

Sports Opinion



Antone Oseka

Officiating crew shafts Kentucky

Through wind and the rain, through good defense and superb goaltending, Kentucky couldn't put the ball in the goal Sunday against the Nebraska soccer team.

But it wasn't the weather or the Huskers that bothered Kentucky coach Warren Lipka. It was the officiating.

"A blind man could see this wasn't a great day for officiating," Lipka said.

Warren, a blind man can't see anything, I hate to point that out. And the Wildcats weren't going to win the game anyway. NU goalkeeper Rebecca Hornbacher is too good, and Kentucky didn't have enough power to sneak one past her. But I do agree. The officiating was pretty bad at times.

There were times when a call obviously went one way - but not the other - during similar situations. In fact, Lipka said after the game he would like to evaluate the officials, as is the practice in the Southeast Conference.

Nebraska coach John Walker didn't see any major problems with the officiating.

"It certainly wasn't an issue in who won the game," Walker said. "There were a few individual calls he was upset about."

And that's true.

But an official's presence should never be felt outside of enforcing the rules. An official should never become a point of controversy throughout the game. He or she should never enrage a coach to the point where the coach needs to make his feelings known in an outburst similar to those seen in professional baseball.

Lipka was so upset that he was yelling at an official through most of the second half. He told the referee, when he was in earshot, that he was "the worst official I've seen all year, and I've seen some bad ones."

The point wasn't that Kentucky was cheated out of a victory, Lipka said several times that Nebraska was the superior team. The point is that an official's job is to call a fair game for both teams.

That didn't happen Sunday at the Abbott Sports Complex.

Though soccer is an objective sport to call, there was a lack of fairness in this game.

"I thought it was absolutely ridiculous," Lipka said.

Oseka is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan opinion reporter.

Injuries leave NU in a bind

Oxley may ditch redshirt to fill in for hurt Krondak

BY SHANNON HEFFELFINGER
Assignment Reporter

The Nebraska volleyball team slipped a notch on the college volleyball ladder last Wednesday after suffering a five-game loss to No. 19 Colorado.

A three-game loss to unranked Oklahoma two days later transformed the small slide into the early beginnings of a downward dive and the Huskers' first losing streak since 1993.

The Cornhuskers sustained back-to-back losses for the first time in four years last week, ending a 41-match homecourt winning streak and closing the door on a 22-year string of league wins at home. With the losses, NU fell four places to No. 9 in the USA Today/AVCA Top 25.

Husker coach Terry Pettit places most of the blame for the losses on injuries to key players and primary passers Jaime Krondak and Renee Saunders. Pettit said he hopes to see Saunders return in four weeks but remains uncertain about Krondak.

With a full week to adjust to the loss of the two players, Pettit expects NU to move forward over the next few weeks and reclaim its previous spot on the national scene.

"They're young kids, and they're not used to losing," Pettit said. "So there may have been some confusion about why they lost."

"As a coach, I can identify physically that we didn't have a certain player on the court, and that's why they lost. They maybe don't understand that and blame themselves for things that aren't

their fault. I think it's our job as a coaching staff to try and put that in perspective for them."

Krondak - a junior outside hitter suffering from back spasms - can no longer play the full rotation, requiring Pettit to make some adjustments. Krondak leads the Huskers in service aces, digs per game and total digs. The 6-foot graduate of Lincoln East ranks third for Nebraska in total kills with 144.

Saunders averaged 1.61 kills per game before a foot injury sidelined her.

To counteract the loss of the two players in the back row, Pettit has experimented with several different lineups, allowing middle blockers Megan Korver and Katie Jahnke, and outside hitters Denise Koziol and Kim Behrends opportunities for increased time in the back row.

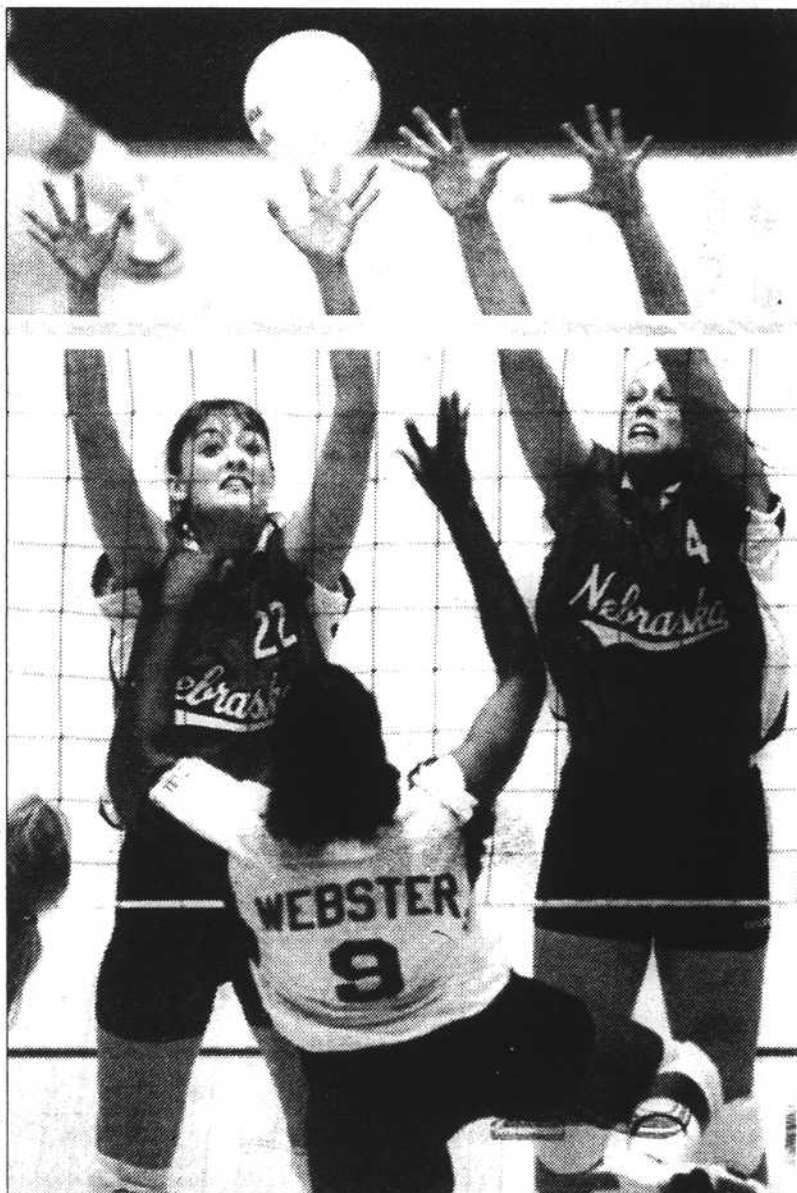
Pettit is also considering bringing freshman Angie Oxley, whom the coach called the most fundamentally sound freshman ever at Nebraska, out of her redshirt season.

But the quick adjustments have failed to make a large impact, Pettit said.

"We're a team that has always been built around specialization," Pettit said. "We highlight the things our players do well and disguise the things they don't. Krondak passes 60 percent of our balls, and she does that exceptionally well."

"As a coach, I've made the decision to go ahead and work on a system assuming Jaime's not going to be a part of it. We've got to go. We can't sit around for three or four weeks and find

Please see INJURIES on 8



TONIA TAUKE (No. 22) and Mandy Monson jump to block an Oklahoma attack Friday in Norman, Okla. The Huskers lost the match in three games, their second straight defeat, and face matches at Texas and Texas A&M this weekend.

Wiltz, Warren shine as nose tackle duo

BY SAM MCKEWON
Staff Reporter

Some call it the anchor of the defensive line.

Nebraska defensive coordinator Charlie McBride likens the nose tackle position on the Cornhusker defense to a "meat grinder."

Two of NU's lesser-known defenders, sophomore Steve Warren and junior Jason Wiltz, man that position for the Huskers (5-0 and 2-0) who take on Texas Tech (3-2 and 2-0) Saturday at Memorial Stadium at 12:30 p.m.

"Warren and Wiltz have both done a good job this season even though a lot of people don't see it," McBride said. "They have both played with discipline and haven't been a weakness for us."

Warren started the first game of the year against Akron at the nose tackle before falling to second-string because of back problems. Wiltz, who had been learning the nose tackle and defensive tackle positions at the same time, then started in Warren's place. Warren returned to see extended playing time Saturday against Baylor.

In replacing Jeff Ogard and Scott Saltsman, Wiltz and Warren have been solid in the middle this season. Wiltz has nine tackles on the season, including four for losses and one sack. His fumble recovery against Baylor set up Nebraska's second touchdown. Warren has been almost as forceful in limited



Wiltz



Warren

action, with seven tackles and two pass breakups.

Wiltz said he and Warren battle through friendly competition for playing time and together have made an effective combination this season in the trenches.

"We're both pretty happy with how the defense is right now," Wiltz said. "We're tough against the run and the pass rush is strong, too."

The responsibilities of the nose tackle differs somewhat from the rest of the Husker front four. The nose tackle's primary responsibility is to stop the run, and much of that is accomplished in keeping the opposing offensive linemen off the Husker linebackers.

Wiltz, who played defensive tackle in high school, said playing the nose tackle position is an exercise in discipline and toughness.

"You don't have as much freedom as some of the other guys on the defensive line," Wiltz said. "The first thing you have to do is keep the guards and center off the linebackers so they can

Please see NOSE on 8

Hornbacher, defenders form impenetrable wall

BY JAY SAUNDERS
Assignment Reporter

Coaches have often said that defense wins championships, but for the No. 10 Nebraska soccer team, defense has been more than just the key to success.

It's been the Cornhuskers' stabilizing force.

NU coach John Walker said the Huskers (12-2 overall and 6-2 in the Big 12 Conference) have played excellent "team defense" this season. For the season the Huskers have allowed just five goals, and no opponent has scored more than one goal in a game.

Senior goalkeeper Rebecca Hornbacher has allowed four of those goals, ranking her second nationally and first in the Big 12 with a 0.33 goals-against average.

Hornbacher also has nine shutouts, eight of which came during NU's eight-game monthlong homestand. The senior from Ralston said the shutouts and her goals-against average, aren't important statistics.

"We don't look at the numbers," Hornbacher said. "The fact that we are getting the shutouts does really well for the confidence of the team. Working hard defensively is really paying dividends."

Even though Hornbacher's statistics are impressive, the entire Husker defense has been stifling

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REBECCA HORNBACHER
NU goalkeeper

opponents. In the past eight games, NU allowed 15 shots on goal, compared to the 98 shots the Huskers have posted against their opponents. In the first four games of the homestand, Nebraska did not allow a corner kick.

"If somehow they get through, our job is to not let them get a shot or a cross and keep pressure off the keeper," senior defender Stephanie Vacek said.

Vacek and fellow NU defenders Tanya Franck and Sharolta Nonen, along with Hornbacher, serve as the last line of defense for the Huskers. But Walker said his defensive scheme requires contributions from more than four players.

Although defense start in the

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