

Huskers prepare for war with MU

BY MATTHEW HANSEN
Staff Writer

The fifth and sixth-ranked Nebraska Cornhuskers travel to Missouri to open Big 12 play on Saturday night with an unblemished record but also with an offense whose production has been discouraging at times, according to Head Coach Frank Solich.

"I think we need to improve offensively," Solich said. "There is absolutely no question about that. We need to improve in a lot of categories. We are determined to get that done."

The Husker offense gained only 185 yards and had just eight first downs in a 20-13 victory over Southern Mississippi last week. Junior split end Matt Davison elaborated on the general feeling of the Nebraska offense going into the Missouri contest.

"There is absolutely no excuse for how we played (against Southern Miss)," Davison said. "With everything we can do, it isn't right that we didn't move the football. I think everybody is going to buckle down because we realize we can't leave the defense on the field the whole game like we did (against Southern Miss)."

The NU offense will look to get untracked against Missouri (2-0), who, like Nebraska, have question marks on one side of the ball. For Mizzou, though, the unit that has struggled early on is the defense.

In Missouri's game last week against Western Michigan, the Tiger defense surrendered 379 passing yards and 34 points to the Broncos. For the season, Missouri has given up an average of 470 yards per game.

On the other side of the ball, Nebraska will face a Missouri offense that has dominated its two opponents this season. The Tigers have

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racked up 939 yards in two games, including 620 on the ground.

Senior tailback DeVaughn Black has been the main cog in MU's rushing attack so far. Black has rushed for a total of 345 yards on 57 carries, including a 205-yard performance against Western Michigan.

At quarterback, sophomore Jim Dougherty and redshirt freshman Kirk Farmer split time. The two have completed 30 of 53 passes and combined for 319 yards.

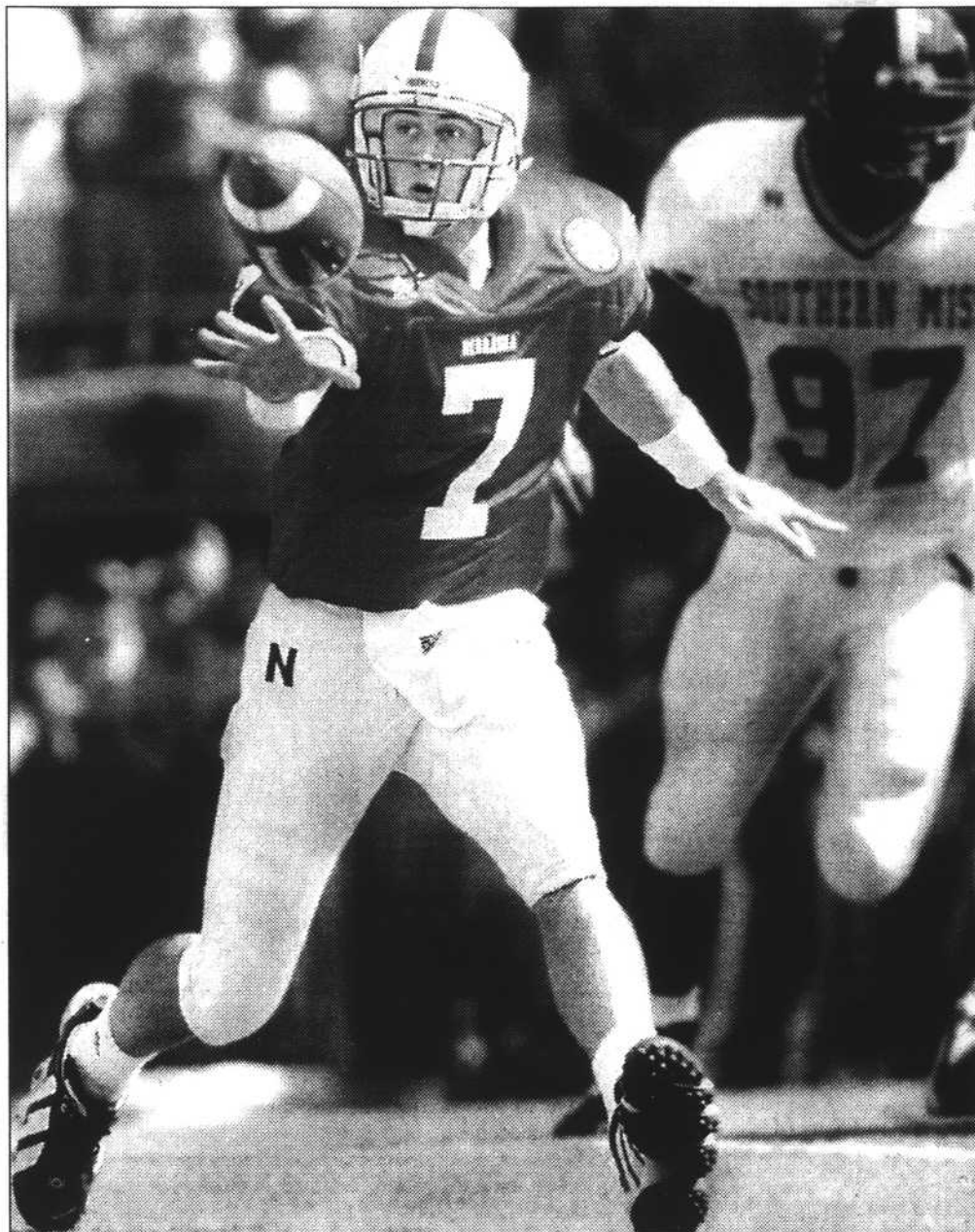
Solich said that Missouri's offense will attempt to bring it right at the Blackshirts.

"They use two very talented quarterbacks," Solich said. "Both are very tall and move well. They run a power offense with play-action passes coming off it. They have backs that fit right in with their physical style of play. They are a physical football team."

Another point of concern for the Huskers is the Missouri crowd. A sellout crowd of 68,164 is expected at Faurot Field. Davison, though, is looking forward to the environment.

"I remember driving to the stadium two years ago and seeing how fired up their fans were," he

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MIKE WARREN/DN
QUARTERBACK ERIC Crouch pitches to I-back Dan Alexander on an option play to score a two-point conversion against Southern Miss. The Nebraska offense hopes it can put together longer drives Saturday in Missouri.

Loss leads to renewed vigor for soccer squad

BY BROCK WENDLANDT
Staff writer

Last Sunday's 2-1 defeat to top-ranked Santa Clara was more like a midseason evaluation than a midterm exam for the No. 4 Nebraska soccer team.

The Cornhuskers, who played what Coach John Walker referred to as possibly the best team he has seen since arriving at Nebraska, didn't exactly ace but certainly didn't fail the challenge Santa Clara put forth.

Instead, the game served as a means to assess the team's progress at the middle of a 19 game regular season.

"Sometimes, in the midst of a season, you forget what your goals are," Walker said.

"The key to our season is to keep improving. We know the season wasn't decided on that date (Sept. 19), and we want to keep improving down the road," he said.

The Huskers (7-1) will continue on their journey with two matches this weekend. They host Tulsa in a 7 p.m. game at the Abbott Sports Complex, and then travel to No. 18 Clemson on Sunday to face their sixth-ranked opponent of the season at 1 p.m.

Tulsa, Walker said, is a solid team

that opponents can't overlook. The Golden Hurricane (4-3) has traditionally given good teams tough games.



Walker

Clemson (5-3), on the other hand, is a team that nobody takes lightly, he said.

"They are the only team that I can remember coming to Lincoln in the last four years and outshooting us," Walker said. "Along with Notre Dame and (Texas) A&M, they are one of the top three to four teams we played last year."

The Tigers, who began the season ranked in the top 10, have suffered consecutive losses to Richmond, Wake Forest and North Carolina, and find themselves struggling to remain in the polls.

Walker expressed his distrust with the polls.

"It's difficult for me to believe that Clemson is that much different than they were a few weeks ago," he said. "Playing them will be a challenge very similar to playing Stanford on the road."

NU junior midfielder Jenny Benson said the Huskers will have

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NU soccer player

plenty of motivation for the weekend's games.

"None of us like to lose," she said. "And we are going into this weekend ready to compete like we did against Santa Clara."

Benson, who was named last week's Big 12 Conference Soccer Player of the Week, said the team gained confidence by its aggressive play in the second half against Santa Clara, and will look forward to a rematch if the opportunity presents itself.

"We lost to a great team," Benson said. "But if we keep plugging away game by game, hopefully we will have another shot, and we'll be right there with them."

NU volleyball travels to Tech

BY JOHN GASKINS
Staff writer

Minutes after his team's shocking upset loss to No. 24 Kansas State on Wednesday night, Nebraska volleyball coach Terry Pettit had a one-word answer when asked where his team was going from there.

"Lubbock," Pettit said, referring to the fourth-ranked Cornhuskers match at Texas Tech on Saturday night. He didn't care to explain.

The response might seem somewhat surprising considering what had just happened to NU (8-3 and 0-1 in Big 12 conference play). Kansas State beat Nebraska for the first time in the 59-match series history and did so by catching a sleepy Husker squad that thought it had the match in the bag after taking the first two games.

Offering no excuses for the upset, Pettit said the show must go on, and NU has had to regroup and travel to Texas Tech.

The Huskers have the new Big 12 Conference scheduling format to thank for even getting the chance. Last season, the conference teams were playing Friday and Saturday nights instead of this year's

Wednesday to Saturday slate.

The back-to-back match format left road teams fatigued from long road trips and home crowds exasperated from seeing the same show two nights in a row.

"It's tough to get fans to come back and develop a following for some of these teams," Pettit said. "If you eat at a great restaurant Friday night, how many times do you go back Saturday night?"

"At Nebraska, it doesn't make any difference because we're going to draw a crowd if we play four nights in a row. But for other programs, it's better we play Wednesday to Saturday."

Pettit pointed out Texas Tech as one of the programs in the conference that is on the rise and consistently brings a solid challenge for the defending Big 12 Champion Huskers.

And although Tech is picked to finish sixth in the conference this year, opposing teams will have to deal with a new force in the Big 12—senior middle blocker Lori Garber.

Garber transferred from third-ranked Hawaii to play in Lubbock. So far, her impact has been felt. The team is 10-2 behind the 6-foot-3 Californian's .346 hitting percentage and 3.92 kills-per-game attack.