

SPORTS

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Huskers down Drake in three

■ Nebraska bounces back from its two-loss opening weekend, defeating the Bulldogs in under an hour and a half.

By BRANDON SCHULTE
Staff writer

The Nebraska volleyball team's match against Drake didn't have the same heart-pounding excitement as its first two matches, but unlike the first two matches, this one gave the Cornhuskers a notch in the win column.

NU earned its first win of the season by blanking the Bulldogs 3-0 (15-7, 15-7, 15-11). After starting 0-2 for the first time in school history, the Huskers

hit .339 to depose of Drake in less than an hour and a half.

Nebraska Coach Terry Pettit saw positives in his team's performance—even if it wasn't perfect.

"We did some good things and some not-so-good things," Pettit said. "On the positive side, we had time to play (Amber) Holmquist, (Laura) Pilakowski, Katie (Jahnke). The tempo was different from last weekend, and there was some sloppiness on our side."

NU took control

of the match right

from the start, jump-

ing out to a 12-3 lead in the first game on its way to

a 15-7 win.

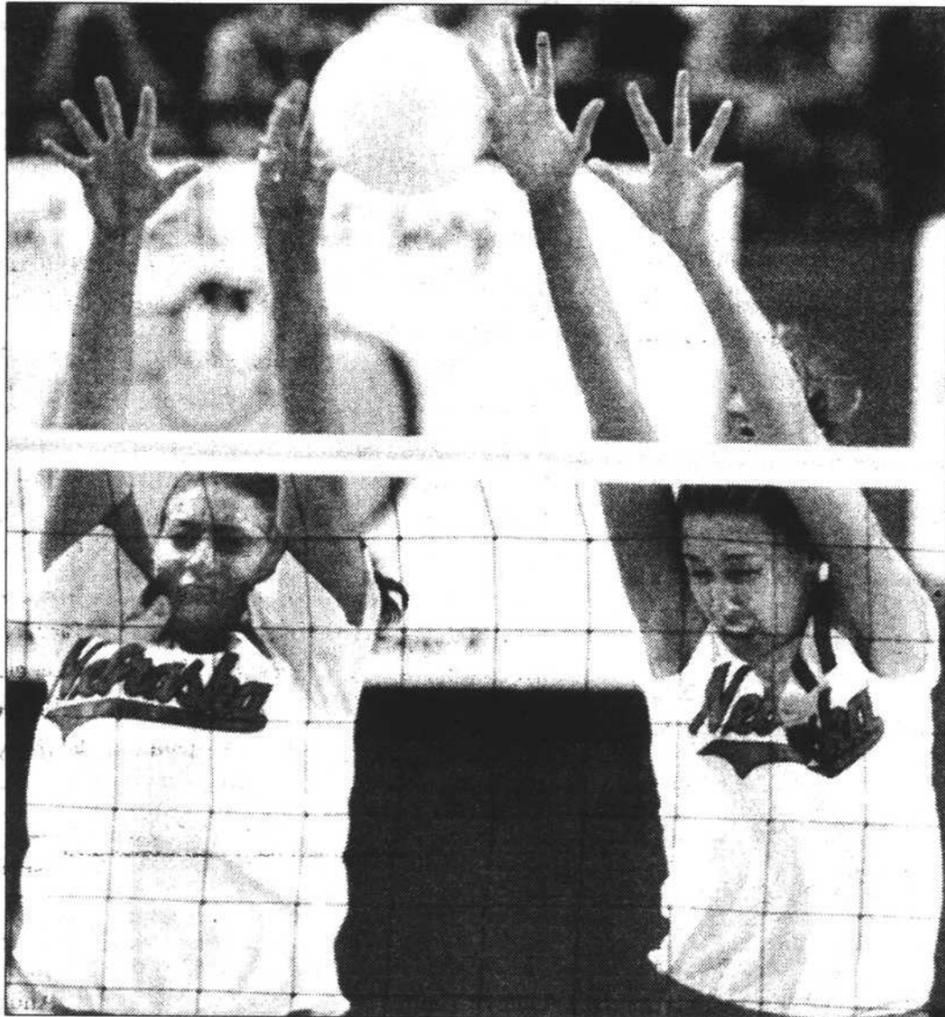
The second game finished with the same score, as Nebraska was aided by Drake errors. The Bulldogs committed 27 errors on the night, 10 in the second game alone.

In the loss, Drake Coach Blaine Tendler was happy with the effort of his squad.

"The competitiveness was definitely there," Tendler said. "Last year, if we would have played a team as good as Nebraska, we would have been out of here in a half an hour."

DU kept the final game tight and was down 12-11 with Nancy Meendering serving. But the Huskers ran off three consecutive points culminating in a kill by Katie Janke.

The non-conference match gave NU time to see



MIKE WARREN/DN
NEBRASKA SOPHOMORE Jenny Kropp (right) and junior middle blocker Katie Jahnke put both arms up to block a spike from Drake. Nebraska beat Drake in a 3-0 sweep at the Coliseum, rebounding from last weekend's two losses. The Huskers' record is now 1-2.

freshman Greichaly Cepero at setter in the third game. She also played as an outside hitter, finishing with 13 assists and five kills.

"She did a nice job," Pettit said. "She fired a couple of 31s (a long cross-court set). She really hadn't worked with the team as a setter."

Though Nebraska used 13 players, competition amongst teammates wasn't the focus of the game, middle blocker Jenny Kropp said. Not having a let-down was.

"There's a lot of competition," Kropp said. "Regardless of that, we do a really good job getting

up for games."

The game was a homecoming of sorts for Bulldog setter Heather Harr, a graduate of Lincoln Southeast High School.

She had 36 assists to lead both sides. And even in the loss, Harr was still up 20 minutes after the match ended.

"I was so excited to be able to come here to Nebraska and play my senior year," Harr said. "I'm still on a high."

Nebraska will next be in action this weekend at the Florida SunTrust Invitational in Gainesville, Fla.

Sports Opinion

Adversity no match for NU

Suspensions and position controversies add fuel to Huskers' fire



Don't be surprised if the Nebraska football team wins a national title this year.

I know. I know. You're saying, 'What is this guy thinking? How can he be making a prediction like this when there are so many uncertainties?'

Call me fan boy if you like. But if you look at history, you may be calling me Nostradamus at the end of the year.

Here is my reasoning: NU has had

a key player suspended in Shevin Wiggins, and there also has been controversy at the quarterback position.

It seems that Nebraska thrives on adversity. If you look back to the three national championships in 1994, '95 and '97, each year started with some controversy and adversity.

Receivers Coach Ron Brown is a big believer that adversity makes people stronger. When a whole team faces adversity, it brings them closer together. And when a team comes closer together off the field, that can't help but carry over to the playing field.

"When something happens, Coach Brown always stresses that we can be the ball that bounces back or be the paper that crumbles," said senior Will linebacker Eric Johnson. "At Nebraska, we strive to be the ball that bounces back."

The Cornhuskers bounced back

when Lawrence Phillips was suspended in 1995. Other running backs stepped up and filled in until he was reinstated.

Look for a similar occurrence at wingback this year, although it is not known whether Wiggins will be reinstated or not. Wiggins will be missed — don't get me wrong — but there is talent at that spot. Sean Applegate, Jon Gibson and Wilson Thomas just don't have the same game experience.

Thomas, however, showed what he could do in the last scrimmage catching a long bomb.

The Wiggins situation has all but been swept underneath the carpet as the quarterback controversy took center stage.

The battle between Eric Crouch and Bobby Newcombe is settled for now, but I don't think we've seen the last of it.

The quarterback situation paral-

els 1997 when Scott Frost and Frankie London were steeped in controversy or 1994 and 1995 when Brook Berringer and Tommie Frazier went head-to-head.

Every time the media tries to drive a stake between players, or cast a bad image over the NU program, it seems to bond the team closer together.

And this increased unity can sometimes be the difference between completing a crucial fourth down and failing.

When everyone on the team is on the same page and has extra motivation to prove critics wrong, teams can be very hard to beat.

I think you will find NU is hungry and will be hard to beat this season.

Darren Ivy is a senior news-editorial major and Daily Nebraskan senior staff writer.

Awaiting Iowa 3 days and counting

Johnson's role not limited to linebacker

By DARREN IVY
Senior staff writer

If you step into the shoes of senior Will linebacker Eric Johnson, you better be prepared to take on many roles.

To his coach, Frank Solich, Johnson is a "tremendous" player, who provides enthusiasm and leadership for the Cornhuskers.

To redshirt freshman linebacker Randy Stella, Johnson is a teacher and player to look up to.

To senior linebacker Tony Ortiz, he is a fraternity brother and good friend.

The list goes on, but no matter who was asked, they all had positive things to say about the former Proposition-48 player from Phoenix, Ariz.

"He has a great heart and enjoys doing things for people in the community," said Solich, who once considered using Johnson as a running back. "He plays many roles and does them all well."

Johnson's role as a football player is well documented. He is often regarded as one of the best athletes on the team — holding five position records.

As a junior, he started all the games, recording seven sacks and 70 total tackles. But his roles off the playing field are less known.

When Johnson came to Lincoln in 1995 as a freshman, he feared that he would be picked on.

"I was scared it would be a cold, cut-throat place," said Johnson, a fifth-year senior. "As a high school student, you watch movies like 'The Program' and think it is going to be like that."

But he got a pleasant surprise when he arrived on campus.

Tony Veland, Mike Minter, Michael

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New coach's plan remains a mystery

By JOHN GASKINS
Staff writer

There are plenty of things the Nebraska coaching staffers know about Iowa that will have them licking their chops for Saturday.

To start, the Hawkeyes are coming off a 3-8 season in which they lost their last five games and ranked dead last in the Big 10 conference in both total offense and total defense.

To boot, the experienced Cornhusker coaching staff, mostly assembled of coaches who have been here for more than 10 years, will go up against a recently assembled Hawkeye staff under the guidance of first-year Head Coach Kirk Ferentz.

But the fact that the Hawkeyes have a new coaching staff may be the one thing that will keep Husker coaches' chops dry. Both Nebraska's offensive and defensive coaching staffs

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