

Huskers not looking past Minnesota

BY BRANDON SCHULTE
Staff writer

A new season starts Sunday for the No. 4 Nebraska soccer team.

With a No. 4 seed and a home-field advantage through the quarter-final round in hand, the Cornhuskers will face their first test in their quest for the Women's College Cup with their best chance ever to win the national title.

After a first round bye, the Cornhuskers (20-1-1) will play host to the Golden Gophers (13-8) in the second round of the NCAA Tournament on Sunday at 1 p.m. at the Abbott Sports Complex. Minnesota defeated Eastern Michigan 2-0 Wednesday night in a match played at Minneapolis in the

first round.

Nebraska comes into the match hot, winning 12 consecutive matches since a 0-0 tie with Clemson on Sept. 26. NU ranks second in the nation in scoring at 4.59 goals per game and is fifth nationally in goals allowed at 0.56 goals per game.

Even though Minnesota comes into the match unranked and Nebraska is on a roll, Coach John Walker is wary of the Gophers.

"We're quite familiar with Minnesota," Walker said. "Minnesota has always been a real attack-minded team."

The teams have met three times in the past four seasons. If the game is anything like past meetings between the two schools, then the Huskers will be in for a battle.

In the 1996 NCAA Tournament,

"Minnesota has always been a real attack-minded team."

JOHN WALKER
NU soccer coach

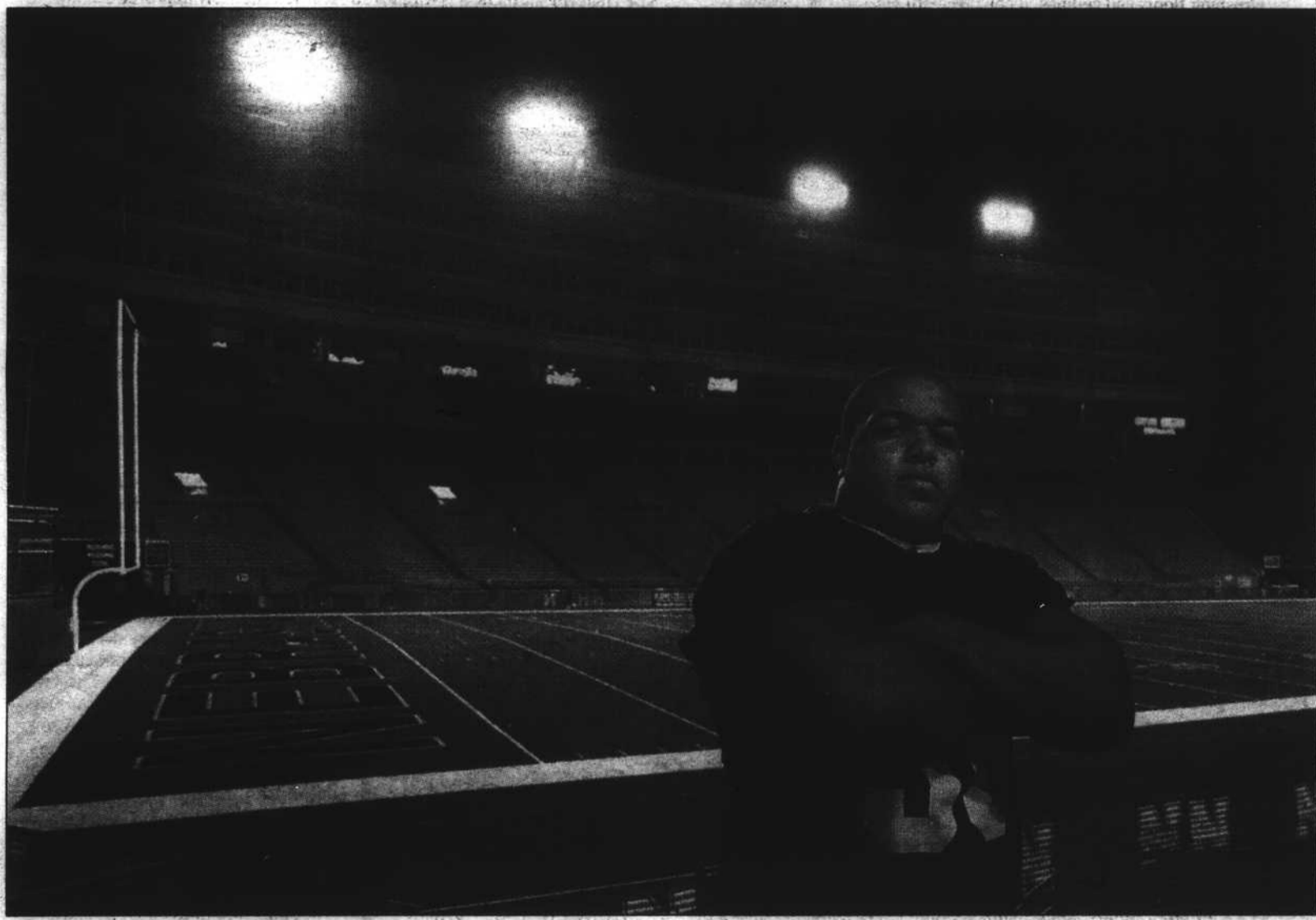
Nebraska outlasted Minnesota 3-2 in quadruple overtime. NU also won the last meeting 3-1 in 1997 at home.

The teams have two common opponents: Kentucky and Iowa State. Nebraska defeated both by a com-

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MIKE WARREN/DN
Nebraska Coach John Walker directs his team during practice. NU takes on Minnesota in the first round of the NCAA Tournament this weekend.



Steve Warren has played a key role in the strength of the Nebraska defense this season after battling back pains last year.

MIKE WARREN/DN

NU Warren battles back, foes

BY DARREN IVY
Senior staff writer

During last year's 40-30 loss to Kansas State, Nebraska defensive tackle Steve Warren basically willed himself onto the football field to play.

The 6-foot-2 then-315-pounder was playing at about 60 percent because of two damaged discs in his back. But injuries to other players and inexperience forced him into action.

"I had to play through it. We were a young team last year and didn't have a lot of depth at defensive tackle," Warren said. "(Jason) Lohr and (Jeremy) Slechta were still learning. (Jason) Wiltz had an ankle injury, and (Loran) Kaiser was just getting into a rhythm. I had to do what I had to do for the team."

When Warren came out of the game, he would mention to the other defensive linemen that his back was sore, but not to the coaches, Slechta said. He was "really dedicated" and wanted to play, no matter how

much pain he was in.

Somehow, Warren made it through the season. After the Holiday Bowl, he took some time off before spring football. He worked on his flexibility and strength to try and alleviate his back pain.

The exercises seem to have worked because this year a healthy Warren is leading the Cornhuskers with six sacks and 11 tackles for a loss. Last week against Texas A&M, Warren had a career-high three sacks. It was his biggest game in a Nebraska uniform.

Warren's performance didn't come as a surprise to teammate Loran Kaiser, who said Warren had been causing problems for opposing offenses all year.

"This is the Steve Warren that everyone has been waiting for," Kaiser said. "He's been playing out of his mind right now. He's flying to the ball. He's getting a great pass rush. He's feeling good, and he's healthy."

Last year Warren was anything but healthy and often wondered if playing football was worth the

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LORAN KAISER
NU defensive lineman

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Brown, Huskers ready for K-State

BY DARREN IVY
Senior staff writer

It has been 363 days since Ralph Brown walked off Wagner Field in disbelief that Kansas State had just defeated Nebraska 40-30, ending the Cornhusker's hopes of a decent bowl, its 29-year win streak and its dominance over the North division.

For Brown, that is 363 days too long. If it were up to him, the two teams would have turned around and played it again the next week. But it wasn't up to him, and he has had to wait a painstakingly long time for his shot at redemption.

Brown's week is now here, and he has talked about the 2:38 p.m. contest Saturday with the same intensity on his face as he had after last year's loss, when he said to reporters:

"Don't get used to this. This will not happen again. We will not lose to these guys next year."

Much to the chagrin of Coach Frank Solich, Brown renewed that guarantee after the 37-0 win over Texas A&M.

"I said it last year, and I am sticking with it," said Brown, a senior from Hacienda Heights, Calif., who will be playing in his last game at Memorial Stadium Saturday. "If we lose, then you can come to me afterward and ask what happened."

A whole state might be asking. Saturday's game between the No. 5 Wildcats and No. 6 Cornhuskers will determine which school holds the power in the North division going into the next century.

In its four years in the conference, Nebraska is 41-7 with three North Division titles and one conference championship. Meanwhile, K-State is 40-6 with one North Division championship.

"Certainly everyone knows this is a big game," Solich said. "... There is a lot riding on this

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