

Pettit: Recruiting class could be his most talented ever

By SEAN CALLAHAN
Staff writer

Though they have yet to set or spike a ball in a Nebraska uniform, the four members of the 1999 Cornhusker recruiting class are already being touted as one of the best incoming groups in the country.

"This may be the most talented class we've ever recruited," NU Volleyball Coach Terry Pettit said.

Pettit said he was confident any one of the four could step in and play right away.

Of course, they still have some adjusting to do — including getting used to playing under Pettit.

"I think the hardest thing is going to be adjusting to the coaching," said Laura Pilakowski, a 6-foot-1 outside hitter from Columbus.

Named the Central Region Volleyball player of the year following her senior season, Pilakowski said she is eager to make the step to the Division-I level.

How fast she sees court time, however, isn't a top priority.

"I will practice hard," Pilakowski said. "If I don't play, it's no big deal."

Amber Holmquist, a 6-4 middle blocker from Houston, had a similar outlook on her future as a Husker.

"I want to make sure I work my hardest to gain respect and fit in as well as I can here," Holmquist said. "I look up to these girls."

Holmquist, a starter for the U.S. Junior National Team this summer, was named the 1998 All-Greater Houston Player of the Year after recording 461 kills, 81 solo blocks, 216 assists and 277 digs during her senior season.

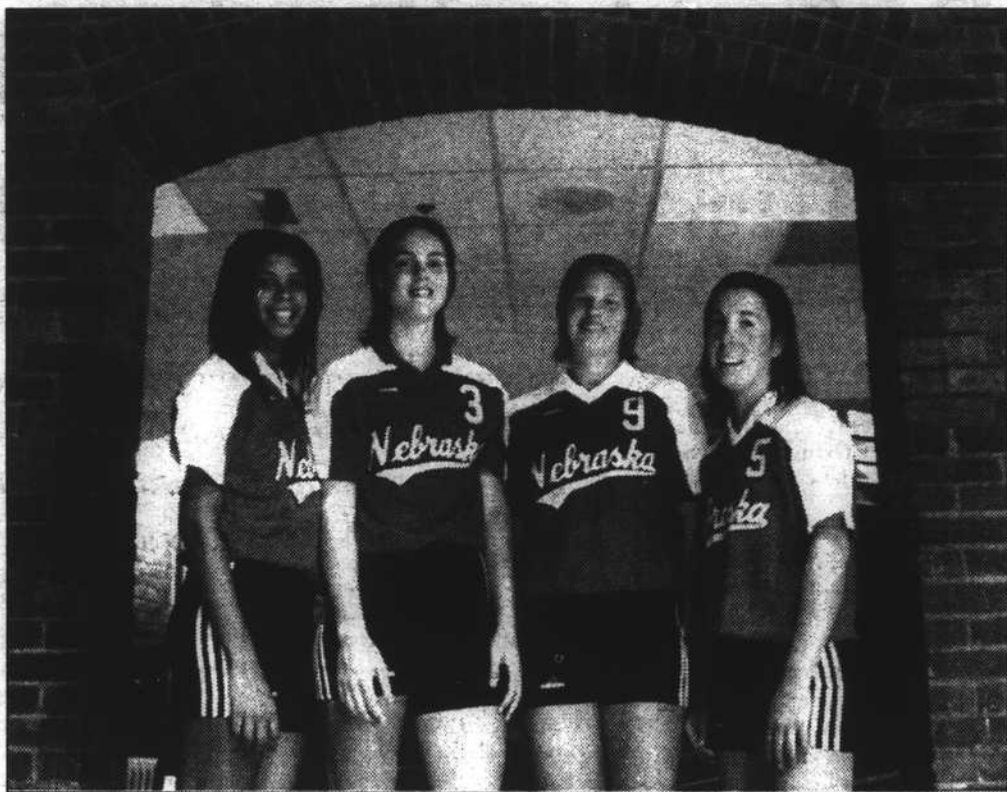
"Somebody like Amber Holmquist is going to be a better player three years from now," Pettit said, "but she's good enough right now to play."

Also good enough to see action this season, Pettit said, is 6-2 setter Greichaly Cepero, from Dorado, Puerto Rico.

Cepero came to the United States for her senior season as an exchange student at McDonogh High in Owings Mills, Md. She was also a member of the Puerto Rico Junior National Team.

Though she will concentrate solely on volleyball this season, Cepero will likely be placed on a basketball scholarship next year — while participating in both sports.

According to Pettit, an athlete like Cepero does not come around often.



LYDIA GONZALES/DN

NEBRASKA COACH TERRY PETTIT says he is confident that any member of this year's volleyball recruiting class could step in and play right away if needed.

"Greicha is truly a unique person," Pettit said. "I don't want to prejudice anything right now, but Greicha has more poise and is more comfortable in new situations than anybody in this room. You're going to be pleased and entertained by how talented she is."

Another setter, 5-9 Lindsay Wischmeier from Burchard, will also look to get her feet wet

in a Nebraska uniform this season.

Wischmeier attended Lewiston High School where she led her squad to two state championships.

Pettit is also confident in Wischmeier's abilities.

"Lindsay has been a setter for so long, she has the mental ability to help us right away."

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London, Wiggins lead inexperienced group of wingbacks

By JOHN GASKINS
Staff writer

Shevin Wiggins would like to be known for more than just his part in "The Catch."

His foot happened to be in the right place at the right time with Nebraska trailing Missouri 38-31 in 1997 on the last play of regulation. He kicked a football headed for the turf into fellow NU receiver Matt Davison's hands to secure the "Miracle in Missouri."

"That was just a phase," Wiggins said. "That's in the past. I'm looking to do a lot more than that this year."

Frankie London would like to be known for more than just being a heavily recruited, former backup quarterback who broke his leg in his seventh game as a wingback in 1998.

Together, Wiggins and London will lead a wingback core that is short on experience — but neither player questions the group's talent.

Wiggins, who possesses the most big-game experience of the wingbacks, wasn't even supposed to be back this season, but was granted an extra year of eligibility by the NCAA last spring because of injuries.

London, also a senior, has also experienced his share of injuries but said he is ready to go this fall.

Senior Sean Applegate, junior John Gibson and freshman Josh Davis will also bring explosion to the position this season, Nebraska Receivers Coach Ron Brown said.

"We definitely have a mixed bag at wingback," Brown said. "Overall, it's an inexperienced group. The jury's still out. But I like their work ethic, and normally guys like them will come along."

Wiggins caught 22 passes for 326 yards and one touchdown, ranking

"We definitely have a mixed bag at wingback."

RON BROWN
NU receivers coach

second only to Matt Davison on the team in receptions.

Brown said he is expecting even more from Wiggins this year.

"Shevin, I believe, is one of the most underrated receivers in the nation," Brown said. "He's very intense, very savvy, but also very smart. He understands the game and picks things up right away. He's the most improved player I have coached in that area."

Wiggins said despite being the most experienced wingback, he has actually picked up a lot of things from watching and playing alongside London.

"He's been teaching me a lot," Wiggins said. "He knows the odds and ends, the running routes, the blocking as well as anyone. I learn a lot just by watching him."

Brown said London was given the choice after the 1997 season to either compete for the congested quarterback job or switch to wingback. London chose to move, and Brown has been impressed with London's adjustment to the position ever since.

But what has impressed Brown even more is London's ability to continuously come back from adversities such as losing his quarterback dreams or breaking his leg on his only punt return of 1998 (against Kansas).

"I was in the hospital with Frankie the day after that happened," Brown said. "That guy has tremendous tenacity. He never did or will ever lay down."

"To do what he did was amazing. He has shown so much leadership, so much optimism and so much faith in God to bounce back the way he has."



London

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