

# Huskers 'can't relax' entering Big 12 play

By **ANDREW STRNAD**  
Staff writer

A volleyball season has four stages, according to Nebraska Coach Terry Pettit. Stage one is the nonconference schedule.

Stage two begins tonight, as the No. 3 Cornhuskers open Big 12 Conference play against Iowa State tonight and Missouri on Saturday.

The Huskers (9-0) cleared stage one with relative ease, dropping only one game during the nonconference schedule.

"I think we did almost everything well (last) weekend," Pettit said, "especially our serving and blocking, which go together."

"We're not a great volleyball team, we're great competitors."

NU downed two ranked teams last week, including No. 9 Florida in three games — 15-4, 15-8, 15-0.

During the Huskers' first nine matches, they defeated five ranked teams, including two-time defending national champions Stanford.

Now, the Huskers enter Big 12 play, which won't be any easier.

## Volleyball

No. 3 Nebraska vs. Iowa State, Friday, 7:30 p.m.  
No. 3 Nebraska vs. Missouri, Saturday, 7:30 p.m.  
Both matches at the NU Coliseum

With five ranked teams, Pettit regards the Big 12 as the best conference in the nation.

"I think it's even better than I thought," Pettit said.

NU does get to open the conference with two opponents that historically have been weak.

Iowa State (2-9) hasn't beaten the Huskers in 52 tries and last won a game in 1994.

Missouri hasn't fared much better. The Tigers have a 2-46-1 record against the Huskers and haven't beaten them since Sept. 20, 1982.

Missouri (8-4) will come into the NU Coliseum on Saturday having won four of its last five matches.

Despite the Huskers' dominance over Missouri and Iowa State, junior middle blocker Tonia Tauke refuses to take any opponent lightly.

"You just can't relax, you've got to take a deep breath and keep on going,"

Tauke said.

Lately, Tauke has become an offensive spark plug for the team, as opponents have spent more time focusing on the Huskers' outside hitter.

The 6-foot-3 Tauke is fourth on the team in kills and is hitting a solid .375.

"I think I've got a lot more going for me, and that's helping my teammates trust me out on the court," Tauke said.

As the Huskers head into the second stage of the season, Tauke expects the intensity level to go up in practice.

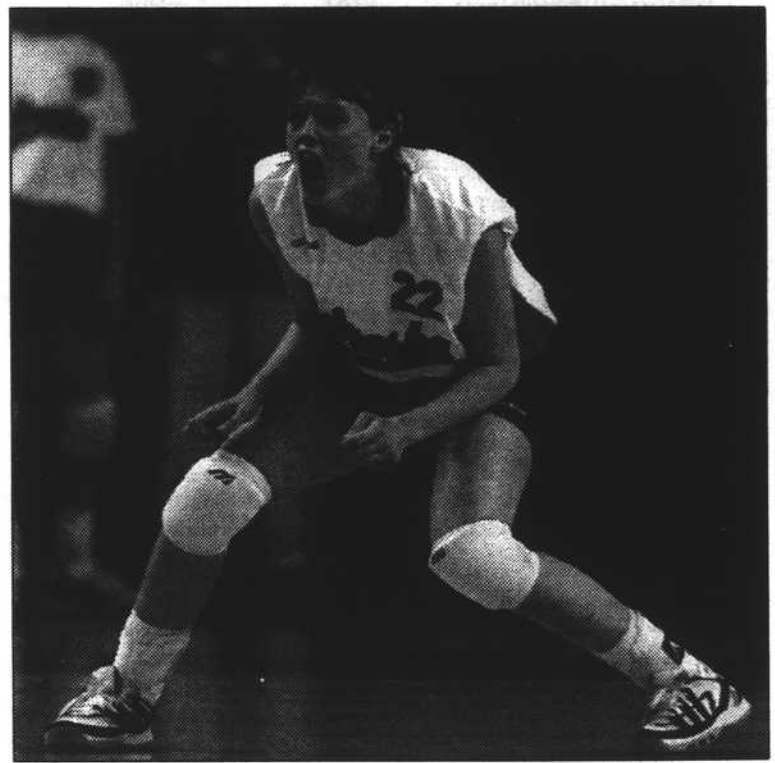
Last season, the Huskers rolled out to a 4-0 start in the conference before dropping four of the next six matches.

Tauke said that this year the team's focus and confidence will be there during the crucial stages of the conference season.

Pettit told the media during a Tuesday press conference that he expects this week's practices to be among the toughest of the season.

"It's not a long season. We have 10 weeks left, and that means only 30 practices," Pettit said. "If we miss three, that's 10 percent of our practices."

Both matches begin at 7:30 p.m. at the NU Coliseum.



MATT MILLER/DN  
JUNIOR MIDDLE BLOCKER Tonia Tauke reacts to a point last season.

## NU braces for Huard

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with the big play when he has to."

Huard said the Huskies have been watching film of NU's victory over Louisiana Tech, when the Husker secondary gave up 590 yards in the air.

But that's the last thing in the minds of the defensive backs, Brown said.

"The defense wants to come out and prove that we're a good defense," Brown said. "I think people have started doubting us a little bit. We want to

come out and prove that we're capable of playing great defense against a top-10 team."

Coats said consistency is important if the Huskies are going to move the ball against Nebraska.

But attitude, he said, is another key. "I know it's Nebraska," Coats said.

"But I'm not going to get caught up in their winning streak and stuff. I'm just going to look at the team and try and dissect it. We have to go in believing that they're beatable."

## NU gears for six-game homestand

By **JAY SAUNDERS**  
Staff writer

Coming into this weekend, Nebraska Soccer Coach John Walker can't help but have a case of deja vu.

Last year, the Cornhuskers were 4-2 entering a month-long homestand.

One year later, the No. 21 Huskers are 4-2 after a win Wednesday against Iowa State.

This weekend, NU starts a stretch of six consecutive games at the Abbott Sports Complex. The homestand starts tonight at 7 against Loyola-Chicago. Sunday, Nebraska plays host to Southwest Missouri State at 1 p.m.

"It is really ironic," senior Lindsay Eddleman said. "Hopefully it won't become a trend."

Walker said although the situation is the same, this year's Husker team is vastly different than last season.

Not only did the Huskers lose several players to graduation, but nine players are in different positions. Only Eddleman and fellow forward Kim Engesser are in the same position as they were a year ago. But Eddleman is just returning from a foot injury that has hampered her the entire year.

In addition, five freshmen have

## Soccer

Nebraska vs. Loyola-Chicago, Friday, 7 p.m.  
Nebraska vs. SMSU, Sunday, 1 p.m.  
Both matches at Abbot Sports Complex

seen considerable playing time.

"It is quite a bit different because we have such a younger squad," Walker said. "We still have a good team, but the team is not as experienced."

As if Walker didn't have enough problems to worry about, the injury bug has bit the Huskers.

This week in practice, freshman Najah Williams suffered a knee injury and will be out at least this weekend.

Williams' injury leaves 17 healthy players for this weekend.

"We are still in the experimentation phase," Walker said. "It is difficult when you have five players out."

Despite all of that, Walker said he is comfortable with Nebraska's situation — because the Huskers are at home.

NU has only lost once in the past three seasons at Abbott.

"We have a good track record at home," Walker said. "After this homestand, we will have a better idea about our team."

In last season's homestand, the Huskers won all eight games, outscoring their opponents 40-0.

But this year, senior Becky Hogan said something is different.

"I just think we might have lost track of our goals," Hogan said. "It's nice to be at home. It will be exactly what we need."

Whatever the ailment, Hogan said a little home cooking could very well be the cure.

Both Loyola-Chicago (5-3) and Southwest Missouri State (1-5) are unranked.

The Ramblers have won three consecutive games. Walker said Loyola is being talked up as one of the most improved teams in the region.

SWMSU is suffering from an injury situation similar to that of the Huskers. The Bears have been outscored 19-6 in their six games.

But even though this weekend's opponents are not in the NSCAA/Umbro Top 25 poll, Walker said the Huskers cannot be complacent.

"Sometimes when you play a team without a big name, there is a human nature to have a drop-off in intensity," Walker said. "There is no reason for that."

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## Evans, Newcombe return for NU

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way to trick the coaches and doctors into thinking it was 100 percent," Newcombe said. "That didn't work, and it probably turned out to be a good thing."

The thought of handing off to Evans adds to Newcombe's excitement. The last time Evans played for NU, Newcombe was in high school.

Evans is also ready to play with Newcombe.

"We are both confident in each other," said Evans, who ran for 776 yards and 14 touchdowns as a freshman. "And with both of us back, they won't be able to key on just one person. We will have all of our dimensions."

The Huskers expect their biggest offensive challenge yet against UW. The Husky defense was impressive in a 20-10 win over BYU last Saturday, holding the Cougars to 204 yards of total offense.

"I think they are the best defense we have seen all year," Newcombe said. "They will challenge us offensively. They do a lot of stalling before the ball is snapped, which makes it hard to read the defense."

But Evans thinks NU could catch the Huskies off-guard — Washington

## Football Starters

Nebraska Starters

Offense					Defense				
Pos.	No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Pos.	No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.
QB	12	Bobby Newcombe	6-0	195	LT	37	Chad Kelley	6-3	250
IB	36	Correll Buckhalter	6-0	225	NT	96	Steve Warren	6-1	305
FB	45	Joel Mihalovick	5-11	240	DT	91	Loran Kalsar	6-6	280
WB	5	Shavin Wiggins	5-11	200	RR	84	Miko Rucker	6-6	280
SE	6	Kenny Chestnut	6-4	210	SLB	48	Brian Shaw	6-1	215
TE	88	Sheldon Jackson	6-4	245	MLB	44	Jay Foreman	6-1	240
LT	68	Adam Juch	6-5	315	WLB	27	Eric Johnson	6-1	250
LG	63	James Sherman	6-2	295	LCB	16	Erwin Swiney	6-0	185
C	58	Josh Henshaw	6-3	290	FS	24	Mike Brown	5-10	230
RG	72	Ben Gessford	6-2	290	ROV	25	Joe Walker	5-10	200
RT	65	Jason Schwab	6-1	300	RCB	22	Ralph Brown	5-9	190
PK	35	Kris Brown	5-10	205	P	23	Bill Lafleur	5-11	200

Offense					Defense				
Pos.	No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.	Pos.	No.	Name	Ht.	Wt.
SE	4	Ja'Warren Hooker	5-11	165	SLB	4	Juniah Pharms	6-1	235
WT	68	Elliot Silvers	6-6	300	DE	99	Joeh Smith	6-4	255
WB	67	Tony Coats	6-7	310	DT	79	Mac Tullock	6-6	280
C	51	Brad Hutt	6-3	285	NT	95	Jabari Issa	6-6	295
SB	71	Chad Ward	6-5	315	ILB	27	Marqueson Hamilton	6-2	235
ST	75	Aaron Dulan	6-7	325	LB	17	Lester Towns	6-3	240
TE	6	Ruggie Davis	6-3	230	WLB	23	Todd Johnson	6-2	235
QB	7	Brock Huard	6-5	225	ROV	8	Nigel Burton	5-9	180
FB	32	Marques Shaw	6-0	215	FS	13	Shawne Jones	5-11	190
FB	47	Pat Conniff	6-1	235	CB	1	Jermaine Smith	5-11	195
HB	80	Dane Looker	6-1	190	CB	10	Toune Baw	5-9	180
FL	9	Gerald Harris	6-1	190					

has not seen NU's injured players at full strength this season.

"I feel better about coming back for a game like this. I feel like I can bring

some big-play capability," Evans said. "I expect a victory. If I play well and things happen the way they should for everyone, we can win it."

JON FRANK/DN