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Win adds to NU confidence

By JAY SAUNDERS Assignment Reporter

For the first time in the four-year history of the Nebraska soccer program, the Cornhuskers defeated a

team ranked in the top five of NSCAA coaches' poll with a 5-0 win over Duke on Monday.

With the win the 13-2 Huskers extended their winning streak to nine games. Since the game played



Walker

Monday, the outcome is not reflected in the most recent poll, but NU Coach John Walker said the win will affect how the rest of the season may play out.

"Our players feel good about (the win), and rightly so," Walker said. "At this stage, you are angling yourself for playoff position. They are hungry for the stretch run."

Lindsay Eddleman scored a hat trick with three goals, and Amy Walsh added two goals to propel NU to the victory.

goalkeeper Rebecca Hornbacher, who recorded her ninth consecutive shutout against the 12-3 Blue Devils, leads the nation with a 0.31 goals-against average. The senior from Ralston said the team knew going into the game how important a solid effort would be for the program.

'Our team was mentally prepared and focused," Hornbacher said. "We dominated in a lot of aspects of the game."

One of those aspects was field position.

Hornbacher said most of the first half was played in Duke's end of the field as the Huskers allowed the Blue Devils just two corner kicks and five shots on goal.

said the Huskers played the best they have all season.

In the game sophomore striker us a little confidence and shows us that anything less than this is unacceptable."

The Huskers also proved they could win on the road. Nebraska had lost some confidence after losing to Texas on Sept. 12, and No. 7 Texas A&M on Sept. 14, both by the score of 1-0.

"It's not like we have a history of not playing well on the road," Walker said. "We answered (questions) really well. Yeah, we can go out and win a big game on the road."

Now the Huskers must go on the road again this weekend, closing out Big 12 Conference play with games at Oklahoma State (6-8-1 and 2-5) and Oklahoma (2-11-0 and 1-6). Both of those teams are in the bottom half of the conference, but Walker and Hornbacher said the possibility of a letdown is non-exis-

"We don't fear letdowns," Junior midfielder Kim Engesser Hornbacher said. "We just focus on what it takes to be successful.

"You have to remember what "It is good to play against a brought you that success and conranked opponent on the road and tinue that. This team is mature beat them," Engesser said. "It gives enough that they understand that."

NU freshmen find court time

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she is," Pettit said. "It's because her strength is what she doesn't do. She doesn't make errors.

"She's not spectacular. She had the second-most kills and the second-highest hitting percentage Saturday, and nobody knew it until after the match. When she gets a kill, she usually hits the ball off the blockers' hands instead of slamming it down to the floor."

Slamming the ball on a quick and direct path downward is Meendering's specialty. The 6-1 graduate of Western Christian High School in Hull, Iowa, has benefited from a recent change in the Huskers' offensive scheme.

Pettit, in an attempt to open NU's offense, decided to move All-America right-side hitter Lisa Reitsma to the middle blocker position, allowing Meendering and freshman Katie Jahnke to compete and rotate on the right.

Krondak and back-row specialist Renee Saunders forced an earlier

"Meendering is very explosive," Pettit said. "She has a quick arm swing, jumps well, and she is really strong. Jahnke hits quit sets, and

Meendering hits higher balls on the outside of the court. With those two at the same position, it forces opponents to make adjustments."

The move places Meendering and Reitsma side-by-side, a situation both know well. The two played alongside each other while competing on the Western Christian High School team that won the 1993 Iowa Class 2A championship. The reunion pleases Meendering.

"It's exciting playing next to Reitsma, and I'm having a blast doing it," Meendering said. "She makes everybody look good. She is really cool. Everybody is. They really make you feel like you fit in with

Pettit doesn't expect Meendering Pettit said he anticipated the or Oxley to spend much time on the move would take place later in the sidelines for the remainder of the season, but injuries to starter season. With Krondak still ham-

It's exciting playing next to Reitsma, and I'm having a blast doing

> NANCY MEENDERING NU outside hitter

pered and Saunders out for three more weeks, Pettit will continue to count on the consistent play of Meendering and Oxley.

The expanded responsibility thrills Meendering.

"It has really helped my confidence a lot," Meendering said. "I was frustrated. I know you can't take things personally, but knowing that you can help the team makes you feel better. I'm really excited about

Osborne: Top ranking means little

FOOTBALL from page 7

Arizona State and a 37-27 setback to Texas in the Big 12 championship game kept the Huskers from playing for their third straight national championship. NU won the national championship in 1994, edging out an undefeated Penn State team, and 1995 by beating Florida 62-24 in the Fiesta Bowl.

The problem with sitting on top, though, is everyone wants to take a

"I know now people are going to be gunning for us because we're No. 1," senior rush end Grant Wistrom said. "We're playing pretty darn good football right now.

Despite the Huskers' current No. ranking, Nebraska Coach Tom Osborne said he just wants to continue the type of football his team is playing. Osborne, who is in his 25th season of leading the Huskers, said he doesn't want to change his coaching style just to try to hold on to the

top spot.
"We've just got to play well,"
Osborne said. "I don't plan to change. I want to do what's best for the players on our team."

The Huskers' next opportunity to play well comes Saturday when NU faces Kansas (4-3 and 2-2) at 6:07

Channel 58 in Lincoln.

Nebraska senior defensive tackle Jason Peter said since the Huskers have no chance of possibly playing Penn State for the national championship, the Huskers need to play well to keep their No. 1 ranking. If Penn State wins the Big Ten Conference, the Nittany Lions will play in the Rose Bowl, and if Nebraska doesn't lose a game and wins the Big 12 championship, the Huskers will play in the Orange Bowl as part of the Bowl Alliance.

"I thought the voters would keep with Joe Paterno and Penn State," Peter said. "I'm happy it's us and not them. Until they finally get this whole thing settled with one game, it'll be like this."

Osborne said with the way the Bowl Alliance works - without the Rose Bowl - the field is uneven for many teams.

"It's OK if everyone is in the same pot," he said. "With the system now, it's a concern. Perception is obviously a factor."

Osborne said he doesn't want to keep a hold of No. 1. Earlier this month NU could have run up the score on Baylor, but Osborne said he

p.m. in Lawrence. The game will be felt he shouldn't have to. Nebraska televised by Fox Sports Net on led the Bears 42-7 at the half and won the game 49-21.

"We probably had that game put away by halftime," Osborne said. 'But you do what's best for your

Osborne said doing what's best for the Husker players is playing NU's first team until a game is safe and then putting second- and thirdteam players in the game to gain experience.

Wistrom said he understands the process, but it doesn't lessen his desire to play the full game.

"I want to play the whole game," Wistrom said, "no matter what the score is. I feel cheated by not playing 60 minutes of football.

Note:

Junior defensive tackle Jason Wiltz will miss Saturday's. game against Kansas for violating the team's class-attendance policy. Nebraska senior defensive tackle Jason Peter said Wiltz will be missed on the defensive front.

"He tips the scale with three have to run up the score on teams to bills, and takes up some guys," Peter

Sophomore Steve Warren will start in Wiltz's place.