

Alshammar on water's main stage

The stage at the 2000 Olympics couldn't have set up better for former Nebraska swimmer Therese Alshammar.

For one, it's right in the center. Thanks to the great Chinese swimming collapse – and the corresponding great American triumph – that splashed across television during the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta.



Samuel McKewon

Couple that with the strength of the host nation Australian team and those controversial new suits (which look like a full body Capri pant), the water is ground zero for viewers starting Friday.

And the Swedish Alshammar competes in the centerpiece of 2000 swimming and diving – the freestyle sprints – which is stocked with an all-star lineup. Six record holders are in the 100-meter free. The blink-and-you'll-miss-it 50-free is similarly stocked.

The United States' Jenny Thompson, a poster child from the '96 Games, is a factor in the 100. The media is sure to play up fellow American competitor and two-time gold-medal winner Dana Torres, competing in her fourth Olympics, who will race in both sprints.

And then there's the record-holding favorite in both events, Inga De Bruijn, the tall Dutch diva bathed in gold paint for the Sports Illustrated Olympic Preview, on the newsstands last week. Blink as many times as you want. You won't miss it.

Neither will you skip SI's three-page spread on Alshammar that follows a few pages later. That would be her, laying on something or other, half clothed, half not, pronouncing her divine status with a big black tat that screams DIVA on her lower back. And the shirt she sports in picture three? About a square foot of fabric, more or less.

The style has been part of the Alshammar experience – the revolving door of hair colors, the moon boots ensemble, the chewing tobacco habit, the day when she walked naked in downtown Lincoln bathed in silver paint. She certainly wasn't handed the title of "Sweden's Sexiest Woman" from a Swedish men's magazine in April 1998. No, she earned it. Just ask her.

In terms of personal style, Alshammar has no doubt. In an interview with me about four months after she won the sexiest title, she offered up all kinds of career futures: modeling, fashion business, her own line of stuff (her words, not mine).

But in the midst of the conversation, a gold-medal possibility was brought up and Alshammar acted the shrinking violet. While everything else seemed vibrant and focused, she shied away from cocky predictions for the pool.

"I won't say I'm going to come home with a gold medal," Alshammar said in an interview in 1998. "Because then people are going to say, 'Oh, you only came home with a bronze!' And that's not bad at all."

In November of 1998, she was 22nd in the world in 50-free. Keith Moore, NU sprints coach, talked of her in-water speed in awe-like terms, but criticized a clunky start. Alshammar, competing the college-shortened lengths of yards, which diminished her in-water advantage, never won a NCAA title.

"I knew the first time I saw her, at just some Photo Day swim, that she had the talent to be this great," Moore said Sept. 7.

"This great" would refer to Alshammar's status as the dark, unknown horse in Olympics whom SI picks to win both races. That's based on the notion her blistering victory times at the European Championships, which fellow European De Bruijn did not compete in, will carry over to Sydney. Alshammar has relocated to Hamburg, Germany, and found a coach that

Please see **ALSHAMMAR** on 11

Top-ranked Nebraska hooks Horns

■ Tough second set is the only speed bump in an otherwise easy win over Texas.

BY BRIAN CHRISTOPHERSON

Had they not worn the classic burnt orange long sleeves, Texas could have been mistaken for any other Big 12 sacrificial lamb sent to the NU Coliseum slaughter house.

NU looked every bit the new No. 1 team in the land, upping their record to 8-0, 1-0 in conference play, after a 15-4, 17-15, 15-4 sweep of the Longhorns.

UT is off to their worst start in school history with a 1-5 mark.

Nebraska was especially dominant right out of the gate in game one, causing Texas Coach Jim Moore to use superlatives such as "flawless" and "perfect" to describe the Cornhuskers' play.

"In games one and three, it was classic Nebraska volleyball: serve tough and block tough," Nebraska Coach John Cook said.

Sandwiched in between the 15-4 laughers was a 50-minute second game tussle, in which Texas fought back from 12-8 and 14-12 battles knotting it at 15.

Texas continually silenced the 3,646 fans in attendance with numerous side-outs before Nebraska finally took

NEBRASKA 15 17 15
TEXAS 4 15 4

the game and momentum with a 17-15 win.

"It seemed like everything was going good for Texas, and everything was going bad for Nebraska," Cook said of game two. "It had some weird plays, but that was a good game to win."

"We were pretty determined out there tonight. We just got passive in the second game," middle blocker Jenny Kropp said. "They were gaining points off of our mistakes."

NU's size kept the Horns

Please see **WIN** on 11



Nebraska Senior Angie Oxley celebrates with her teammates after a kill against the Texas Longhorns on Wednesday night at the Coliseum. The Huskers put down the Longhorns in straight games, 15-4, 17-15, 15-4.

Scott McClurg/DN



Nebraska quarterback Eric Crouch pitches to I-back Correll Buckhalter on one of Nebraska's option plays. Nebraska is one of a few college football teams who are considered true option teams, and one of the few who have enjoyed great success in recent years running the option attack.

Photo Illustration by Mike Warren/DN

BREAD & BUTTER

FIVE NU PLAYS THAT PAVE THE WAY

BY DAVID DIEHL

The numbers explaining Nebraska's offensive dominance do not lie.

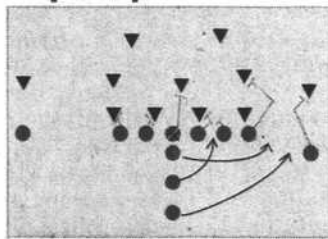
There are the irrefutable facts such as the seven NCAA offensive records Nebraska's offense holds today, the locker chock-full of 11 rushing titles in the past 19 years, and, of course, the Sears Trophies stacked up in the South Stadium offices.

Those figures are almost as undeniable as what one can see on Husker Saturdays: The Big Red Steamroller plowing up, around and through trifling defenses and the yardage totals board subsequently spinning out of control as if it were the national debt board.

When that board hits 300 rushing yards, NU is 176-5 since 1973. When it tops 400, the record's an astronomical 89-0.

The talent that has put up those convincing figures has

Triple option



Opponents know it's coming. Heck, the cheerleaders know it's coming. But the triple option is unstoppable because of the options (and because of Nebraska's offensive talent, too, of course). The quarterback can either hand off to the fullback, pitch to the I-back or keep it himself.

made Nebraska's offense the standard in power football over the last three decades.

Please see **BUTTER** on 11

RED HOT IN RED ZONE

BY JOSHUA CAMENZIND

The middle linebacker is huffing and puffing as he enters the huddle – the direct result of having been on the field for four minutes straight.

Nebraska's offense has just driven down the field from its own 35-yard line, and the ball now rests on the opponent's 15.

The Husker's quarterback, Eric Crouch, has led his team close to the end zone with an assortment of handoffs, pitches and play-action passes.

Crouch now finds himself in an area crucial to the success of the Huskers – the red zone.

According to Husker center Dominic Raiola, NU's goal at this point is clear – despite the limited room of a short field, the team wants seven points.

"We want to score all of the time," said Raiola. "Whether it be a field goal, or preferably, a touchdown. We want to put points on the board."

NU has yet to go the field-goal route in 2000, thanks to near-perfect execution inside the opponents' 20-yard line.

The Huskers have scored a touchdown on each of its seven attempts in its first two games of the season.

Why has the offense been so successful in the short field?

Please see **RED ZONE** on 11