

NU tennis team falls to 15-2

From staff reports

The Nebraska women's tennis team fell to 15-2 after losing to Baylor 8-1 on Sunday in Waco, Texas.

The Huskers have taken a nose dive as of late, losing the last two matches after winning the first 15 of their season.

NU's Sandra Noetzel was denied her 100th win and an upset of the No. 22-ranked player in the nation. Jahnvi Parekh beat Noetzel 7-6, 1-6, 6-1 to signify the Bears' dominance over NU.

The Huskers managed only one win on the day, a No. 2 doubles win by Katarina Balan and Maria Fernandez.

I-backs show depth of past years

I-BACKS from page 16

Alexander, junior Correll Buckhalter and sophomore Dahrran Diedrick—return with plenty of big game experience. They'll also return with the confidence gained from NU's smoking of Tennessee's seventh-ranked rushing defense for 342 yards in the Huskers' 31-21 Fiesta Bowl win.

The depth should produce the same kind of shared rushing statistics NU turned in last season. Quarterback Eric Crouch led the team in rushing with 74.1 yards per game, followed by Alexander at 72.1 and Buckhalter at 60.2. Diedrick also showed shades of future brilliance.

Alexander said the I-backs liked that kind of balance, as opposed to some years when NU showcases one "star" back. It was also a nice turnaround from 1998, when injuries plagued the already-inexperienced position and forced whoever wasn't injured to carry the load.

"Last year, we started mixing guys in there," Alexander said, "and went two series and out instead of being in there all the time, and we felt better. That way we could be in there every game and give it 100 percent every play and keep away from injuries.

"At Nebraska, something we've always done is wear down teams. Last year, we'd take other teams' starting linebackers and defensive linemen out of the game because we just kept hitting them. This year, we're going to have even more depth and potential to wear people down."

Behind Alexander, Buckhalter and Diedrick, are three scholarship freshmen I-backs who redshirted last year—DeAnte Grixby, Josh Davis and Robin Miller. Freshman walk-on Chris Butler added his name to the mix with a team-leading 90 yards in the April 1 scrimmage.

Solich said that of the four younger backs, Grixby has been making the most strides and has showed the most consistency, but all are "coming along well."

Because he has so much talent competing for the fourth-string position, Solich has been able to rest the top three backs and give the freshmen more carries and experience.

He said the coaching staff is protecting Alexander especially, who has had a career full of injuries and suffered a sprained ankle in the spring's second scrimmage. The coaches have been extremely cautious, considering injuries to the team's top two quarterbacks, Eric Crouch and Jamal Lord.

RUNNING BACKS PROSPECTUS	WHO'S BACK:
	Dan Alexander Correll Buckhalter Dahrran Diedrick Willie Miller
	WHO'S GONE:
	NONE
	OUTLOOK:
	Nebraska is loaded at this position. That's obvious. What isn't is who will play next season. There's talent galore. But the jury will stay out until fall on just how the system will play out.

David Jané/DN

But the most important thing for NU to protect will be the football, Butler said. Last season, the Huskers recorded a nation-leading 49 fumbles, 25 of which they lost, despite being one of the top ten rushing teams at 265 yards per game.

"That's been a huge focus for the running backs," Butler said. "The coaches have really been on us about ball control. When we have scrimmages (Running Backs Coach Dave Gillespie) grades us on ball protection, and it's a big part of the grade."

"So far, it's gotten a lot better. Everybody's a lot more focused and concentrating a lot better on holding on."

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Johnson comes off bench for spark

JOHNSON from page 16

for Iowa Western Community College last season, Johnson led his region in home runs, RBI and slugging percentage.

He did not bunt, there or anywhere else. But that doesn't mean he dislikes it.

In fact, Van Horn said Johnson has worked hard on improving his "small-ball" ability.

"Big guys like Dan come in here and don't know how to bunt at all," he said. "We're trying to punch in a run in that situation, and he understands that. In fact, he's actually become a pretty good bunter over the course of the year."

Bunting isn't the only thing Johnson has improved since he first donned the Husker uniform. Although he hit for power from his first batting practice session, it took him until mid-March to show it in games, Cowan said.

"That Kansas State series was a breakout series for him. From then on, it seems like he started bringing his

batting practice power to the field," Cowan said.

In the March 10-12 set against the Wildcats, Johnson had four hits, two homers and three RBI in two games.

And he hasn't slowed down. In 16 conference games, the first baseman has hit seven home runs, driven in 22 runs and, maybe most importantly, hit .359.

Hitting for average is what Johnson must continue to concentrate on, Van Horn said.

Johnson knows it. He said his goal for the rest of the season was to continue to hit for power while increasing his average. If that works, he may realize his ultimate goal.

"I want to make it to the big leagues. That's been my goal since I was really young, and I believe it's possible."

Cowan isn't disagreeing. He has seen Johnson swing a wood bat.

"It's not just with aluminum," Cowan said. "I've seen him take batting practice with a wood bat, and the ball jumps off of that, too. I've seen him hit balls a long way with a wooden

bat. "He's got big-time power anywhere. Anybody can see that."

Notes:

The Husker baseball team next hosts Creighton on Tuesday. It is the second meeting between the two in-state rivals. Nebraska won the first meeting 9-5 on March 21.

Nebraska will put its four-game winning streak on the line against the Blue Jays, who are 26-7 and were ranked No. 21 in the last Baseball Weekly/ESPN Coaches Poll.

Husker hurler Shane Komine picked up national and conference pitcher of the week awards on Monday.

It is the second time Komine has been tabbed the Big 12 Pitcher of the Week, but the Collegiate Baseball National Pitcher of the Week Award was his first.

Komine tied a school record last Saturday by striking out 17 batters in a 9-3 win over Kansas. Komine allowed only five hits and no earned runs in eight innings.

Packer charged with sexual assault

HARTLAND, Wis. (AP)—NFL star Mark Chmura was arrested on Monday after his 17-year-old baby sitter accused him of sexually assaulting her in a bathroom during a party at which they played a drinking game together.

Robert Gessert, a friend of the Green Bay Packers tight end, also was arrested. An 18-year-old woman accused him of sexually assaulting her in a hot tub at Gessert's home at the party after a prom, according to court records.

Chmura appeared in court in an orange jumpsuit with his hands bound in chains. Chmura and Gessert were released on \$5,000 bail and are due in court May 15.

Chmura, 31, and Gessert, 42, have not been formally charged, Waukesha County District Attorney Paul Bucher said.

"We'll continue reviewing the case. We'll need to gather more information," Bucher said.

Police are recommending a charge of third-degree sexual assault, a felony punishable by up to 10 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

A search warrant filed in Waukesha County Circuit Court said the 17-year-old girl told police Chmura led her into a bathroom at Gessert's house early

"We are disappointed that Mark Chmura is involved in the type of situation that has been reported."

Green Bay Packers statement

Sunday, locked the door, removed her jeans and underwear and had sexual intercourse with her.

The 18-year-old girl accused Gessert of indecently touching her while in the hot tub.

Police Chief Morton Hetznecker said 15 to 20 people were at Gessert's home, many of them juveniles. The 17-year-old girl told police they were playing a drinking game and Gessert gave her a drink with vodka. She told police she became drunk, the warrant said.

She said Chmura was wearing white boxer shorts and a dark towel. Four pairs of underwear were confiscated

when authorities searched Chmura's home on Monday, including white boxers, the warrant said.

Investigators also recovered six towels when they searched Gessert's home, the warrant said, including a dark-colored towel. Authorities also confiscated vacuum cleaner filters containing hair and other debris from the bathroom floor. Chmura also gave hair and blood samples to authorities, the warrant said.

Chmura was arrested and handcuffed early Monday at his home, where his wife was present, Hetznecker said. Later in the day, Chmura friend John Drana answered the door at the player's home and said Chmura had no comment.

Third-degree sexual assault involves sexual intercourse with someone without her or his consent, according to Wisconsin law.

The 17-year-old girl and her mother contacted police Sunday. The teen was examined at a hospital, Hetznecker said.

Packers spokesman Lee Rempel issued a statement Monday from Green Bay.

"As an organization, we are disappointed that Mark Chmura is involved in the type of situation that has been reported," the statement said.

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