) with 28 kills and a .460 hitting percentage. Pacific, which has appeared in every NCAA Tournament since 1981, has defeated Sacramento State,

Cincinnati, and New Mexico this season.

"We haven't worked on a specific team's offense or defense," NU middle blocker Megan Korver said. "We just have to play one game at a time and we are not going to focus on one particular team like we did last week with Florida."

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NU looks to improve in weekend road trip

By JAY SAUNDERS
Assignment Reporter

For the first time this season, the Nebraska soccer team goes on the road, hoping to "iron out the wrinkles" of its first two games.

The 2-0 Cornhuskers head to Boulder, Colo., for a 5 p.m. game against the Buffaloes as both teams open the Big 12 Conference season. Then on Sunday, NU plays No. 14 and Central Region foe Vanderbilt at 11 a.m. in Nashville, Tenn.

The Huskers continue their brutal road schedule next weekend when they travel to conference foes Texas and Texas A&M.

"This is really the toughest part of our schedule," Walker said. "We will know a lot about our team in these next four games."

Walker said his team did not play a complete game against DePaul or USC last weekend. Nebraska beat DePaul 4-1 and USC 2-1 to open its season.

Senior co-captain Tanya Franck said the team needs to play for 90 minutes in order to win games.

"If we come out flat any team can capitalize on that," Franck said. "We can't be complacent. We need to come out fired up every game."

Franck said that has to start in the game against Colorado.

The Buffaloes (0-2) are in their second year of existence. Last year, in Lincoln, Nebraska handed CU its worst defeat of the season with a 10-2 victory. Against Colorado, Nebraska scored six goals in the first half and set team records for goals in a single game (10), team points (36), team assists (16) and victory margin (8).

However, the Buffs finished their inaugural season respectably with a 6-10-1 record.

This year Colorado has two of the best goalkeepers returning in junior Nina Bjornstad and sophomore Heidi Burgett. Bjornstad was in the game when NU scored its six goals but still finished the season with 1.88 goals-against average for the season.

The Buffaloes also benefit this season from a strong recruiting class.

"Colorado will almost be a different team than last year," Walker said. "That first year you are just trying to get a team on the field. The second



TANYA FRANCK HUGS teammate Isabelle Morneau after scoring her second goal of the game against DePaul last Friday. The Huskers hope to continue their success against Colorado and Vanderbilt this weekend.

year there is quite a turnover - the talent level will be greatly improved."

CU coach Austin Daniels said he knows his team is up for a tough game and hopes the Buffaloes don't think about last year's game too much.

"They gave it to us pretty good last year," Daniels said. "Obviously it will be a challenge. I hope there isn't a whole lot of baggage from last year."

Along with the freshman recruits, the Buffaloes have nine of their 11 starters returning from last season. Daniels said mixing those players with

all the newcomers this year will be a challenge, but the result will eventually be good soccer.

"We are still trying to get used to playing good, technical soccer at a fast pace," Daniels said. "It is an attractive game to watch when we get going."

Both Daniels and Walker said they were not happy with the conference schedule that has the two teams starting league play this weekend. Nebraska did play a conference game in the first weekend last year against Iowa State.

Next year the Big 12 is planning on having schedules like the conference football teams where conference games will be played after a non-conference schedule.

"The way it is scheduled this year, we have three road weekends sandwiched around two home conference weekends," Daniels said.

Besides playing conference opponents early, Walker said, NU is also playing strong competition early in the

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