

## Collier stresses discipline on and off the court

■ The new men's basketball coach says game-day performance can be connected to good discipline and demeanor in practices and school.

BY JOSHUA CAMENZIND

Nebraska Basketball Coach Barry Collier enjoys a jog every now and then.

His players don't - especially for five miles at 5 a.m.

Five at five, a program implemented by Collier to deter Husker players from missing class, is just one of many new things for players to adjust to as Collier takes over a Nebraska basketball program previously headed by Danny Nee.

"There are a lot of differences," guard Cary Cochran said. "And they are evident ones."

"They will be evident to those who come to watch us play and are probably evident to those who have taken note to what we are doing off the court, as well."

NU has had plenty of off-the-court activity this offseason.

Last year's starting point guard, Danny Walker, was kicked off the team, and three other Huskers

(Kimani Ffriend, Rodney Fields and John Robinson) have been suspended for three games apiece because of various violations.

Ffriend said Collier has demanded respect from his players, and the team has taken notice.

"He's the boss," he said. "He's the head man. You just have to listen and learn."

"If you don't fear or respect the coach, you are not going to have a team; the team is not going to work. And right now, nobody knows Coach Collier, and there is that fear to work within the lines and abide by the rules."

The rules, which include timeliness, accountability and truthfulness, are crucial to the Huskers' becoming the unit it was not in 1999, Collier said.

"They don't want to repeat an 18-loss season," he said. "They can learn from what happened last year and what worked and didn't work."

As Walker and others have found out, the new sheriff in town means business.

Collier said that while he maintains an open door for his players, his policies are not up for discussion.

Ffriend said Collier's rules are cut and dry. "He came in, and he put the hammer down," he said. "Either you are with the system or you are not."

Assistant Coach Kevin Mouton said the players are with it.

"We are all on the same page," said Mouton, who worked with Collier from 1993 to 1995 at Butler.

But time was needed for the players to adjust, Mouton said.

"When you have 19- and 20-year-old guys, they are going to try and figure out what is going on," he said. "Once they figured out that we were for them and had no hidden agendas, they figured out that we want to win as bad as they do."

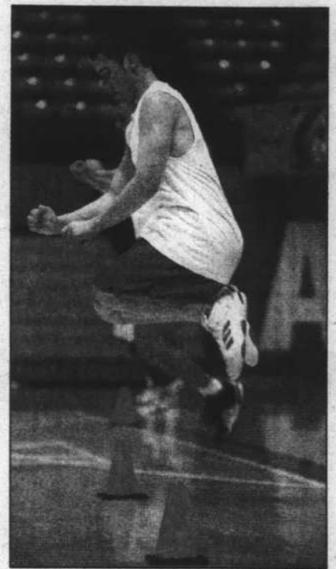
Collier said he believes winning and on-the-court performance can be directly linked to good discipline and demeanor.

And while his policies are new to the players, they are not new to him, he said.

"You either have an overall positive attitude, or you don't," said Collier, who won more than 22 games in the last four years with Butler. "That is reflective on how you do in school, on the court and how you treat people - that is the big picture."

"I haven't talked to anybody that has been successful with a part-time attitude. They just don't have a good enough attitude - period."

Please see **COLLIER** on 9



Husker basketball walk-on Ryan Thomas endures conditioning drills during an off-season workout on Monday.

Nate Wagner/DN

## NU proves passing attack against Iowa

■ Despite going to the air only 13 times, Husker quarterback Eric Crouch threw a record-tying five touchdown passes.

BY JOSHUA CAMENZIND

Nebraska quarterback Eric Crouch only completed 10 passes against Iowa on Saturday.

But NU's five-touchdown aerial performance against the Hawkeyes did put opponents on notice that the Cornhuskers can switch gears.

"How'd you like our new offensive approach?" Crouch joked after the game.

Missouri, next Saturday's opponent, will surely take notice of what took place against Iowa.

"I'm sure they'll take an approach like all teams do to stop guys who have been making plays," he said. "We have been fortunate that we have had a good number of guys' doing that."

Against Iowa, Crouch and his trio of receivers made their share of plays.

Crouch picked his spots well, hitting 10 of 13 passes. He also threw for a school-record tying five touchdowns, after throwing only one in NU's first two games. The Husker quarterback has now scored six touchdowns running and six passing.

Saturday, Crouch found Tracey Wistrom three times in the end zone and Matt Davison twice.

Wistrom and Davison hurt Iowa from both short and long range. Wistrom's three touchdown receptions totaled 26 yards, while Davison gained 74 on his two.

Davison and Wistrom have combined for 244 of NU's 353 receiving yards. Throw in Bobby Newcombe, and the trio have gained 322 yards altogether.

Some of Nebraska's passing success Saturday was because of Iowa's defensive scheme.

Coach Frank Solich said Iowa dictated how

much his offense threw the ball because the Hawkeyes were blitzing its safeties, opening up both the play-action pass and normal drop-back passes.

"They came with a lot of people and came with their safeties an awful lot," he said. "That will slow you down some in the running game sometimes, and then there are times when you can catch them in it and get big plays."

"It does, if you are able to protect it, open up the passing game."

The Iowa defense's concentration on the run made Wistrom's job easier.

"I was just pretty much wide open today," he said. "I'd like to say that some of those catches were spectacular, but they were just routine plays that all worked today."

Fans may be in for an instant replay next Saturday if the Tigers fail to adjust.

Solich said the Huskers have taken notice of the similarities between the Hawkeye and Tiger defenses.

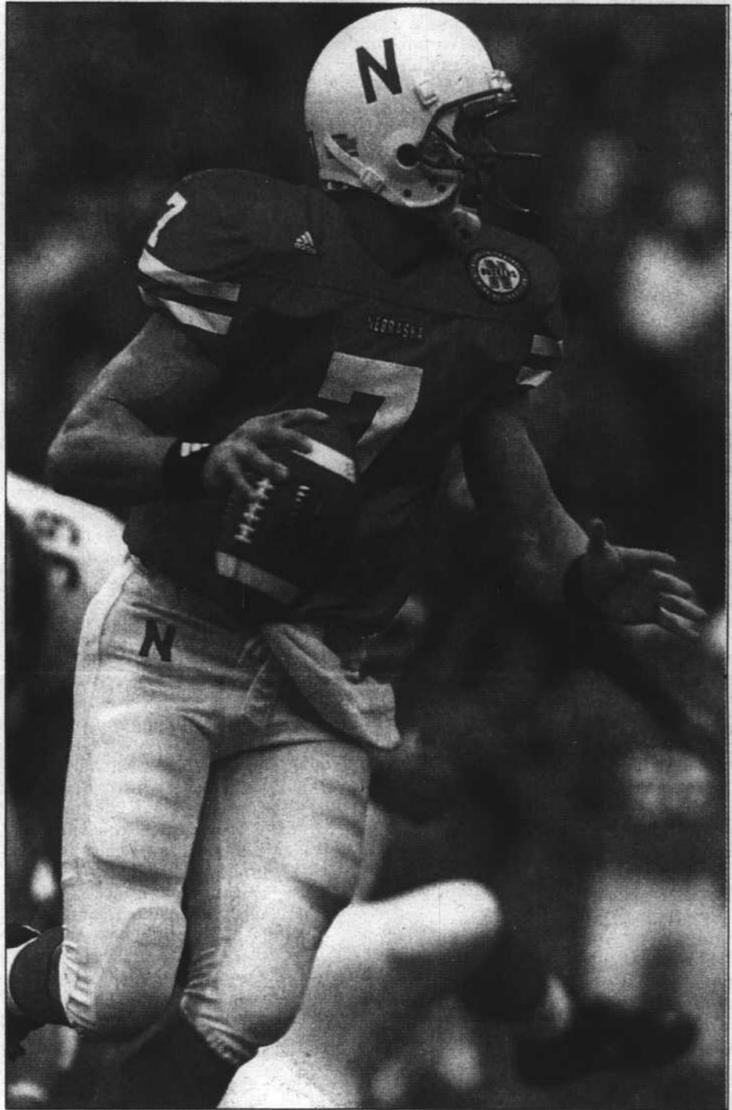
"They run very much what Iowa runs in terms of the defensive package," Solich said.

Still, the top priority for the Tiger defense will be limiting the Huskers' running attack. This is ground-bound NU, where 159 yards coupled with a record-tying five touchdown passes is an offensive revolution.

After all, NU still rushed for 352 yards on the game and nearly had three 100-yard rushers. They lead the nation in rushing yards, piling up 370 yards per game.

"We have a lot of confidence in our running game, and we feel that we can make big plays," Solich said. "Just because an offense at times will be stopped for one drive, it doesn't mean you don't come back and continue to try to run the football."

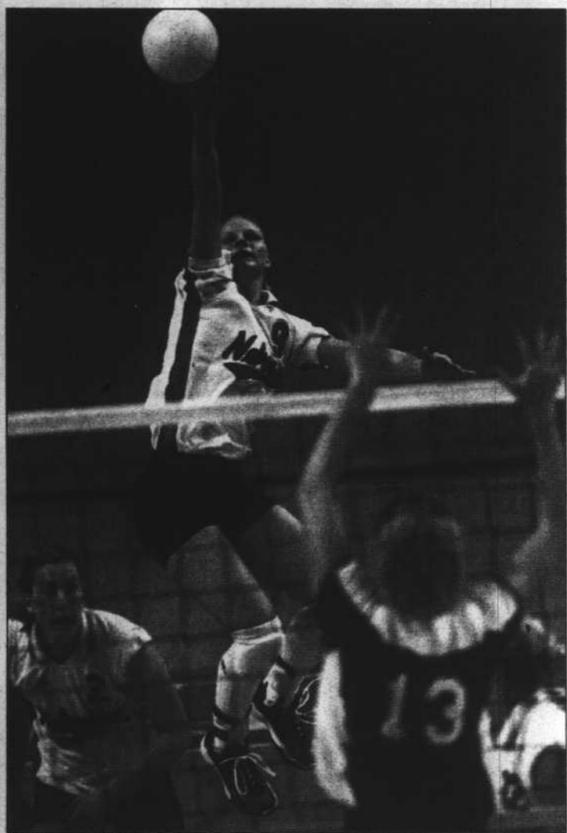
"You do what you do best, and we think we're a good option football team."



Nebraska quarterback Eric Crouch was 10-13 passing, tying a school record with five touchdown passes against Iowa on Saturday.

DN File Photo

## NU volleyball building the 'Great Wall' Buffs look for first win at Kansas State



DN File Photo

Sophomore Laura Pilakowski reaches for a ball against Oklahoma last Saturday. The top-ranked Huskers lead the Big 12 in blocks this season.

■ The Cornhuskers have used size, practice and attitude to remain the best blocking volleyball team in the Big 12.

BY SEAN CALLAHAN

It's an attitude held by Nebraska Volleyball Head Coach John Cook and his team - when opponents attack, Nebraska will block them.

It's also reality. The Cornhuskers lead the conference with an average of 3.7 blocks per game.

"The theme for our poster this year was the Great Wall," Cook said. "It's a mentality that we want to be the best blocking team in the country."

"It's something we work on, I really enjoy teaching, and it's been a tradition of Nebraska volleyball."

Cook said NU volleyball has always been known for great blockers, and this year proves to be no different.

Leading the way for the Huskers with an average of 1.69 blocks per game is junior Jenny Kropp. Sophomore Amber Holmquist tallies one block per game. There are 3 to 5 games per match.

Kropp said that in her career at NU, this is the best blocking team she's been around. A lot of that, she said, is because of the look the team sees in practice.

"There were great blockers in the past, but I think we've kind of developed and worked on it everyday in practice," Kropp said.

"We go against Nancy (Meendering), Pam (Krejci), Assistant Coach Craig

(Skinner) and June (Li). There's balls that get past our block all the time in practice. Every attack we see in practice is perfect, so it's a lot harder to block balls."

Height doesn't hurt, either. Holmquist (6-foot-4), Kropp (6-foot-2), Laura Pilakowski (6-foot-1), Kim Behrends (6-foot) and Angie Oxley (6-foot) make up a huge lineup.

A tall, athletic setter like Greichaly Cepero also adds to the Husker block.

The 6-foot-2 sophomore from Dorado, Puerto Rico, presents opposing teams a new look.

Cook said having Cepero to complete the blocking attack gives the Husker players an advantage every time they walk onto the court.

"This team is an exceptional blocking team," Cook said. "What makes it an exceptional blocking team is there's not a weak spot on the net."

"Typically teams will have smaller setters. We have a 6-foot 2-inch setter, so there's no weak area, and that's something teams have a hard time handling."

With such a dominating block, Nebraska's back row may not be tested until the postseason.

Cook said the strong looks the team sees in practice daily will keep it prepared.

"I think there are going to be challenges in the Big 12 for us," Cook said. "They're coming down the road, so we just need to keep getting better and keep improving. This team that we go against everyday in practice made our block look pretty bad today."

"We get humbled in the gym almost everyday against our scout team."

## Buffs look for first win at Kansas State

BY SAMUEL MCKEOWN

Gary Barnett figures the attitude of his Colorado football team couldn't be any better than it is considering the circumstances, which couldn't be much worse.

The Buffaloes, a good enough team to be undefeated, have instead dropped its first three games to two ranked teams, Washington and Southern California, and to worthy in-state rival Colorado State. And, to open its Big 12 Conference schedule, CU is faced with Kansas State, the nation's No. 4 team.

At least the game's at home.

"We keep just playing better teams," Barnett said. "But our kids feel good about themselves - as good as they can without winning a game."

KSU, at 4-0, hasn't broke much of a sweat in its four wins, outscoring opponents 212-27.

In its final year of playing teams that are clearly below its skill level - USC is on schedule for next season - the Wildcats are playing near-perfect football, Barnett said, "at the highest level."

And when Kansas State Coach Bill Snyder is pressed for team weaknesses, he offers only cautionary praise of the second team.

The quarterback play of senior Jonathan Beasley has been good enough to hold off freshman Ell Roberson. KSU has established a running game. And the defense, even without star safety Jarrod Cooper, has been rawhide tough.

Yet it's no surprise that Snyder is planning against an "ambush" from the Buffs, maybe because he nearly saw his Cats get upset last year in the Big 12 opener against Iowa State after a slate of weak non-confer-

Please see **COLORADO** on 9