

Early goals help NU take tournament crown

BY JAMIE SUHR

■ The Huskers continue their Big 12 dominance with a convincing defeat of Texas A&M.

The Nebraska soccer team continued its stranglehold on Big 12 Conference crowns with a 4-1 win over Texas A&M.

The No. 3 Cornhuskers won the Big 12 regular season championship and followed it with a conference tournament championship for the third time in the team's five seasons of existence.

Nebraska	4
Texas A&M	1

The Huskers swept both crowns in the Big 12's inaugural season of 1996 and again won both titles last season.

To bring both championships to Lincoln again, NU (21-1) used early goals from freshmen Christy Harms and Lindsey Greenwood to jump out to a 2-0 lead en route to a 4-1 win.

NU Coach John Walker said he wasn't surprised by the production of the freshmen.

"We've had good depth all year, and it showed this weekend," Walker said. "With freshmen, they have to become (accustomed) to the program, so you'll usually see them step up towards the end of the year."

Earlier in the year, the Huskers were forced to come from behind in a 2-1 victory over the Aggies.

Walker said the difference between the two matches was obvious.

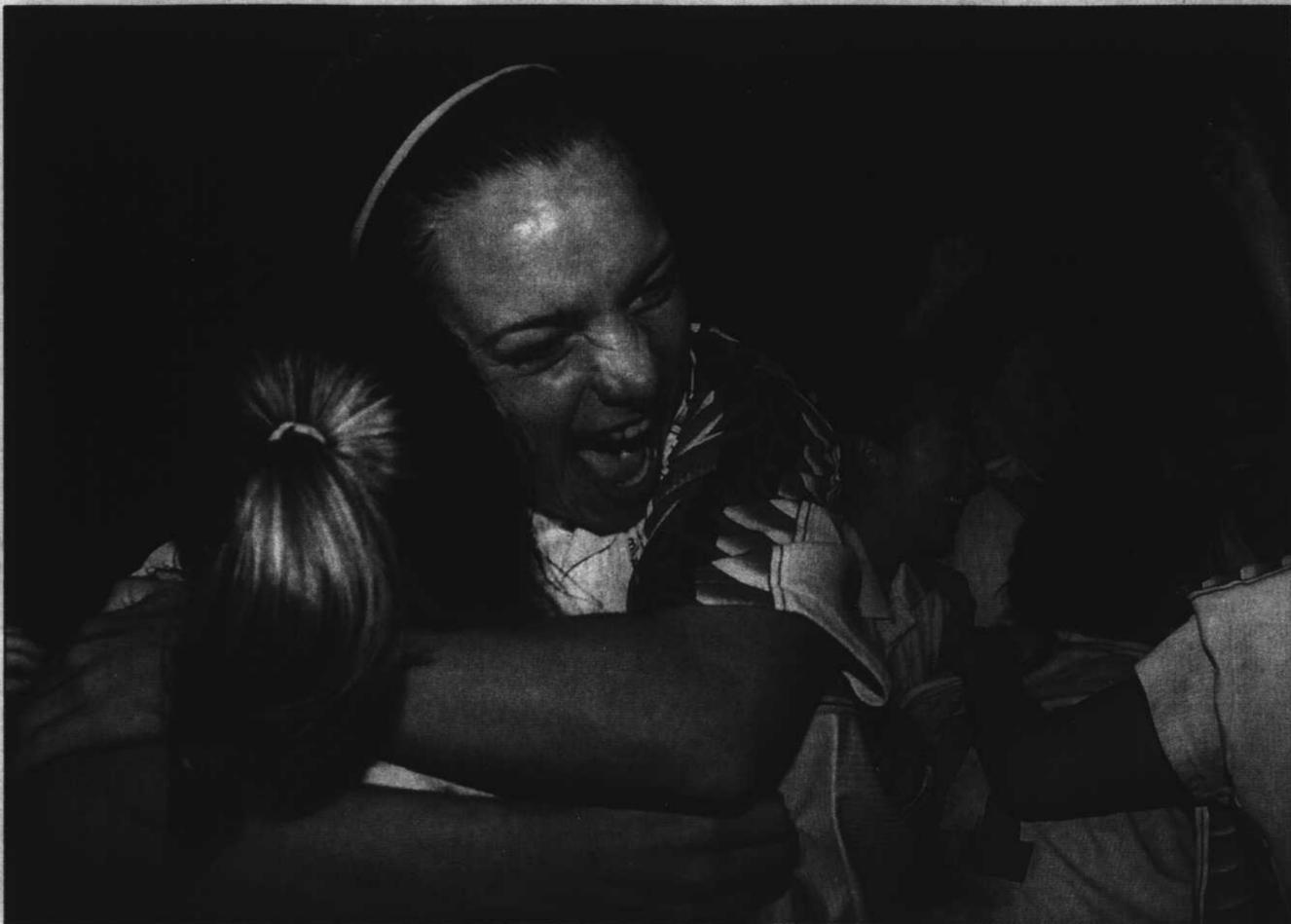
"This time we scored first and put the onus on them," Walker said. "All night we had the advantage."

On the night, NU outshot the Aggies 19-16, but 11 of A&M's shots came in the second half.

While the Huskers gave up more shots than usual, Walker said he was pleased with the play of the defenders.

"Our back three did a good job of not allowing much penetration, forcing them to shoot a little

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Mike Warren/DN
ABOVE: Paige Phillips celebrates with teammates after time runs out in the final round of the Big 12 Conference championship tournament as NU defeated Texas A&M 4-1. Phillips scored her first career goal in the tournament as NU captured the regular season and tournament championships.

NU to host NCAA Regional

BY JAMIE SUHR

The room was filled with mixed reactions as the Nebraska soccer team was awarded its NCAA Tournament fate.

The Cornhuskers got exactly what they wanted — a top four seed. But the team got the fourth seed, a spot or two lower than some players felt they deserved.

NU does get to host NCAA Tournament games at the Abbott Sports Complex, provided they keep winning.

"We're at home, and that's what's most important," Husker Coach John Walker said.

At 7 p.m. on Saturday, the Huskers will face the winner of Richmond and West Virginia — two teams Walker said he knew little about.

NU's early draw appears to be favor-

able. If the Huskers win their first game, NU will likely see Connecticut, which they beat 2-0 in the UConn Classic.

But the second highest seed in NU's bracket is 16-time NCAA champion North Carolina — the No. 5 seed. The Tar Heels won last year's NCAA Tournament.

Defender Jenny Benson said she liked the way the seeding turned out, even with UNC in the Huskers' bracket.

"We get home field advantage, so (the Tar Heels) have to come to us," Benson said.

While the Huskers will have to face one of the storied programs of women's soccer, Notre Dame will have the easiest route to the Final Four after being named the No. 1 seed.

The undefeated Fighting Irish have knocked off the Huskers the past three years in the tournament, including last

season's 1-1 tie where Notre Dame won in a shoot out.

"It's nice to avoid Notre Dame for the first three rounds," Benson said.

If the teams were to square off, it would be in the semifinals of the Final Four in San Jose, Calif.

Washington was awarded the No. 2 seed despite losing to Washington State in its final game of the season. Clemson, who knocked off then-No. 1 UNC earlier this season, brought home the No. 3 seed.

The tournament brackets were scattered with Husker opponents. Overall, NU beat five tournament teams this season — Southwest Missouri State, UConn, Florida, Texas A&M and Dartmouth.

The Aggies were the only other Big 12 Conference team to qualify for the Big Dance.

Texas was likely dropped from contention after its first-round loss to Oklahoma in the conference tournament.



Mike Warren/DN
Christine Latham, Big 12 Conference Player of the Year, fights off a tackle in the second round of the Big 12 tournament against Baylor. Latham was named the offensive MVP.

Cornhuskers survive scare in exhibition against Hungary

BY JASON MERRIHEW

The Nebraska women's basketball team played in an unexpected nail-biter on Sunday, holding off KSC-Szekezsard (Hungary) 76-74 in its first exhibition game of the 2000-2001 season.

The Hungarian team battled back from a 46-36 halftime deficit to tie the score with less than a minute to go in the game.

"We let them back into the

game, and they started to play with confidence," NU Coach Paul Sanderford said. "We played the score instead of the game."

A foul committed by Hungary's leading scorer Eva Strgovic with 3.4 seconds left in the game put NU freshman K.C. Cowgill on the line.

Cowgill hit both free throw attempts to take the lead and ice the game.

The late points earned at the

charity stripe were the only points scored by the highly touted freshman from Grand Island.

Husker teammates said those points won't be the last.

"Her (Cowgill's) confidence with her shot is unbelievable," senior guard Amanda Went said.

Cowgill played 16 minutes off the bench for the Huskers, going 0 for 5 from the field and 0 for 3 from behind the arch.

The Hungarian team showed NU a 1-3-1 zone trap defense rarely used by Nebraska's opponents. It led to 30 Husker turnovers.

"We threw the ball to the wrong color jerseys too many times," Sanderford said.

Despite the tentative play by Nebraska, Sanderford was able to give everyone on the team significant playing time.

Eleven out of 13 players played over 10 minutes during

the exhibition contest.

Sanderford said he attributes the lack of a cohesive rotation to NU's second half collapse.

"We need to find a rotation in a hurry," Sanderford said.

Freshman guard Shannon Howell, and senior forward Monique Whitfield, who both started, led the Huskers with 13 points apiece.

Whitfield also led the team with 10 rebounds — six offensive

and four defensive.

Sanderford said he was relieved the game didn't have to play into extra minutes.

"I didn't want to sit through overtime," Sanderford said.

Nebraska will play the Australia Institute next Sunday in NU's only other exhibition game before the season opener against Oakland in the Time Warner Cable Classic on Nov. 17 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

No. 1 NU holds off CU

BY BRIAN CHRISTOPHERSON

It was a Final Four-like atmosphere with some Final Four-like, hard-fought volleys and some Final Four-like competitive games between the underdog and the Final Four favorite.

The score in game one stood at 9-4 in favor of the Buffs when CU freshman outside hitter Sara Villwock capped a five-point run by lacing one of her 12 kills to the hardwood.

"At first, we came out a little tentative, and our serving was not as aggressive as it has been," senior right-side hitter Angie Oxley said. "I think serving sets how we play."

Meanwhile, Colorado Coach Pi'i Aiu said his team's quick passing pace exposed openings in the Nebraska block.

"When we pass well and Nebraska has to respect our middles, I think our offense is fast enough that we can get some split blocks and some holes in the block," Aiu said. "Early in game one, we passed pretty well."

CU consistently set the ball to junior

was really a part of history tonight — a crowd like this for a volleyball match," Cook said. "In the volleyball world, this will be a big deal. What was special about this is that there were no free tickets given tonight. You had to buy a ticket to get in tonight. This was a paid 12,504."

And the home fans wouldn't be disappointed, although the Buffaloes' play early in game one suggested that NU might have to work beyond the usual three-game sweep that has become a trademark of the Huskers this conference season.

The crowd was the largest ever to witness an NCAA regular-season volleyball match, eclipsing the mark of 11,529 set in 1995 in the same building between CU and NU. Saturday's crowd was the third largest in NCAA history.

Nebraska Coach John Cook said he knew some special attendance numbers could be set when he saw people backed up to the street waiting to get in two hours before the match.

"I told the team after the match that this

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Devaney fans set new mark

BY SEAN CALLAHAN

The Bob Devaney Sports Center hasn't seen 12,504 paying fans in quite some time — 20 months and the 1999 Nebraska-Kansas basketball game to be exact.

Despite the fact that Saturday night's volleyball match with Colorado was televised live on NETV, and there were no free tickets or promotions, Nebraskans showed up in record numbers.

The 12,504 fans in attendance made up the third-largest crowd in NCAA Volleyball history next two games in the NCAA finals in 1998, which drew 13,194.

The match did manage to shatter the all-time NCAA regular season mark of 11,529 that was set by the Cornhuskers in 1995.

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ABOVE: The No. 1-ranked Nebraska volleyball team set a new NCAA record for regular season attendance with 12,504 spectators.

RIGHT: NU middle blocker Jenny Kropp puts a kill over Colorado's Monique Gerlach Saturday at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

Photos by Scott McClurg/DN