

# Huskies challenged by back-to-back matches

By JOHN GASKINS  
Staff writer

For the only time in the Big 12 Conference season and just the fourth time this year, the Nebraska volleyball team will play back-to-back matches.

The matches begin the second half of the conference season and NU's chase at its third title in four years. The 13<sup>th</sup>-ranked Cornhuskers sit in a tie for third place in the standings at 7-3, two matches behind Kansas State and Texas (9-1).

The Huskies will play host to Texas Tech — which is 14-9 overall and 3-7 in Big 12 play — at 7 tonight in the Nebraska Coliseum, then they will pack their bags and take the journey to Manhattan, Kan., for a match with No. 15 Kansas State on Saturday night.

The Huskies have been trying to prepare for both teams' attacks in practice this week, which doesn't exactly thrill Head Coach Terry Pettit.

"It's an interesting challenge," Pettit said. "The team we're playing Saturday (KSU) is sitting there preparing for us (all week). We've got to prepare for them Friday night."

The match, against Kansas State, the same team that shocked the Huskies a month ago with its first win over NU in school history (59 matches), poses a challenge. And this is a match that Nebraska almost has to win to defend the Big 12 title.

"What competition is all about — assuming teams are fairly equal — is where you play and how much preparation time you have," Pettit said. "I think we could play Cuba if we have two weeks to prepare, but that's an issue. We'll bust down Friday immediately following the match."

Preparing for two teams in one weekend was something NU and every other team in the Big 12 had to deal with every week during the conference season in the first three years of Big 12 play.

But after realizing the majority of teams were becoming bogged down by the dual preparation, traveling schedule and physical effects Friday-Saturday matches had on the players, the Big 12 changed the format to Wednesday-Saturday.

For coaches like Pettit, that means on most weeks, he can prepare for his foes individually and evaluate and make adjustments in the lineup and game plan between matches with deliberation.

For players like junior All-American Nancy Meendering, who takes an average of 42 swings at the ball in one night and on some has taken 80 or more, the format spells relief for aching bodies.

"Physically, as far as your arms and legs recovering from jumps, I think this is better," Meendering said.

Meendering and senior co-captain Mandy Monson said they prefer playing on Wednesdays so they have time to physically recover and to prepare for each team. But Meendering and Monson don't like everything about the format switch.

"It just seems like we're gone all the time," Meendering said. "By being on the road all the time, it's harder to keep up with things when you're always gone."

The geographical spread of the Big 12 states is a lot for players and coaches to handle.

Last year, NU used the Friday-Saturday format to play at Texas Tech and Baylor on back-to-back nights and Texas and Texas A&M on another trip. This year, they played the teams in separate trips.

Iowa State Head Coach Linda Greisinger coached in the Big Ten Conference as an assistant coach at Ohio State from 1991 to 94. The Big Ten

still uses the Friday-Saturday format, but Greisinger said it's not as punishing for them because the conference is not as spread out as the Big 12.

What is punishing for Greisinger's players at ISU is the classes they miss.

"You have to stress to athletes what they do academically," Greisinger said. "A lot of our players have a lot of science and math classes that meet on Wednesdays, and it's been tough for them to keep up because we're gone."

Nebraska players said they haven't noticed a difference in the academic strain volleyball puts on them because they have to adjust to the dual commitment no matter what the schedule says.

One reason the players may prefer Wednesday-Saturday would be getting Friday nights off.

But no matter when they play their matches, they said, they always have to be ready to play.

"(The format) gives you a night off to relax and maybe not have to be mentally focused on volleyball for an evening and not have to be in the gym," Monson said. "But that doesn't mean it gives you the night to 'go out.' When you're in the busiest time of your sport, you don't have much of a social life."

## Tiger coach, team holding high hopes

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wins and conference titles is a national championship. In those 16 NAAs, Stewart's teams advanced through the Sweet 16 twice and never reached a Final Four.

If Snyder is to do what his predecessor didn't, he must continue being a recruiter, according to Hafer.

According to both players, another Snyder positive is his coaching style. The coach has made it clear that the Tigers will play an up-tempo style of basketball, which Dooling and Hafer both like. Dooling said that, in addition, the coach's age allows him to relate to younger players.

"(Age) helps because he's been around the game and knows what players like," Dooling said.

"He knows what buttons to push with us, what we respond to. That's what makes him a great recruiter and a great coach."

When asked if Stewart had the same qualities as a motivator,

## Gottlieb strives to drive team

By JOSHUA CAMENZIND  
Staff writer

Dallas, Texas — Oklahoma State point guard Doug Gottlieb is short, he has black hair and pointy ears and looks like a leprechaun.

And he will admit it. Despite being 6-foot-1, the senior has had to battle the stereotypes that every small, white point guard has had to face.

In most cases, he has won. Playing against bigger point guards is a challenge Gottlieb welcomes. But at the same time, he is wary of competing against those who are his size.

"When they are bigger, you can take them off the dribble," Gottlieb said. "Of course, they have advantages over you, too, but they even out."

Dooling, who had several well-publicized clashes with his former coach last season, laughed and shook his head.

"No comment," he said. Snyder said he doesn't feel the negative aspects of the college basketball world's expectations.

Last season he led the nation in assists, averaging 8.8 per game.

"I have really good eyesight and have been able to see things," Gottlieb said. "I just have that natural feeling."

Gottlieb, who started for Notre Dame as a freshman, said he enjoyed passing or handing off the ball even though it was not the most glorified aspect of the game.

"My teammates really appreciate me," Gottlieb said. "I think the coaching staff appreciates what I do, and that's all I ask for."

He has worked hard to improve on his career point average of 4.8 and said this year will be different.

"I hope he will be a better shooter," Coach Eddie Sutton said. "He is one of the best passers in college basketball, and if he can score from the perimeter, that would be a real plus for us."

"There is a fair amount of pressure on me," Snyder said. "I look at it as a motivating factor, though. Pressure helps to motivate me. It reminds me how hard I have to work to compete with guys like Roy Williams and Eddie Sutton. It's a challenge I welcome."

## Solich reprimanded by Big 12

By DARREN IVY  
Senior staff writer

Sometimes speaking your mind about an issue can get you in trouble as a football coach, especially if that issue is related to the zebras who referee the game.

Nebraska Head Coach Frank Solich learned that lesson Wednesday as Big 12 Commissioner Kevin Weiberg sent a fax to Lincoln saying he was being publicly reprimanded for comments made during the Frank

Solich Show following the Texas game.

"I felt that it would probably come," Solich said. The reprimand is basically a slap on the wrist and doesn't carry a fine or penalty with it.

Solich's comments were related to two key plays in the fourth quarter of the Texas game.

"Another ridiculous job of not being able to see what happened," Solich said. "Or if they did see, they made a horrendous call."

It is not known whether the officials were reprimanded.

## Wills finds way back from edge

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the footsteps I am in now."

Aaron will be happy to know Colin is following his right footsteps and not the wrong ones.

### Blood brothers

Colin follows his brother's footsteps almost religiously on and off the football field.

The two play the same position, and Colin tries to emulate his brother's work ethic so he can one day start in the same left rush end spot.

But one difference is that Colin has kept out of trouble. He credits his brother for that.

"He came down here and smoked weed and got in trouble," Colin said. "It was kind of like a lesson. He'd been through it, so why would I put myself through the same situation?"

Aaron is glad his brother didn't make the same mistakes he did because he cares for him greatly.

"I love my brother a lot," he said. "My love for my brother goes way deeper than any friend I've ever had."

The love is mutual, Russell said. "I think Colin really looks up to him," she said. "There is such a respect you can see when they are around each other. They have a beautiful relationship."

And both want to keep it that way.

### Keeping on track

The Wills brothers are closer now than they have ever been before.

They live in the same apartment complex and hang out quite a bit.

Knowing what Aaron has been through, Colin has taken it upon himself to keep his brother out of potentially dangerous situations.

Three weeks ago, he told Aaron that he needed to go home rather than stay at the place they were.

"I know where he wants to lead his life," Colin said. "Sometimes temptation presents itself — whether it is alcohol or going to a party and meeting some other girls."

"I know he doesn't need to be around that. I told him straight up, 'I think you need to go home.' He understood."

The old Aaron Wills wouldn't have understood. But with the help of God, things are much clearer for him now. He is happy with his life.

He is clean from drugs. He starts for the No. 8/9 team in the country. He has a good relationship with Russell. He will get his degree in December.

But most importantly, he is that positive role model he has always wanted to be for his brother.

"(Colin) told me the other night, 'I want what you've got,'" Aaron said. "Everybody wants what you've got. You've got it all right now." He wasn't just meaning I was a football star, but he was meaning upstairs I got it. God has given me some knowledge about life.

"I told him, 'You can have everything I have.' He told me he just wasn't ready to receive it (from God) right now. That really opened my eyes that he is noticing what I am saying and doing."

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