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NU volleyball goes without Meendering

■ Regardless, Coach John Cook is optimistic the team can succeed without its star.

BY SEAN CALLAHAN

It wasn't exactly a secret, but Nebraska Coach John Cook finally made it official at the volleyball team's Media Day: Nancy Meendering, an All-American in 1999, will not play for the Huskers in 2000.

Instead of rushing Meendering into her senior season, Cook decided to redshirt the senior from Hull, Iowa, because she spent most of the off-season working out with the U.S. National Team.

"In my opinion, and I think in her heart, this is the best thing to do," Cook said.

Cook said the uncertainty regarding Meendering's status on the National Team played a part in the decision.

Until several weeks ago, Meendering was still an alternate on the team.

Cook said the team had to learn to play without last season's star.

"I do feel like we're lucky because we had the China trip to prepare this team to play without Nancy," he said. "So I feel like we're way ahead of the game and that we have a chance for a great season."

The plan is that the year off will refresh Meendering, and she'll come back a stronger and better player, plus have a more confident group of teammates to complement her.

The decision to redshirt Meendering isn't unprecedented.

Terry Pettit made the same kind of decision when he decided to redshirt All-American Christy Johnson during her sophomore season.

That fact hasn't been lost on Cook.

"He's told me the (Christy Johnson) story about 10 times," Meendering said

That's because when it was all said and done, that decision made Pettit look like a genius and helped Nebraska win the 1995 National Championship.

Cook hopes the decision will produce similar results and benefit Meendering, as well.

"Obviously, there's some negatives," Cook said. "I'm going to go into my first season here without a two-time All-American.

"But we feel this is what's best for Nancy."

In the end, Meendering agreed, but only after a decision-making process she called "really, really hard."

She said it will be difficult to watch from the bench, but she knows she needs the time off to get her mind back to where it was.

"This allows the other girls on the team a chance to step forward and develop as players in their own right," Meendering said.

"That's exciting for me to see.

"Probably the hardest part about it is you're going to have to come to practices every day, put in the hard work and the hours just like everybody else, but when it comes down to it, and the game is on the line, you can't make a difference."

But, this will also give her some time to get back into the academic mode. While training with the national team, she missed the entire spring semester of classes.

Overall, Meendering sees this experience as something that will get her mind and body prepared for one more solid year in a Husker uniform.

"Mentally, if you have to sit back and stay away from it, it really gives you the edge and the drive because you want it all that much more."

Husker Volleyball 2000 Schedule

August	
26	Red/White Scrimmage
September	
1-2	U.S. Bank Tournament
4	Oral Roberts
8-10	@ Notre Dame
13	Texas
16	Missouri
20	@ Kansas
23	Oklahoma
27	@ Colorado
30	Texas A&M
November	
3	Creighton
8	@ Iowa State
11	Baylor
14	@ Texas Tech
18	Kansas State
22	@ Texas
25	@ Missouri
28	Kansas
December	
1	@ Oklahoma
4	Colorado
8	@ Texas A&M
15	Iowa State
18	@ Baylor
22	Texas Tech
25	@ Kansas State

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2	Penn State	1,375
3	Stanford	1,309
4	Long Beach State	1,216
5	Hawaii	1,224
6	Nebraska	1,055
7	USC	1,019
8	Pepperdine	1,011
9	Florida	946
10	Arizona	906
11	Minnesota	892
12	Pacific	858
13	Colorado State	857
14	UC Santa Barbara	739
15	BYU	722
16	Wisconsin	516
17	Kansas State	462
18	Texas	455
19	Texas A&M	432
20	Michigan State	254
21	Baylor	254
22	Northern Iowa	208
23	Loyola Marymount	165
24	Michigan	164
25	Ohio State	150

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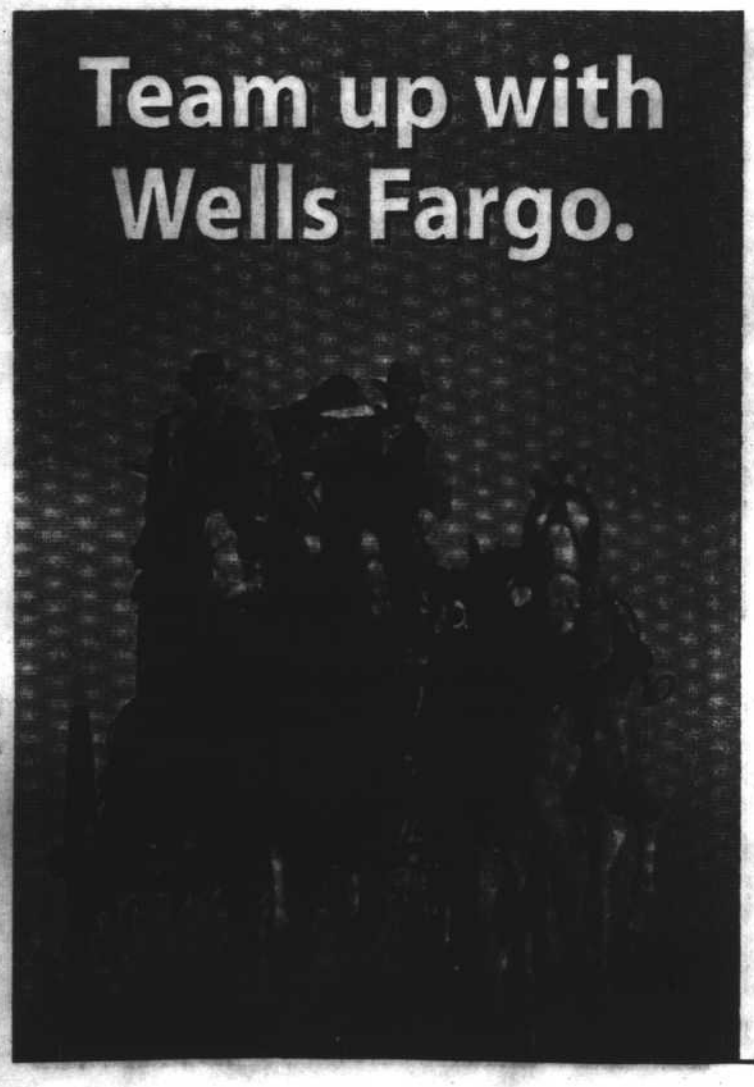

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