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Holmquist steps up vs. ISU

BY SEAN CALLAHAN
Staff writer

AMES, Iowa — When freshman Amber Holmquist stepped onto the volleyball court Wednesday night against Iowa State, she was making only her second start as a Cornhusker.

What differed from her first start was that she played in all three games.

After the match, in which Holmquist made a career-high seven kills and added three block assists, she said it could have been a "break-through" game for her.

"I was really comfortable," said

Holmquist, a 6-foot-4 middle blocker from Houston. "The team just made me feel so comfortable on and off the court. I was really happy with my play. I feel I am really ready to step up."

NU Head Coach Terry Pettit said he has been pleased with the progress Holmquist has made, especially as of late.

"I thought this would be a good game to give Amber a lot of experience," Pettit said. "She has the potential to be as strong a middle blocker and attacker as we have ever had."

Pettit said he had wanted to get Holmquist on the floor earlier, but he hadn't gotten the go-ahead from Holmquist until recently.

"I wasn't ready until a couple weeks ago," Holmquist said. "I could really feel it whenever I was comfortable and felt I could contribute to the team."

Holmquist picked a good game to break out, as many family members and friends saw her play.

"It's fun to play in front of people I know, and to look up and see people I know," she said.

She may be getting more time as a starter this week when NU takes on Colorado in Lincoln.

Pettit said Holmquist would continue to start if the matchups were right.

"I didn't see anything to lead me to believe she wouldn't," Pettit said.

Cyclones prepare for NU test

BY JOSHUA CAMENZIND
Staff writer

Two weeks ago against Kansas State, Iowa State won a moral victory if there ever was one.

But that is not what the Cyclones (3-1) are hoping for this Saturday night when they take on fourth-ranked Nebraska (5-0) in Lincoln.

The 35-28 loss to KSU showed the ISU players that they were capable of hanging with the best. A second half collapse was the culprit — and Cyclone players want to make sure it does not happen again.

"First of all, we have to play four quarters," sophomore defensive end Kevin DeRonde said. "If we don't, it is going to be pretty tough."

DeRonde said the Cyclones are preparing for the showdown in Lincoln with upset on their minds but know that NU is going to be a challenge.

Husker Coach Frank Solich said that this Cyclone team is more athletic than in the past.

"They are the best all-around team we are going to face up to this point," Solich said. "The defense moves much better than in the past, and they have not allowed many points."

The ISU defense, ranked fifth in the country, is led by junior defensive end Reggie Hayward, who has 25 tackles and two sacks. He had 11 tackles and a sack against KSU.

Junior linebacker Eric Weiford leads ISU with 30 tackles, followed by Robert Brannon with 26.

Iowa State has held opponents to just 215.3 yards per game. It has given up only six touchdowns all season, none of which have come through the air. It is the only remaining college football team yet to give up a passing touchdown.

"The defense is not very complicated," Solich said. "They have very few breakdowns and do not give up many big plays."

DeRonde said that one of the keys

of the game will be how the defense plays the Husker option.

"They come at you a lot of times in a double tight end set," DeRonde said. "Their tackles are huge, and we just have to be aware of our responsibilities."

NU running back Dan Alexander is a worry of DeRonde. Alexander ran for 110 yards and three touchdowns in last year's 42-7 win over ISU in Ames.

"Alexander is a big-time back," DeRonde said. "He is a load, and we are going to have to keep him from breaking away."

As far as running backs go, Iowa State has one of the best in the country in senior Darren Davis, who leads the nation in rushing at 176 yards-per-game and has scored six touchdowns.

Davis averages 6.2 yards per carry and has big-play capability with a 54-yard run this year.

NU rover Mike Brown said that Davis had the "ability to make people miss" and that the Huskers were going to need to have 11 defenders running to the ball to stop him.

Davis rushed for 131 yards in the first half against KSU but stumbled along with the rest of the team in the second — gaining only 21 yards.

Davis' backup, sophomore Ennis Haywood, is also able to put the hurt on opposing defenses. He led the Cyclones in rushing against Indiana State with 172 yards. He has rushed for 222 yards on the season, only 16 yards behind Husker starter Dan Alexander and 12 yards ahead of backup Correll Buckhalter.

While ISU ranks first in the country and the Big 12 Conference in running the ball, it ranks dead last in the Big 12 throwing the ball.

Iowa State's quarterback, junior Sage Rosenfels, has started in only four games in his career. Rosenfels is completing 53.57 percent of his passes for 394 yards.

McCarney said there is no questioning that Rosenfels, 6-foot-4, 218 pounds, is an athlete.

"
Their tackles are huge, and we just have to be aware of our responsibilities.
"

KEVIN DERONDE
ISU defensive end

Rosenfels, not Davis, owns Iowa State's longest touchdown run of the season. He ran for a 52-yard touchdown against Indiana State.

Rosenfels' favorite target is senior Damien Groce, who has six catches for 169 yards — a 28.2 yard average.

Groce will be battling an NU secondary that has yielded only 58 completions out of 149 attempts this season.

The Cyclones feel that they can match up this year better than in the past in the trenches against Nebraska, DeRonde said.

"The offensive linemen are going to have to be solid and stick to their blocks," DeRonde said. "In the end if we want to win, we are going to have to out-tough them."

The Iowa State players know that the table is set and no time is better than the present, DeRonde said.

"Going to Lincoln is going to be a great opportunity," DeRonde said. "It will be a fun place to play. People are always talking about the sea of red, but we just have to take the opportunity and make sure we don't pea it down our leg."

Note:

■ NU Sophomore Nebraska defensive tackle Jeremy Slechta is "very doubtful" for Saturday's matchup, Solich said Wednesday after practice.

Freshman Jon Clanton will likely fill in for Slechta, who injured his ankle and knee Tuesday. Slechta, a 6-foot-6, 290-pounder from LaVista, has recorded 14 tackles this season.

UM-MSU rivalry heats up

■ Michigan State hopes to get bragging rights, erase frustration with a win over No. 3 Michigan.

(U-WIRE) EAST LANSING, Mich. — Every year at this time, the Michigan-Michigan State football game elicits a lot of emotion.

Brother faces off against brother. Father faces off against son. During the week of the game, a mini-civil war breaks out throughout the state.

"To a fan, this game is all about bragging rights," Michigan State Coach Nick Saban said. "It's all about beating the guy at the office that goes to the other school."

The hoopla that surrounds the game — which is crazy in its own right — will be at ridiculous levels this upcoming week. With both the third-ranked Wolverines

and 11th-ranked Spartans sporting 5-0 records, the hype machine will be on overload.

"We need to separate all that surrounds this game from the game itself," Saban said. "We need to keep the players separated so they can focus on what they need to do."

As far as the Michigan State program is concerned, the Spartans need to break from the shadow cast by its maize-and-blue rival to the south.

Three losses in a row to Michigan, including a 23-7 loss the last time the Wolverines visited Spartan Stadium, have Michigan State followers yearning for revenge and the national respect that goes along with it.

"This is obviously a huge state rivalry," Saban said. "Whenever you have success against your rival, that is something to be proud of. But being consistent over time makes you a national power, and that is what we are trying to do."

"I don't mean to minimize this game, but the loser still has a good shot of going to the Rose Bowl. There are so many big games in this conference."

With the increased interest in the game comes an increased interest in what both teams are doing. With the emotions that are evoked in a game of this magnitude, everything that is said is repeated multiple times.

This has been a problem for Michigan State in the past, as the Spartans have been known to mouth off before key games in the past.

Although there were no Michigan State players at the weekly press conference to affirm his sentiments, Saban said that the key to the game was the players' performance on the field, not their verbal skills.

"You don't want to say anything to rile your opponent," Saban said. "I don't want our players to believe that trash-talking is a way to success."

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