

Huskers blast Ohio State to sweep tournament

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hitting .269. After posting 34 kills and a .351 hitting percentage in OSU's five-game Saturday morning loss to Oral Roberts, Pankova hit minus-.057 with 11 kills against NU.

"I just think at this level, we should not be playing two matches a day," Stone said. "That certainly didn't lose the match for us, but if it manifested itself, it was in Pankova. After the afternoon, her gas tank was pretty low and she

hit negative tonight."

Husker coach Terry Pettit said All-America right-side hitter Lisa Reitsma and setter Fiona Nepo played a part in Ohio State's poor performance at the net. The two blocked the Buckeyes' outside hitters three times apiece.

"I don't think that they necessarily matched up well with us," Pettit said. "Their best hitters hit from the left side, and we probably have the best right-side blockers in the country in Lisa and Fiona. With those two opposite each other, we did-

n't have to chose who we were going to defend.

"Attack-wise, Lisa could pretty much go anywhere she wanted and (Megan) Korver could go over their middles."

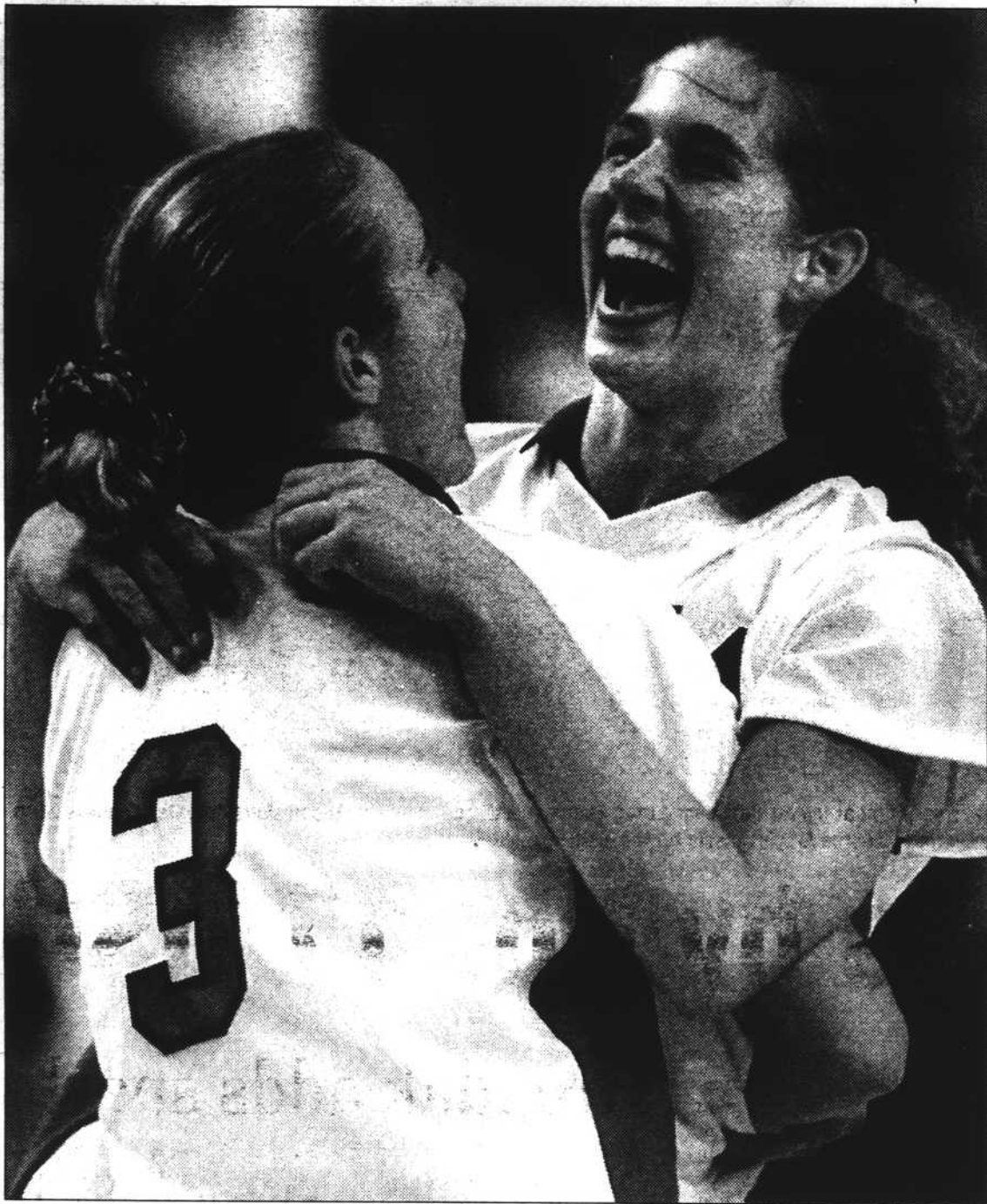
Korver, along with Nebraska's other middles blockers, held a definite height advantage OSU's middle blockers. The Buckeyes were forced to counteract the 6-foot-1 Korver, 6-4 Reitsma and 6-3 Tonia Tauke with three players up front who averaged about 6 feet.

Offensively, the Buckeyes could only muster a

.153 hitting percentage against the Cornhuskers' front line, and OSU failed to contain the Huskers attackers, who hit .309 for the match.

Reitsma, the tournament's most valuable player, led NU with 22 kills, Krondak added 13 along with 14 digs, and Korver posted 10 kills.

Despite three dominating performances over the weekend, Reitsma said the Huskers need to improve this week before traveling to Madison, Wis., for the Big Ten-Big 12 Challenge. Nebraska will face No. 14 Wisconsin and No. 1 Penn State.



JAIME KRONDAK (right) celebrates with Renee Saunders Saturday in Nebraska's win over Ohio State.

MATT MILLER/DN

Krondak gives NU a spark

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hitting .164.

"The first four games we had, I didn't hit above .220," Krondak said. "I was just like, 'Well geez, I suck.'"

Things changed Friday and Saturday in the Arby's Classic.

In a sweep of Ohio State Saturday night, Krondak pounded 13 kills - second only to Lisa Reitsma's team-high 22 - and hit .387 while recording 14 digs. Through the three-match tournament, Krondak slammed 26 kills and hit .322.

"This weekend was one of the first weekends that I've actually thought I've played all-around good," Krondak said. "My hitting has not been on at all. I felt (Friday and Saturday) that I was strong on my hitting, strong on my digging and my passing. So I'm very happy about that."

Krondak said her on-court improvements were directly related to her mental preparation for the matches, as well as the emotion she brings to the court.

"I basically do think it's confidence," Krondak said. "It's not that I haven't been ready to play, because I have been. I just think I'm dwelling on my mistakes a little bit

too much. And (Saturday night) everybody was pretty low key. I'm one of those people who kind of has a lot of energy on the court, so I was basically going out there and being a complete idiot - trying to get everybody else coming along, and I think that just kind of helped me."

Even Coach Terry Pettit noticed the difference.

"Jaime, you played real solid," Pettit said to the junior outside hitter as he left Saturday's post-match press conference.

Krondak said her success in the Arby's Classic gave her a much-needed confidence boost.

"I've just been needing to break away from the crappy play that I've been doing," Krondak said. "I needed a game to help me get my confidence back, because I've been pretty low on it."

As a sophomore last season, Krondak knocked 349 kills while hitting .210. The Lincoln East graduate also recorded 387 digs - the second-highest total in school history behind Kate Crnich's 390.

But now as a junior and a team leader, Krondak has changed her on-court thinking.

"When I was a newcomer (to the starting lineup) last year, I was concerned with how I was playing

and less with the team," Krondak said. "It's not like a choice you make, it just kind of happens. But now that I have a year of experience starting, I'm more concerned about trying to help get everybody organized and figuring out what's going on and helping people."

Take Reitsma for example.

"Reitsma, I mean the girl is outstanding," Krondak said. "But she shows no emotion. Man, if I were 6-foot-4 and played that well, I'd show a lot of emotion. It's just something that she needs to work on, like I need to work on skills."

Krondak said she began the season with five goals: To pick it up another level on defense, to be a captain on passing, to never hit below .220, to be a member Big 12 all-conference team and to bring emotion to the team.

With the first nine matches behind her, Krondak said, she hoped to remain focused on meeting her goals for the rest of the season.

"I just need to keep thinking about my goals and thinking about hitting," Krondak said. "I believe that's the key to bring up my whole game. I was there (Saturday night), and hopefully I can remain consistent the rest of the season."

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