



FIRST STRING I-BACK DeAngelo Evans (#4) runs drills against Tyrone Uhler at Tuesday's practice on the grass fields behind Memorial Stadium.

MICHAEL WARREN/DN

Solich pleased with NU practices so far

BY SAM MCKEWON
Staff Reporter

After the fifth day of two-a-day practices and the first day in pads for the Nebraska football team, NU Head Coach Frank Solich got what he expected.

He got tired team, weary legs and some ragged play.

All in all, Solich said, the practices were perfectly normal for the Cornhuskers, who worked out this morning with just shoulder pads and switched to full pads in the afternoon.

"We're pushing them pretty hard," Solich said after the two-hour workout. "We got them to the point to where they're in great shape and can lay off a little."

Solich said Nebraska worked on its passing game in the afternoon session, with some mixed results.

"We're a long ways off in being a

good passing team," Solich said.

NU's passing skeleton drill was hampered by sophomore quarterback Bobby Newcombe's sore right elbow and an inexperienced offensive line.

The running game looked better than the passing attack, Solich said, with signs of ground game that could make big plays this season.

"We've got a lot of explosive guys," Solich said, "and when you have that you can start to move the football."

Defensively, NU was quick to the ball and was physical on the first day of contact.

Sophomore rover Mike Brown said he welcomed the pads, as it helped the defense prepare for Saturday's first scrimmage.

"We needed the contact," Brown said. "It feels good to get a little hitting in."

The Huskers escaped without any major injuries in their first day of

contact. Left guard James Sherman did not finish practice because of a high-ankle sprain. Solich did not expect the injury to hold Sherman out for an extended period of time.

Also, starting left cornerback Erwin Swiney was held out of practice again Wednesday because of pulled groin muscle. He is still listed day-to-day, Solich said.

On the freshmen front, defensive backs seem to be an area where newcomers have come in and performed early. Solich said that true freshmen Keyuo Craver, DeJuan Groce and Mike Demps have all made significant strides in early season fall camp, although Demps and Groce were limited Wednesday because of injuries.

Solich also noted that rush ends Chris Kelsay and Demoin Adams have performed well at positions already laden with talent.

Nebraska will continue workouts this week, with a closed scrimmage on Saturday.

Volleyball team readies for season

Experienced squad aims for championship

BY DARREN IVY
Co-editor

In just over three years, Nebraska senior volleyball player Fiona Nepo has grown from a small, timid freshman, who was afraid to talk to reporters, into a confident captain who now comes right up to reporters and doesn't act the least bit nervous.

During volleyball media day Monday at the NU Coliseum, the two-year captain and two-time All-American setter from Honolulu took some time to reflect on her media day experiences and talk about the upcoming season.

"The first three years went by so fast," Nepo said. "But I feel more comfortable this year. I remember when I was a freshman, and I was like, take my picture and then run away. Then my sophomore and junior year you (reporters) came up to me. Now I am coming up to you."

In her final season at NU, Nepo is hungry for another national championship. Her desire to win has rubbed off onto the other 12 returning letter winners and two new freshmen. Their confidence could be seen in the way they talked and carried themselves Monday.

To get back to the championship game, Nepo and fellow seniors Megan Korver and Jamie Krondak have taken it upon themselves to motivate the younger players.

"Off the court and on the court they look up to us," Nepo said. "We're the core group."

Coach Terry Pettit likes what he has seen in terms of leadership from the trio. Any time three players have started for at least two years, there is going to be leadership, he said.

Pettit also likes the team's progress from last season, when NU finished 27-7 and tied for second place in the Big 12 Conference, to this season. He said the spring season provided a big springboard into the 1998 season.

"We always have pretty good springs, but this past one was exceptional," Pettit said.

One reason the spring was exceptional was because of all the experienced players. He said he felt comfortable he could play at

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TERRY PETTIT
NU volleyball coach

least 12 players and not miss a beat. This group has 10 years of starting experience and there usually is only four or five, Pettit said.

But one player who won't be around is two-time All-American Lisa Reitsma, who used up her eligibility in 1997.

Although Reitsma was an All-American, Nepo is confident sophomores Katie Jahnke and Nancy Meendering can step in as her replacements. Meendering's physical style of play particularly impressed Nepo.

"She's a stud," Nepo said. "She hits harder than anyone I've seen, and I've seen the national team players."

Pettit will miss Reitsma, and said some other players will have to take on larger roles.

"We will have to be more balanced," Pettit said. "But we still need to have some go-to players. The right side has always been a go-to player at NU."

Meendering wants to be the next go-to player on that side, but she said she was not the only one who was ready to step up.

"There are a lot of good players who were overlooked last year," Meendering said.

On the other side, Pettit said junior Mandy Monson, sophomore Angie Oxley and Krondak will pick up some of the offensive load.

No matter what combination is on the court, Pettit expects NU to be a better offensive squad than last year.

A better offense will be a necessity because Pettit thinks the Big 12 has at least three top 10 teams and another three or four that will make the NCAA tournament.

"Our conference will be the most competitive in Big 12 history," Pettit said. "But if you can be successful in the conference, you also will be nationally."