

Neumann: Kelber adds missing piece

BY ANTONE OSEKA
Senior Reporter

There's nothing like the feeling of coming home to stay, especially if the return comes with a pay raise and a chance to win your first national title as a coach.

Former Nebraska wrestler Jason Kelber now returns to the Cornhuskers as an assistant coach.

Kelber was a lightweight standout for the Huskers, wrestling at 126 pounds throughout his career. He was a three-time All-American and a two-time national finalist. In 1991, he won the national championship at 126 pounds. He ranks third all time in Nebraska career wins with 123.

Kelber replaces Brad Penrith as the assistant coach who deals mostly with the lighter weights. Coach Tim Neumann calls Kelber "the piece that was missing."

Neumann said he and Penrith didn't see eye to eye on many issues but worked together for seven years. With the addition of Kelber, someone who came through the NU program, Neumann said it felt like the Huskers took a huge step forward.

"It's hard to find someone who is that good of a wrestler who's here to coach and not to train," Neumann said.

Unlike many coaches, Kelber has taken his hat out of the Olympic competition ring to concentrate solely on coaching. He left the head assistant coaching job at Indiana to take the second assistant job at Nebraska. Mark Cody is the top assistant.

This job, however, carries just

as much clout and a pay raise, Kelber said.

"It's all for the team, all for the wrestlers," Kelber said. "I'm here to give them all I have. I'm not competing, I don't have the luxury of thinking about myself."

He does have the luxury of convincing his wrestlers to think about themselves. He said one of the biggest things Nebraska, as a team, has to work on is mentally knowing it can win the national championship.

"No matter what your record is, the slate is clean," Kelber said of how to mentally approach the NCAA Championships. "Whether you have no losses or 10 losses, it doesn't matter. It's for the NCAA championship."

The biggest thing he can add, he said, is constant confidence in each athlete so he can be one of the best wrestlers in the nation in 1998.

"We're doing a lot of hard work, conditioning and mental imagery," Kelber said. "The biggest thing is letting them know you believe they can win it."

Neumann has already started that process.

Neumann said he did several "spastic" things with his team this summer that proved to them they can be one of the best teams, if not the best team, in the country in 1998. One of those things was a three-day workout that consisted of 500 push-ups, running 100 sets of stairs at Memorial Stadium and doing 200 chin-ups in less than 30 minutes. Each wrestler completed the physical tests.

"I tried to show them," Neumann said, "that out of shape, they can do things they never thought they could do."

Benson bucks Nebraska cold

BY JAY SAUNDERS
Assignment Reporter

Adapting to a long Nebraska winter, which includes snow, below-zero wind chill factors and bitter-cold temperatures, can take a toll on anyone - especially someone used to the sunny beaches of California.

Jenny Benson, who played high school soccer for Marina High in Huntington Beach, Calif., has not only had to adjust to Nebraska winters but college soccer as well.

The sophomore midfielder/striker came to Nebraska looking for a big college experience. Benson said she has found that and much more in Lincoln.

"I love Nebraska," Benson said. "It is teaching me a lot about parts of the country I've never seen before."

Benson was a member of a freshmen recruiting class expected to make an immediate impact on a young Husker team. Benson didn't know what to expect from Division I soccer, she said.

Both Benson and the Huskers answered the call. In one season, Benson became Nebraska's sixth all-time leading scorer. Her 13 assists, which led the Big 12 conference, and 11 goals helped the Huskers earn national attention with a 23-1 record and a No. 6 ranking.

"No matter what, you can't win in soccer without the other 10 people on the field," Benson said. "Our whole team gets along amazingly well."

This season, Benson had an extra incentive to come to fall training camp. Junior Kim Engesser, with whom Benson had played soccer almost her entire life, transferred from Portland, Ore., to Nebraska.

Benson and Engesser, along with junior Sandy Smith, give the Huskers a strong Huntington Beach trio.

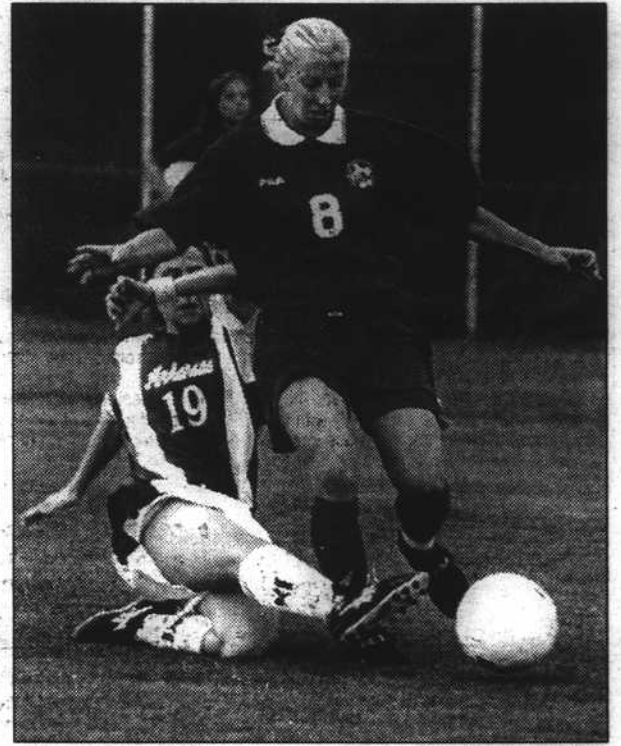
"I came out of training camp to help the team get as far as we can," Benson said. "I was even more excited to come back and start playing with (Engesser) again."

The excitement seems to be leading to good things on the field. Benson has scored four goals, and has a team-high six assists in 13 games this season, and Engesser leads the Big 12 Conference with 13 goals.

In the last six games, Benson has often put the Huskers on the scoreboard by either dishing off to one of her teammates for an assist or scoring herself. Three of her goals and four of her assists have come during NU's recent homestand.

"This year, I'm a little more confident with myself," Benson said. "I know I have to be ready to play."

Nebraska coach John Walker said Benson is good in



SANDY SUMMERS/DN
JENNY BENSON leads the Nebraska soccer team with six assists this season.

one-on-one situations and crosses the ball very well. "That is the level that she is capable of playing at," Walker said. "She is someone who we like to have the ball."

Benson said she feels comfortable handling the ball. Ever since she started playing soccer in grade school, foot skills have been stressed as an important part of her game, she said.

Benson may have to rely on her foot skills to carry her throughout the next month of the season. Seasons are starting to change in the Cornhusker State, and soon the temperatures will start to drop. In Huntington Beach, soccer games are usually only canceled because of rain.

Rain could be a best-case scenario for Benson, who is preparing for her second Nebraska winter.

"Last year was the first time I had played in cold weather," Benson said. "The one negative of this place is how cold it gets. It is tough, but you learn to fight through it."

I-back returns to 1995 form

GREEN from page 9

ball for 274 yards.

Nebraska coach Tom Osborne also said Frost had improved his running game.

"He is running now like an I-back," Osborne said.

But a run-them-over ground attack is what Husker football is all about, Frost said.

"I think you have to be aggressive here," Frost said. "Coach Osborne will get on us if we run out of bounds. That's part of playing the game here. It's a little more physical style of football -

especially at quarterback - but it's a lot of fun that way."

Now that Green is healthy, he said he is having more fun on the playing field this season. But injury wasn't the only thing that hindered him last year.

After hitting the weight room two summers ago, Green was running near 222 pounds his sophomore season - stronger, but bigger. Green has since dropped down to about 208, Osborne said.

The weight loss, Green said, helped his agility.

"I'm a little bit quicker," Green said. "I can make certain moves that I couldn't make last year. I just basically don't get as tired as I did last year."

Green averaged 5.9 yards per carry last season - down from the 7.7 he averaged as a freshman. Now, coming off of the four best consecutive games of his career, Green may be playing his

best ever. "I think he's playing every bit as well, if not better, than his freshman year," Osborne said. "Freshman year, he didn't have time to think about it. Now he knows he has to carry quite a bit of the load."

With a 193-yard performance against Kansas State Saturday, Green moved from 20th to eighth among NCAA Division-I rushers, averaging 133.3 yards and pacing the NU attack, which leads the nation with a 399.8 yards-per-game average.

But Green shuns Heisman Trophy talk.

"I'm glad that they consider me for that," Green said. "But I can't focus on that. I have to focus on putting my team in a spot to win the game, running the ball hard, and practicing hard day in and day out."

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