

## Not your typical pushovers

Ah, yes, San Jose State. The name just sounds right for a season opener, for a home opener, for a "warm-up" for Notre Dame.



John Gaskins

The Nebraska football team and its fans are quite familiar with the San Jose States of the world — those third-world Division I and I-AA teams that venture to football shrines like Memorial Stadium and feed the elite easy "Ws," while walking home parasites themselves, fat with a little extra spending money that one day might lift their program into mediocrity and contention for the Hooters.com Bowl.

Most thoroughbreds, such as NU, schedule one of these teams almost every year (Kansas State schedules three — as if the month of September was supposed to be a vacation from real life.). Fans need a reason to brag to other teams' fans about 84-2 blowouts.

And SJSU is so one of those teams. The Spartans posted the nation's worst scoring defense in 1999 by allowing more than 40 points per game. The team enters its battle with top-ranked NU slated to finish dead last in the laughable WAC Conference. Translation: They stink.

But let's get one thing straight: San Jose State is not your typical pushover team.

Granted, it meets typical pushover standards: unrecognized name, unstoried history, recent losing droughts (finished 3-7-1 and last in the WAC last season and is 11-22 in the three-year Dave Baldwin era), little media attention and a home game atmosphere that makes Nebraska men's basketball home games seem like Lollapalooza.

In fact, SJSU had to expand Spartan Stadium to just more than 30,000 seats to remain a Division I team a few years back. Not that it mattered: It still draws between 10,000-20,000 per game — mostly die-hard alumni and students.

It's mind-boggling, really, because we're talking about a school situated in the 11th-largest city in the nation, with an enrollment of more than 27,000 students (more than NU), in the fastest-growing and highest-profit region in the business nation (Silicon Valley), with an athletic department that has money and consistent powers in men's and women's golf and swimming and a baseball team that made it to Omaha this past summer.

Well, there's some reason behind this, and I understand because I lived in good ol' San Jose this summer. For the record, I loved it and recommend it.

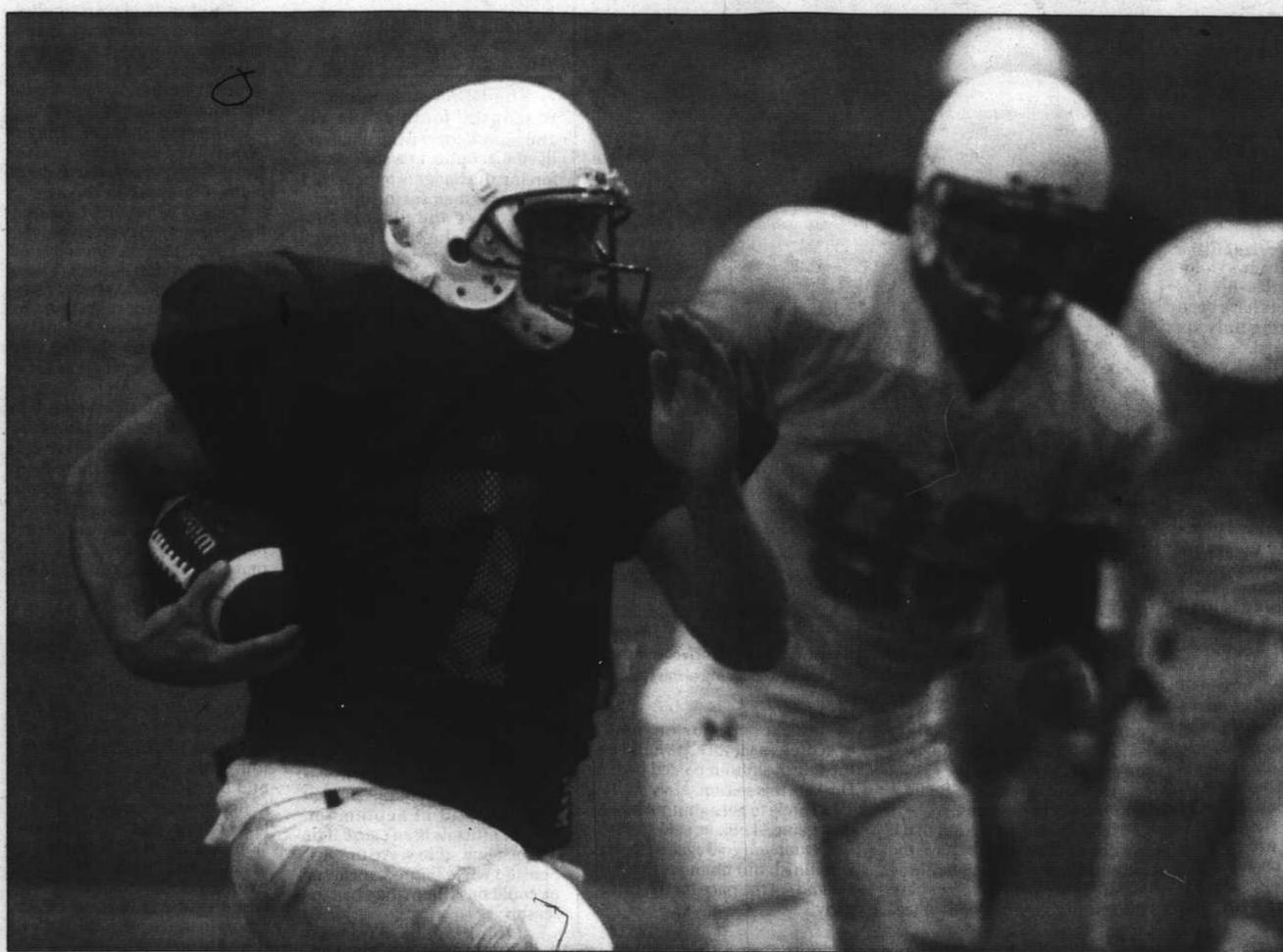
First of all, unlike Nebraska — where football rules and the land is useful for producing crops and lulling interstate drivers to sleep — San Jose happens to lie in an area where there is *always* something to do and places to go, and this especially goes for fall Saturdays.

In damn-near perfect weather, you've got beauty and recreation for the taking: mountains, oceans, lakes, beaches, horse ranches, world class golf courses, amusement parks, water parks, *real* night clubs.

San Francisco is less than an hour away. The divine wine country of Napa Valley is an hour-and-a-half away. The Monterey Peninsula, which features Pebble Beach, the breathtaking site of Tiger's massacre at this year's U.S. Open, is less than a two-hour drive.

And these are just activities for non- or casual sports fans. So who does this major state university have to compete with for attention in Bay Area sports? Oh, just the 49ers, Raiders, Giants, As, Warriors and Sharks.

Are you a NASCAR fan? Go up to Sonoma, an hour away for the SafeCo. 350. Annual major golf and tennis tournaments,



File Photo  
NU quarterback Eric Crouch will take off the green "no contact" jersey this weekend to face the San Jose State defense Saturday at 11:30 a.m. It may not matter, though — the Spartans gave up just 478 yards per contest last season to rank 114th in Division I-A.

## San Jose game like any other for Huskers

It's not just a warm-up for next week's game against Notre Dame, Solich says.

BY JOSHUA CAMENZIND

San Jose State must feel as if it doesn't have a friend in the world right now.

The Spartans will face Nebraska on Saturday at 11:30 a.m. in the season opener for both teams. While the Huskers are ranked No. 1 in both major polls, the Spartans are trying to build on a 3-7 1999 campaign.

Lincoln and Memorial Stadium may not be the place to start. Attempting to beat Nebraska in a season opener — something no one has done since Florida State with a score of 17-13 in 1985, is not going to be an easy task for Coach Dave Baldwin and his squad.

The Spartans and Huskers have found they travel different directions in opening games.

SJSU is 1-8-1 in the last decade, and NU is 10-0. The

Huskers have outscored opponents 504-147 in those games while the Spartans have a lone 35-23 win at Stanford in 1998.

All of this, combined with the fact that NU is a 49-point favorite as of Thursday, makes for a gloomy Saturday for the Spartans.

But the Huskers say not so fast — despite many contending NU will certainly be looking ahead to next week's matchup with Notre Dame.

"You do want to prepare one game at a time," said NU Coach Frank Solich, whose team is trying to match the feat accomplished by FSU last season of being No. 1 all season long.

Solich swore up and down that his team and program did not achieve its national respectability by shrugging off lesser foes.

Solich's players agree each opponent receives equal preparation, making it hard to pull off an upset of the Huskers. Some noted exceptions such as Iowa State in 1992 and Arizona State

in 1996, but none of them have come at home.

"I have been around a long time, and if you add up the number of times Nebraska has been upset, it is probably minimal," Solich said. "The reason for that is the time and effort that goes into preparing for each game."

Home openers have been kind to the Nebraska offense in the past, with NU's scoring more than 45 points in every game but one. The lone exception came in 1990 when the Huskers shut out Baylor 13-0.

Despite playing Louisiana State tough and beating eventual Rose Bowl participant Stanford last season, the Spartan defense has seen better days. SJSU gave up more than 60 points three times and, in the last five games of the season, did not hold an opponent under 40.

Racking up yardage has never been a problem for opponents of San Jose State. The Spartans gave up an average of 478.6 yards per game last season.

Solich said his offense will be

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Frank Solich  
Nebraska football coach

looking to be aggressive.

"They not only want to be good," he said. "They want to be great and hopefully that will play out that way."

Nevertheless, fans and the Huskers themselves expect big things against SJSU. But Nebraska quarterback Eric Crouch wouldn't admit it without first pointing out the Spartan upside.

"They are a team that is going to be physical," he said. "You can't take anything for granted."

"They are going to give us their best shot."

The Blackshirts, who have posted two shutouts in the last decade, including a 45-0 rout of

California last season, have seen better days than home openers.

NU has given up more than 20 points five times in home openers. Against the Spartans, the defense will be looking to make a statement and answer the many questions people have.

Husker defensive coordinator Craig Bohl, who will be coaching his first game in that position, said he will know a lot more after Saturday about his Blackshirts.

"They are going to have to grow up in a hurry," he said. "We are concerned about depth at some spots but I think that is typical with college football with 85 scholarships."

## Spartans excited to play 'best'

San Jose State says the Nebraska game will test it physically.

BY DAVID DIEHL

San Jose State Coach Dave Baldwin is no slouch when it comes to the history of Nebraska football.

He told his Spartans all about Cornhusker history: its national titles and the prestige surrounding the program.

He also told his team the last time the Huskers lost a home opener was in 1985... to Florida State.

Baldwin knows his team is no Florida State.

"Our hands are tied going in against a great football team," he said. "We've got a lot to prepare for."

While Baldwin didn't readily admit defeat, he did note that many of the things his Spartans are preparing for will be unlike anything his team will see all season long — such as NU's team speed and physical style.

"Speed can beat you on the field," Baldwin said. "You can always recover from that after a game."

"It's the physical nature of Nebraska and how we'll be able to recover from that that concerns me."

When Nebraska has the ball the game could get bloody physical. The lightest starter on NU's offensive line is 290-pound Russ Hochstein, and San Jose State has three players under 250 pounds on its defensive line.

### Game Day Huskers Offense

QB: 7 - Eric Crouch, (Jr.)  
IB: 38 - Dan Alexander, (Sr.)  
FB: 15 - Willie Miller, (Sr.)  
SE: 3 - Matt Davison, (Sr.)  
WB: 12 - Bobby Newcombe, (Sr.)  
TE: 87 - Tracy Wistrom, (Jr.)  
LT: 58 - Dave Volk, (Jr.)  
LG: 77 - Toniu Fonoti, (So.)  
C: 54 - Dominic Raiola, (Jr.)  
RG: 55 - Russ Hochstein, (Sr.)  
RT: 65 - Jason Schwab, (Sr.)

### Spartans Offense

QB: 7 - Marcus Arroyo, (So.)  
FB: 21 - Deonce Whitaker, (Sr.)  
WR: 3 - Edell Shepherd, (Jr.)  
WR: 1 - Casey LeBlanc, (Jr.)  
TE: 88 - Sean Brewer, (Jr.)  
LT: 74 - Chris Fe'esago, (Jr.)  
LG: 71 - Jeremy Dominguez, (Sr.)  
C: 64 - Bruno Contreras, (Jr.)  
RG: 78 - Joel Tautuaa, (Jr.)  
RT: 59 - Tim Provost, (So.)

But defensive tackle John Hammer, a 6-foot-5-inch, 275-pounder who is listed third on San Jose State's depth chart, said he isn't intimidated.

"No way," Hammer said. "Why should I? It's the opportunity to play the best. That's what it's all about, and I'm excited about it."

There is an air of anticipation around the Spartan locker room, Baldwin said. It's the anticipation to play a national-champion cal-

When: Saturday 11:30 a.m.  
Where: Memorial Stadium  
Radio: 1400 AM  
Webcast: huskers.com, foxsports.com

Defense  
LE: 98 - Demoiné Adams, (So.)  
NT: 70 - Jason Lohr, (Jr.)  
DT: 91 - Loran Kaiser, (Sr.)  
RE: 83 - Kyle Vanden Bosch, (Sr.)  
SLB: 43 - Scott Shanley, (So.)  
MLB: 13 - Carlos Polk, (Sr.)  
WLB: 34 - Randy Stella, (Jr.)  
LCB: 3 - Keyuo Craver, (Jr.)  
RCB: 16 - Erwin Swiney, (Jr.)  
ROV: 25 - Joe Walker, (Sr.)  
FS: 14 - Dion Booker, (Jr.)

Defense  
LE: 67 - Chris Tandy, (Sr.)  
NT: 98 - Tim Mathewson, (Jr.)  
DT: 75 - John Hammer, (Sr.)  
RE: 45 - Brandon Miles, (So.)  
SLB: 44 - Marshall Blount, (Sr.)  
MLB: 48 - Josh Parry, (Sr.)  
WLB: 35 - Ron Ockimey, (Sr.)  
CB: 24 - Dorae Lewis, (Sr.)  
CB: 5 - Alex Wallace, (Jr.)  
SS: 30 - Travis Seaton, (Sr.)  
FS: 11 - Willie Adams, (Jr.)

Delan Lonowski/DN

iber team, to compete as hard as they can and to see how they stack up.

"Winning is measured on the scoreboard," Baldwin said. "But in spring football we talked about never stop competing."

"Regardless of what the situation is in this first game, I would like to see us playing as hard on the last snap of the fourth quarter as we did on the first snap. We

## Tourney kicks off Cook era in volleyball

BY SEAN CALLAHAN

Nothing like a fun-filled holiday weekend.

When the Cornhusker volleyball team opens up play this weekend the John Cook era will finally be underway.

The No. 6 Huskers begin play today and Saturday in the U.S. Bank round robin tournament against Northwestern (7 p.m. today), Georgia (10 a.m. Saturday) and No. 13 Colorado State (7 p.m. Saturday).

On Monday, NU will have a Labor Day showdown with Oral Roberts to deal with.

Even though Nebraska is untested, Cook said he feels pretty confident in his young team.

One match that will test the Huskers right away is the Saturday night matchup with the Rams, who are fresh off their upsets of national powers No. 1 UCLA and Florida.

"It's really the start of a new era," Cook said. "But we open up with Colorado State, who probably is the hottest team in the nation."

"They just came off the biggest win in their program. It's a tremendous opportunity for us to establish ourselves and send a message to the rest of the country that Nebraska volleyball is going to continue the great tradition."

One of the new faces that should make some noise this

year will be sophomore Laura Pilakowski.

Last season, Pilakowski had a limited role on the court. At this year's media day Cook called Pilakowski the top left-side player in the Big 12.

Those are high expectations, but Pilakowski said she is ready to take them on.

"Last year it was difficult just sitting out and watching," Pilakowski said. "I probably should have redshirted from the beginning."

"But I said I wanted to come out there, and I wanted to play. I really didn't get a chance to do that. I just have to prove to myself and get some confidence right away."

Taking on the full-time setter duties will be sophomore Greichaly Cepero.

Last year Cepero split the duty when the Huskers ran the confusing 6-2 attack. With NU's switching back to the Conventional 5-1, Cepero thinks it will be much easier to focus.

"Last year I was focusing on hitting and setting at the same time. This year I can focus more on what I need to do," Cepero said.

"Right now we're preparing more to play against Colorado State. I know they're good and they're going to come in and try to beat us in our house."

"But trust me, that's not going to happen."

Please see GASKINS on 9

Please see SPARTANS on 9