

# Sooners in rebuilding season

BY ANDREW STRNAD  
Staff writer

Rebuilding is a word that coaches don't like to be associated with.

It usually involves a long season, filled with growing pains and painful lessons that include losing matches.

Unfortunately, this is the reality for Oklahoma Volleyball Coach Miles Pabst.

"When you lose four seniors that meant so much for your team, there will be a day when you're going to have to rebuild, and that's what we're doing," Pabst said.

After a 1997 season that saw the Sooners (20-13 overall and 13-7 in the Big 12) make an appearance in the NCAA Tournament, Oklahoma has started the 1998 campaign 5-7 overall and 0-2 in the conference.

Now a team with just four upperclassmen that make up a squad will welcome two of the best teams in the Big 12 to Norman, Okla., this weekend, playing host to Nebraska and Colorado.

The No. 3 Cornhuskers (11-0, 2-0) will have revenge on their minds, thanks to a stunning three-game loss at Oklahoma last year on Oct. 10 (15-17, 11-15, 10-15).

"It's definitely a motivating factor for us, as all losses last year are." NU middle blocker Megan Korver said.

That could be bad news for Pabst and the Sooners, as his club has struggled offensively all season.

"We're not overpowering anybody.

**Volleyball**  
Nebraska at Kansas  
7:30 p.m. Lawrence, Kan. Friday  
Nebraska at Oklahoma  
7 p.m. Norman, Okla. Saturday

We've only managed to hit around .189, and it's hard to beat anybody in this conference when we hit that low," Pabst said.

In his 21<sup>st</sup> season with the Sooners, Pabst still wouldn't change his situation for a winning team in another conference.

"I love being in this conference, even if we have a down year," Pabst said. "We know we can't stay at that high level as Nebraska does, but it's always good to be in a conference that is as good as this conference is."

As the Huskers travel to Norman for Saturday night's match, Pabst expects his young team to play at a much higher level.

"I think we'll play better because we'll be more relaxed," Pabst said. "Whether we play better or not I don't know, but we should be in the right frame of mind."

While evaluating the Huskers, Pabst said, the experience factor is the main reason for their continued success. He said this year's team could be among NU's best.

"That's a team that never rebuilds. That's why they are always so good," Pabst said. "They always have experienced players on the court, and with a great leader like Fiona (Nepe) it's no surprise that they are always competing for a Final Four trip."

For Oklahoma, the experience isn't quite there yet, as the loss of Patrice Arrington and Melissa Peterson will be hard to overcome in 1998, but a patient Pabst said given time, the Sooners will be back again.

# New coach Bechard helps upstart Kansas

BY ANDREW STRNAD  
Staff writer

Getting invited to the party called the Big 12 Conference was quite a moment for Kansas Volleyball Coach Ray Bechard.



Pettit

For the last 13 years, Bechard has been located in the heart of the Big 12, as head coach of Barton County Community College in Great Bend, Kan.

Bechard put up quite a record at Barton Country by posting a 716-60 mark, a .923 winning percentage.

But for Bechard, the opportunity to coach a Division I team in arguably the best conference in the nation was just too great of a chance to pass up.

"This is where you aspire to go when you become a coach or a player," Bechard said. "This is the best conference to be in, in terms of the number of athletes and the number of quality teams."

So far Bechard, who inherited a fine group of players, has the Jayhawks (10-3, 1-1) off to their best start since 1992.

Kansas has been able to take advantage of a easy schedule early, which has boosted the confidence of a team that finished 9-24 a year ago.

"I think this schedule allowed us to get some wins and get feeling confident heading into the conference," Bechard said.

In a conference where six and perhaps seven teams will make a run for the NCAA Tournament, Bechard believes protecting your home court as well as winning on the road will determine which teams make the tournament.

Junior middle blocker Amanda Reeves is one player who will play a big part in whether Bechard's Jayhawks will make it to the 64-team tournament in his first year.

Reeves is hitting .361 on the year, with 172 kills to go with 65 blocks.

Bechard's biggest test of his brief tenure will come tonight as he faces Nebraska and an old friend, Cornhusker Coach Terry Pettit.

Bechard has spent summers working with Pettit at various off-season volleyball camps.

Pettit, whose Huskers are a perfect 62-0 all-time against Kansas, said he expects KU to soon join the upper division of the conference.

"Kansas has the best team since I've been here," Pettit said. "They have a couple of players that would start for any team in this conference, and soon they'll be a nice new facility."

# Huskers-Aggies rivalry renewed; conference implications abound

BY JAY SAUNDERS  
Staff writer

The rivalry continues. In the first two years of the Big 12 Conference there has been no shortage of big games between Texas A&M and Nebraska.



Walker

The rivalry in a 7 p.m. game at the Abbott Sports Complex.

"The fact that the two teams have played each other in each of the conference championships speaks for itself," NU Coach John Walker said. "It is a healthy rivalry."

Last season, A&M won both times the teams played. In 1996, it was the Huskers who swept two games from the Aggies.

In both years, it was the team that played at home that won the conference title.

"It is probably our biggest game of the season," junior Lindsay Eddleman said. "Energy will not be a problem."

With the increased energy, there have been several altercations between the two teams.

In the last two seasons, it has been no secret that these teams are not the best of friends.

"Everyone has animosity on the field no matter who it is," Eddleman said. "There might be some cheap shots and some yellow cards, but

## Soccer

Nebraska vs. Texas A&M 7 p.m. Friday  
Nebraska vs. Texas 1 p.m. Saturday  
Both matches at Abbott Sports Complex

both teams are prepared for that."

A&M is not the only team on the schedule this weekend. Texas, the only other Big 12 team to have beaten the

Huskers, comes into town for a 1 p.m. game Sunday.

The Longhorns (2-4) have limped out of the gate this season. UT has lost three straight games.

But last season, when Texas beat NU 1-0, the Longhorns had just lost a conference game to Missouri.

Walker said even though Texas has struggled, NU cannot overlook the Longhorns.

"Their track record this year is irrelevant," Walker said. "They always seem to play well against us."

Not only does the Longhorns play the Huskers tough, but they also seem to have close games. Three of the four games Texas and Nebraska have played have been decided by one goal.

The same goes for the series between NU and the Aggies. Walker said the chance of one team getting a big lead is slim.

"If you can get out early, it would be crucial," Walker said. "Looking at the past, I don't know if a team will get out to a two-goal lead."

"More than likely, it will be a nail-biter."

The Huskers are coming off a weekend in which close games were not a problem. NU outscored Loyola-Chicago and Southwest Missouri State 18-0.

Walker said the team had a good week of practice to prepare for the weekend.

For the first time this season, senior Heather Brown may see playing time. Brown, who tore her anterior cruciate ligament in the spring, has been cleared to play by team doctors.

# Evans questionable for OSU game

BY DAVID WILSON  
Senior staff writer

The sequel to the return of Nebraska I-back DeAngelo Evans might be postponed because of another injury.

Evans, who returned to action against Washington on Saturday, suffered from a sore right foot during the game with the eighth-ranked Huskies.

The 5-foot-9, 210 back practiced Thursday for the first time this week, but is still questionable for Nebraska's matchup with Oklahoma State on Saturday in Kansas City, Mo., NU Coach Frank Solich said Thursday.

"He doesn't have all his speed and quickness," Solich said, "so we'll see where he is Saturday. He definitely will make the trip."

Evans missed the entire 1997 season because of a pelvic injury suffered midway through the 1996 season. He then missed NU's first three games this season after undergoing knee surgery.

Against Washington, Evans rushed for 146 yards and three touchdowns - reminiscent of

his 1996 season, when he rushed for 776 yards as a true freshman.

Nebraska sophomore quarterback Bobby Newcombe added 79 yards on the ground and also scored three touchdowns. He also threw for 84 yards.

Saturday marked the first time Newcombe and Evans had played in a game together. Newcombe also returned from a knee injury last weekend after missing two games.

"I didn't realize how tough he was," Evans said Tuesday.

The return of both Newcombe and Evans definitely didn't hurt Nebraska's option attack, senior fullback Joel Makovicka said.

"The best part about it is we're finally starting to get healthy," Makovicka said. "I think you've seen some great players come back and just come into our offense and kind of give us a shot in the arm."

Even if Evans is not available for Saturday's game at Arrowhead Stadium, Solich said he is confident in No. 2 I-back Correll Buckhalter.

"I think Correll does a very good job," Solich said. "I've seen him practice at a much better pace the last couple of weeks."

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- 250 Pets
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- 270 Ticket Exchange
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