

Sports Opinion



Sam McKewon

## Huskers can't forget about Big 12 season

Dear Huskers,  
Hello, my name John Holiday, representative of the 1997 Holiday Bowl, and this Dec. 30, we want you in San Diego!

I know you want to go play for the national championship in the Orange Bowl on Jan. 2; but San Diego has so much more to offer than Miami. We're cleaner, friendlier, and we have Sea World.

Why Nebraska? The fans. They bring hordes of them, and spend lots of money on useless trinkets and tourist traps.

There's just one problem: You'll have to lose once, maybe twice, to get down here. There's not many who think that will happen, but I'm the eternal optimist.

Take your conference, the Big 12. Everybody says it's supposed to be weak, but hey, I don't know. Oklahoma, Texas Tech, Colorado, Missouri - all of them are good enough to scare the Huskers. Don't worry about that, though. You just agree with all your fans, and believe the Big 12 is bad.

And don't listen to your co-captain, senior rush end Grant Wistrom. He seems to think the Big 12 will be a challenge.

"The Big 12 is a lot tougher than everyone imagines," Wistrom said. "Every team will be up for us, and there's a lot more at stake."

Now, Wistrom's a great player who knows what he's talking about, but erase those thoughts from your minds. This season, expect to win easily. Then play like you did against Texas in 1996 and Iowa State in 1992.

Whatever you do, don't play like you did against Washington. Don't knock out the other team's quarterback, and run for 384 yards again, please. We much more prefer the way you played against Central Florida.

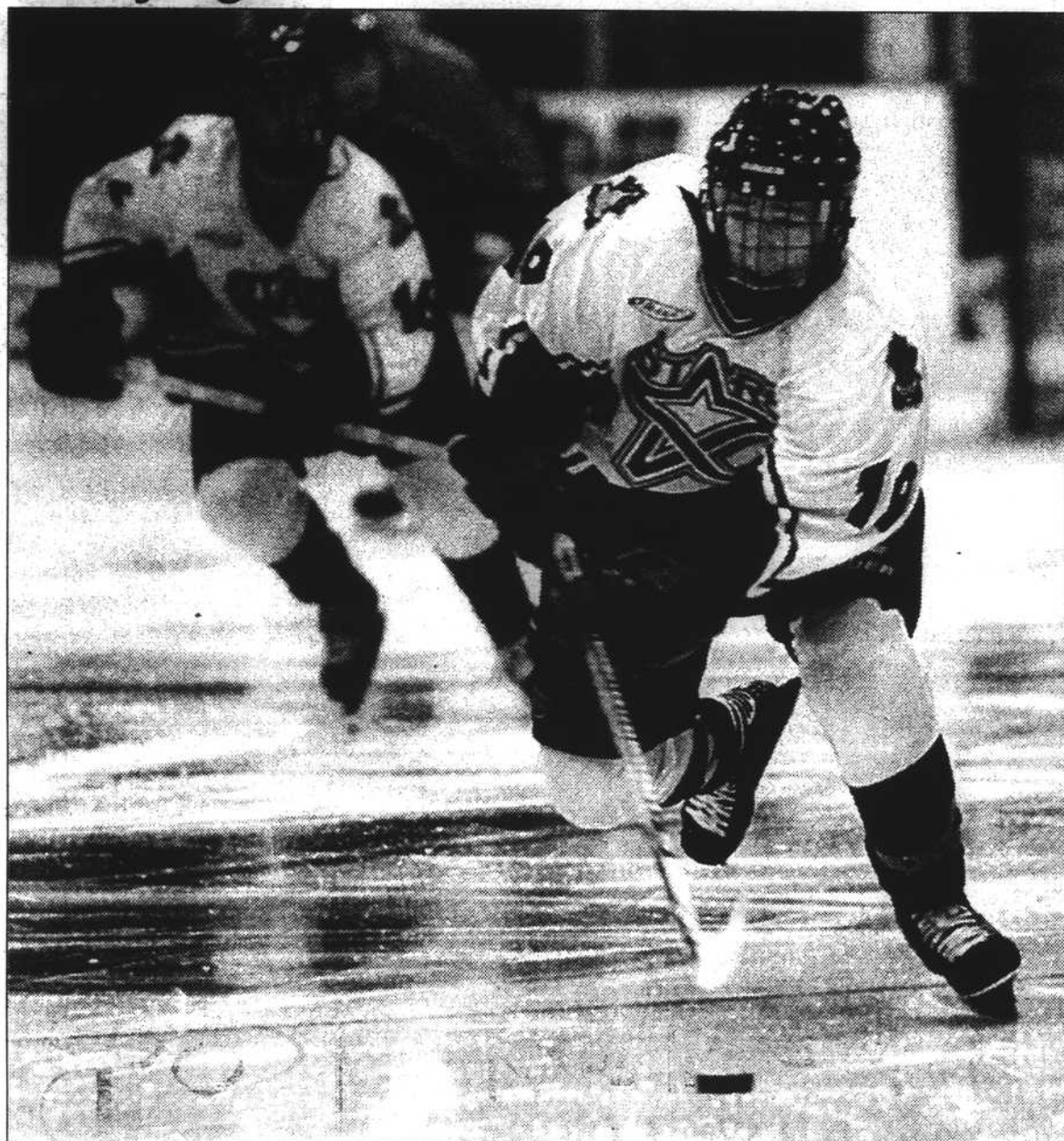
Another thing about that Central Florida game. We like it when your fans boo you. But next time, fans, don't just single out the quarterback, boo the whole team. The lower the team morale, the better our chances of bringing the Huskers to San Diego.

The first step towards mediocrity begins this week against Kansas State. The Wildcats are undefeated. Don't worry about that. Sleepwalk through the first couple quarters, allow a couple big plays, and before you know it, the game'll be a nail-biter.

I hope you consider our proposition, and underachieve throughout the entire Big 12 season. We'd love to have a Nebraska-Washington State showdown. Think of it: The Huskers and the Cougars - with nothing on the line but a little trophy!

McKewon is a sophomore broadcasting major and a Daily Nebraskan staff reporter.

## Starry night



SCOTT MCCLURG/DN

THE LINCOLN STARS' JOE GARVIN breaks for the goal during the first period of the Stars' season opener against the Omaha Lancers. The Stars, who return this season as the '97 Clark Cup champions, went on to defeat the Lancers 6-4 before a capacity crowd Friday night at the State Fair Park Coliseum.

## NU rolls over KU, Cats

BY SHANNON HEFFELFINGER  
Assignment Reporter

MANHATTAN, Kan. - Last week, as the beginning of Big 12 Conference play approached for the Nebraska volleyball team, NU coach Terry Pettit said he just wanted his team to continue to "take a step forward."

Friday and Saturday, the slow-starting Cornhuskers showed signs of moving in the opposite direction in road matches against Kansas and Kansas State. After struggling at times in a four-game victory over the Jayhawks (7-8) on Friday, the Huskers slipped in the first game of a match for only the second time this season against KSU (8-5) Saturday night.

But any momentum fifth-ranked Nebraska (11-2 overall and 2-0 in the conference) lost in the first game, in front of 5,036 fans at Ahearn Fieldhouse, it regained with a balanced attack, and a strong defensive display in the last half of the match.

The Huskers relied on four players, with 14 kills or more, and a season-high 36 block assists, defeating Kansas State 14-16, 15-7, 15-7, 15-11.

With the two league road wins, Pettit said, the Huskers continue to travel in the right direction.

"We played two matches on the road, and they were tough, but we played really hard in them," Pettit said. "I thought even though we didn't have a lot of service aces

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TERRY PETTIT  
Nebraska volleyball coach

tonight, our serving really did a good job for us. It took Kansas State out of their offense.

"We're coming along. We've got some things to work on, but we're getting better."

Serving, a strength the previous night in Lawrence as NU posted 13 aces, soon doomed the Huskers against the Wildcats. Seven service-errors by the Huskers contributed to early momentum for Kansas State.

NU bounced back in the second game, jumping to a 2-0 lead on consecutive blocks of the Wildcat front line by outside hitters Mandy Monson and Lisa Reitsma. Monson recorded seven block assists, Reitsma eight, and junior Megan Korver posted a match-high nine stops at the net.

"We had been working in practice on sealing the block over the net before the attack," Reitsma said. "It all seems to be coming together for us."

Reitsma shined for Nebraska's offensive. The senior All-American passed former NU-great Chis Hall on the all-time NU career kill-

and-attack charts. With a match-high 26 kills and 55 attacks, Reitsma moved into fifth on the kill chart with 1,292 and fourth on the attack chart with 2,906. Reitsma pounded three kills in the final minutes of game four, guiding NU to a 14-11 lead. After four side outs, Korver ended the match with a kill after a Monson serve.

"Lisa wasn't really involved much in the first couple games but (setter Fiona Nepo) got her the ball in the third and fourth games," Pettit said. "She showed she was a dominant player."

"I was also really pleased with Mandy and Jaime (Kronstad) on the outside. We ran a little quicker set out there."

Monson posted season-best 16 kills while Kronstad recorded 14. Pettit was also pleased with Kronstad's defense. The junior led all players with 24 digs, a season high.

Despite the Husker's slow start after a 15-12, 12-15, 15-2, 15-2 win Friday, Reitsma said, Saturday was one of the Huskers' best all-around performances.

## NU golfers finish 14th, head to CU

BY DARREN IVY  
Staff Reporter

Nebraska coach Robin Krapfl is hoping a change in scenery will result in a different outcome for the NU women's golf team.

The Cornhuskers begin play today in the 12-team Colorado Invitational in Boulder, Colo.

On Saturday, the Huskers finished 14th in the 16-team Dick McGuire Invitational in Albuquerque, N.M.

Krapfl said she was disappointed with the Huskers play in New Mexico.

"We were expecting to compete for a team title," Krapfl said. "At the worst I expected us to finish in the top five."

NU's three-round score of 939 strokes was well behind Texas Christian's first place score of 900. Krapfl said there were quite a few ranked teams at the Invitational, but she thought the mental errors were why the 27th-ranked Huskers finished in 14th place.

"We weren't intimidated by the strength of the field, but I don't think we were mentally ready to compete against them," Krapfl said.

Nebraska was put in a tough situation during the opening round on Thursday when Shirin Hornecker was forced to withdraw because of a sinus infection.

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## Defense keys two NU wins

BY ANDREW STRNAD  
Staff Reporter

MANHATTAN, Kan. - The Nebraska volleyball team had to rely on a old friend Saturday night: defense.

After dropping the first game to Kansas State, the Huskers piled up a season-high 36 block assists and defeated Kansas State in four games. Several Huskers posted season-high defensive marks.

Outside hitter Jaime Kronstad set a team high for the year with 24 digs, topping Lisa Reitsma's total of 23 in a five-game loss to Florida earlier this season.

Husker coach Terry Pettit credited the NU defense for Saturday night's win, and pointed to Kronstad's play in particular.

"I thought Jaime and Mandy (Monson) started to dig some balls that enabled us to transition," Pettit said. "That was maybe Jaime's best defensive match."

Monson was a major defensive force for the Huskers, adding 15 digs and pair of career highs with seven block assists and 16 kills.

"We started to run points when we started to play defense," Pettit

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