

NU to have last homestand

■ Seniors Megan Korver, Fiona Nepo and Jaime Krondak will play their final regular season home game.

BY JOHN GASKINS
Staff reporter

The curtain will come down on the Nebraska women's volleyball home season at the NU Coliseum this weekend.



Pettit

The No. 3 Huskers (23-0 overall and 14-0 in the Big 12 Conference) will play host to Baylor Friday and No. 23 Texas Tech Saturday before closing out the regular season with four road games.

With the last home games come the last hurrah for seniors Fiona Nepo, Jamie Krondak and Megan Korver in front of their fans at the NU Coliseum.

The class of 1998, with one national title under its belt and a shot at another, may be the best ever. NU's true seniors, Nepo and Krondak (Korver attended

George Washington University as a freshman), are pursuing the all-time highest winning percentage mark (.907 from 1993-96) in school history. The seniors have gone 112-12 (.903) during their career.

NU Coach Terry Pettit said the heart of the team this year has come from his seniors.

"Without question, they're the core to our team," Pettit said.

"For you to compete for a national championship or a Final Four position, you have to have your seniors play their best volleyball, and I think these three have done that this year."

The leader of the squad, captain and setter Nepo, is in the twilight of a career that has seen her smash the all-time NU set-assist record.

"I really believe she is one of the better players in the country," Pettit said. "Her role is self-explanatory — she allows us to be a better team."

However, a slight tear in a foot ligament prevented Nepo from playing in Friday's win over No. 17 Kansas State. Pettit said an MRI and a CAT scan on the foot have tested negative for a torn ligament, and he is "cautiously optimistic" that Nepo will play this weekend.

Meanwhile, the Huskers coped without Nepo on Friday thanks to the guidance of her backup, sophomore Jill McWilliams, and Nepo's senior team-

mates.

McWilliams, making her first career start, recorded 44 assists against the Wildcats and earned confidence from her coach.

"My wife, Ann, said to me that after about a game I stopped watching Jill," Pettit said. "I just realized that she was going to do the job, and I could watch the match."

"She did a good job and gave our team the confidence not only knowing that Jill could play, but it gave them the opportunity to rise up and make up for the fact that Fiona wasn't in the match. I think we saw that from Krondak's play and Korver's play."

Indeed, the other two seniors did their part, as they have all year.

Middle blocker Korver provides strength, both offensively and defensively. She leads the team in hitting percentage at .387, 13th in the nation, and also leads the team in blocks per game at 1.79, putting her sixth in the nation.

"When she's flying to the ball in transition, that's when we become a pretty exciting team and pretty dynamic team," Pettit said.

Outside hitter Krondak has also sparked the Huskers throughout the season. Against No. 15 Colorado Nov. 4, she provided 17 kills and hit .414 from the left side, leading the team to a straight-set romp.

Solich: Evans' progress slow after tailbone injury

■ The I-back from Wichita, Kan., will likely not see action again this season for Nebraska.

BY SAM MCKEWN
Senior editor

The chances of DeAngelo Evans playing again this season for the Nebraska football team remain dim, NU Coach Frank Solich said Tuesday.

Solich said Evans has tried to do things in practice, and he has not responded as the coaches would have hoped after injuring his tailbone.

"It's really not coming along very well," Solich said. "He tried to come out and go through practices. It's been a situation where he's been able to do very little on the field."

"I don't see him being healthy for some time."

Evans has had a number of injuries in the last two seasons, the worst of which was a year-long pelvic injury that kept him out of the 1997 season.

Then, Evans hurt his knee in fall practice. He hurt his toe and his ankle along the way, too, Solich said.

He now is out with the tailbone injury, which Evans said he suffered on the first offensive play against Oklahoma State when he slipped and fell on the wet turf at Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City, Mo.

Solich said the streak of injuries has been tough on the sophomore from Wichita, Kan., who broke all of Barry Sanders' Kansas high school rushing records.

"It's certainly been discouraging for DeAngelo and for us, and we'd love to have him out there being a part of it, but that's not been the case," Solich said. "It has not been easy on him."

Evans now sits and waits to rehabilitate his injury to a point where he can play. When that point is, Solich said, is not known.

For his part, Evans has not talked to the media since before the Kansas game and has said he would not talk to the media until he plays again, which may not be this season.

"I hate to project (when Evans will return) because with that injury it has been so hard to determine," Solich said. "It's just been one thing after another. He's doing the best he can to get himself back to where he can play football."

Solich says rush attack key to win vs. Wildcats

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KSU's second game.

With NU racking up an average of 270 yards per game on the ground, Heskew said the Husker offensive line has been doing its job quite well and expects nothing different this week.

"I think we stack up pretty well," Heskew said. "We can move around; we can get after people. If we play to our ability, there shouldn't be anybody in the country that can stop us."

Though the Huskers will be up against the most formidable defensive foe they have seen this year, Coach Frank Solich said the offensive line has improved steadily throughout the season and should be ready on Saturday.

"Looking back on the tapes of other teams, no one has been able to (run the ball well) with any kind of consistency," Solich said. "But hopefully the amount of improvement we've made over the course of the season will show."

Heskew said the importance of establishing the running game will be key, but he knows that if the Huskers

are unable to produce on the ground, the pass can also be a viable option.

"We've had games in the past where they try to shut down our run and make our quarterback beat them," Heskew said. "We'll come in with the attitude that if they do shut down the run, we'll beat them with the pass."

Should it come to that, the Huskers will look to quarterback Eric Crouch, who is starting his fourth game for NU.

"We have a lot of different forms in our offense," Crouch said. "But we have to be physical when we come in there. We're definitely going to come out and run the ball. That's what our offense is centered around."

Starting for NU at I-back will be sophomore Dan Alexander, fresh off his first career start — a 110-yard, three-touchdown performance at Iowa State.

With Alexander's 6-0, 250-pound frame thrown into the mix, the battle for the line of scrimmage should turn out to be what Alexander himself touted as a power struggle.

"For Nebraska, it's always a power game," Alexander said. "We don't want to change what we're used to."

Flair helps Krondak excel, keeps teammates loose

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school, but now I'm nothing," Krondak said. "It doesn't mean anything compared to winning a national title, but it's something that I should be able to do."

At Lincoln East, Krondak was a First-Team Mizuno High School All-American and a member of the U.S. Junior Olympic First-Team All-America team in 1994.

Krondak played a key role her freshman season during Nebraska's 1995 championship team, particularly against No. 3 Florida, when she recorded a career-high 16 digs in a dramatic five-game win.

Three years later, Krondak is known as an all-around player by her teammates, but the senior hopes she is remembered in a different light — one that doesn't involve volleyball whatsoever.

"I want to be remembered as a spunky chick," Krondak said. "Somebody with some flair, who people like to play with."

The only child will likely be

remembered for her spunk as well as her knack for fashion.

The fashion merchandising major, unlike most college students, is looking forward to the day when she isn't putting on shorts and T-shirts for practice but instead is donning skirts and blouses for work.

"It's really strange; I'm really excited about getting a job," Krondak said. "I've had two summer jobs, and that's it."

Eventually, Krondak wants to work as a personal shopper, but with a year and a half of school remaining, she's going to have to settle for a part-time job in retail.

But that's quite all right for her, since she sees volleyball as another chapter in her book of life — a chapter that's about to end.

"In some ways, I'm glad it's almost over," Krondak said. "I know I'm not going to have a career in volleyball, and I don't want one."

"I'm just looking forward to having classes at 3:30 in the afternoon and just going to work. That's going to be fun."

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