

## It's tourney time: Huskers ready for MSU

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**NANCY MEENDERING**  
NU outside hitter

BY ANDREW STRNAD  
Staff writer

Playing in the NCAA volleyball tournament may be old hat for Nebraska, but it never gets old.



Pettit

For NU Coach Terry Pettit, the chance to coach in the postseason is the best part of coaching volleyball.

“It's my favorite time of year and my favorite time to coach,” Pettit said.

The Huskers bring a 35-15 record in NCAA tournament matches into

tonight's match at the NU Coliseum with Morgan State, which is 0-1 in tournament play.

NU is 11-1 in first-round matches, and with a top seed, the Huskers are heavy favorites over the Honey Bears.

The first-round matches begin at 5 p.m., with Utah taking on Illinois State.

The Huskers and the Honey Bears will follow at 7:30 p.m. with the winners playing Saturday at 7:30 p.m.

The two teams have never met and know very little about one another. They exchanged videos Tuesday.

“All I know is that they are the Honey Bears from Baltimore,” sophomore outside hitter Nancy Meendering said. “We'll concentrate on our play, and the coaches will have us ready for (Morgan State).”

The Honey Bears (18-14) were champions of the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference, and Coach Ramona Riley-Bozier looks at playing as an opportunity to build the Morgan State program.

“We're trying to build some tradi-

### First round teams

<b>Nebraska (28-1)</b>	<b>Illinois St. (22-9)</b>
SR: 5	SR: 37
CR: 19-1	CR: 16-2
TTR: 14-1	TTR: 2-9
TA: 17	TA: 11

<b>Morgan St. (18-4)</b>	<b>Utah (20-9)</b>
SR: 235	SR: 31
CR: 10-0	CR: 9-5
TTR: 1-2	TTR: 6-6
TA: 2	TA: 1

Key: SR - Sagarin rating  
CR - Conference rating  
TTR - Record vs. tourney teams  
TA - Tournament appearance

JON FRANK/DN

tion here, and playing at Nebraska will show us how things are done,” Riley-Bozier said.

Morgan State, despite not having a permanent home court and playing with six scholarship players, is returning to the tournament for the second-straight season.

For Nebraska (28-1), in its quest for

a third trip to the Final Four in four years, the Huskers have history on their side.

Since 1982, no team that finished the regular season undefeated has won the national championship.

NU was undefeated until Nov. 20, when the Huskers lost to Texas A&M.

In 1998, two unbeaten teams remain (Long Beach State and Penn State), but Pettit doesn't buy historical trends.

“I don't throw salt over my shoulder or cross my fingers or avoid ladders,” Pettit said. “I think the best teams win.”

If Pettit is right, then Nebraska is certainly one of the favorites, considering the Huskers will be able to play all four matches preceding the Final Four at the NU Coliseum.

Nebraska is 22-1 in tournament matches played at the NU Coliseum. The only loss came on Dec. 10, 1994, against Penn State.

That season the Huskers entered the NCAA tournament at 31-0.

## Coliseum Crazies

Husker volleyball thrives on loud, cozy environment that propels home winning streak

BY SAM MCKEWON  
Senior editor

Fourteen minutes before the Nebraska-Texas volleyball match Oct. 16 came one of the best examples of just how cozy the NU Coliseum really is.

There was a mother, court-side, holding her daughter's hand as they made their way through the incoming crowd. The daughter was holding the hand of a younger sister, who, in turn, was holding the hand of the youngest sister.

It was a scene that could have been lifted from the book “Madeline.”

Then came the vicious twist.

On the court, Nancy Meendering and the rest of the NU volleyball team were warming up. Meendering has a cannon of a left arm and isn't afraid to use it.

She unleashed a practice kill cross-court, where a ballboy was supposed to catch it.

He didn't. Can't blame him — the ball shot 10 feet into the air.

But Mom never saw it coming.

The ball zinged off the mother's head. Trying to steady her balance, she broke her hands away from her daughter, who broke away from her sister, who broke away from the youngest sister, who promptly plopped down on her fanny and cried.

Welcome to the comfy (and occasionally, too close for comfort) confines of one of the nation's top college volleyball facilities.

It's small, tight, dark and incredibly loud — about what you'd expect from a venue of a little more than 4,000 seats built before World War II. The coliseum has kept some old touches, too — it still has a Longines clock in the east end of the stands, the only one of its kind in collegiate volleyball.

And the NU volleyball fans love it. Go to a couple of matches and you'll see the same regulars in their same seats: the lady waving the K (for a kill) at the top of the arena, the tubby kid shakin' his thing in Section G, the old man who has to peek around a column to watch the action. They all come back every match.

The NU players love it as much as the fans do.

“This is what you play for, to come out here in front



DAWN DIETRICH/DN

THE NU COLISEUM has played home to the Nebraska volleyball team since the team was formed in 1975. The Huskers have won 61 consecutive matches in the arena.

of the fans at the NU Coliseum,” senior middle blocker Megan Korver said. “The coliseum is what I'm going to miss most.”

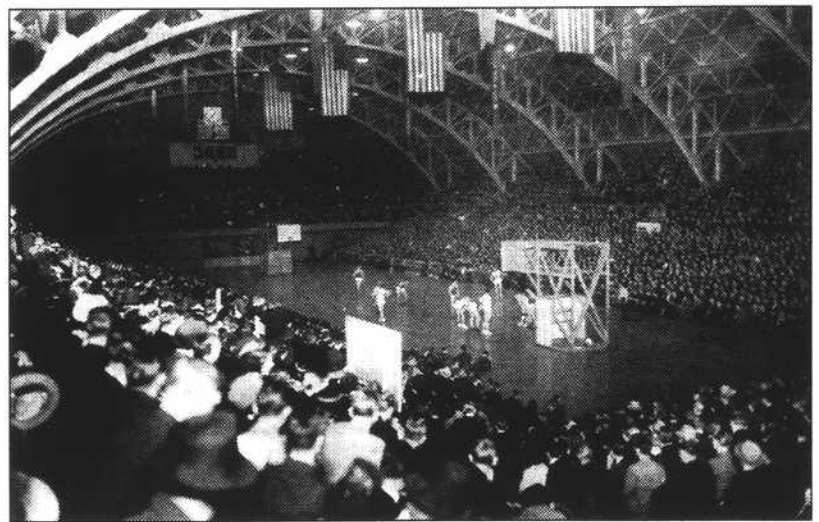
Korver, who transferred from George Washington in 1996, has never lost a match in the coliseum. One must go back to 1995 to find a Cornhusker loss there.

Since then, they've won 61 consecutive matches in the coliseum. NU has won 137 consecutive matches against conference teams in the building that was built in 1926.

The coliseum is a big change from Korver's former home arena with the Colonials. Battling with the NFL's Washington Redskins, Georgetown men's basketball, and other sports in the fall, her teammates struggled to find an audience — especially one that knew what was going on.

“Unhaaa ... Hah,” Korver moaned when asked about GW fans. “I actually had somebody walk up to me and ask me what volleyball was. They said, ‘Do you play that with a net?’ We got about 100 fans per game.”

“Nebraska fans know what volleyball is. They know what a rally is. They know what a back-row attack is.



NU SPORTS INFORMATION

THE NU COLISEUM was home to the Nebraska men's basketball team from 1926 to 1976. In 1958, NU beat No. 1 Kansas and No. 3 Kansas State in the span of two weeks.

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