

NU skills add up to ideal season

I thought Ivy leaguers were smarter than this.

But Emily Brown, senior

captain of the Princeton volleyball team, just couldn't resist from throwing a little dirt up in Goliath Nebraska's eyes.

"We're setting up for the biggest upset in national volleyball history," Brown said of Friday's first-round NCAA duel.

Upset? Are math questions going to be involved? Maybe a Science Bowl?

At least David had a sling-shot and some rocks when he slew Goliath.

Besides the athletic-skill edge Nebraska holds, the Tigers are just too short by volleyball standards.

Princeton has only three players on its team who stand more than six-feet tall.

Nebraska, meanwhile, has only two players under six-feet.

If this were a pick-up game, Princeton players would likely take the volleyball and go home.

So I'll go out on a limb and say the Huskers will handle the Tigers in three games.

I'll go one better. I'll say Nebraska will march straight into the Final Four in Richmond, Va.

This team has had Final Four on the brain since the plane ride home from last year's Sweet 16 loss.

The Huskers scheduled early September tests like the Notre Dame Tournament, in part, to prepare for the back-to-back games the NCAA tournament requires.

Nebraska stormed out of the Notre Dame Tournament confident and unbeaten.

The Husker players yawned whenever they weren't laughing throughout the conference season.

But leave it to good old Kansas State, the purple menace themselves, to show that indeed the Huskers could be beaten.

K-State forced Nebraska to go five games in the last match of the year, and NU didn't look quite as invincible with sophomore outside hitter Laura Pilakowski sitting it out after having her appendix removed.

Ah yes, the Pilakowski factor.

Will Laura be healthy enough to knock down NCAA kills, or will matches be put in the hands of true freshman Anna Schrad?

No worry Cook says. Pilakowski will be back soon enough (as in Sweet 16 time), and young Schrad is very capable of handling her share of the load if Laura sits.

And if the Pilakowski factor proves to be a minus for the Huskers, throw out that variable on count of the home-court factor.

Quite frankly, opposing teams just don't win in the NU Coliseum.

Teams might trade a few punches with the Huskers, but NU seems to get a point, then another, then another in the flash of an eye. The crowd's voices begin to echo off the old brick walls and before the other team knows it, Nebraska player's are smiling and in control of the match.

With Nebraska's talent level and the Coliseum aura, it's clear to see Nebraska is off to the Final Four.

Shoot, if you're going to go undefeated into the Final Four, you might as well win the whole thing.



Brian Christopherson

Badgers hold on, outlast Huskers

BY LINCOLN ARNEAL

Down by 19 points to Wisconsin with eight minutes left to play, the Nebraska women's basketball team looked to be on its way to a blowout loss at the hands of the No. 19 Badgers.

But the Huskers weren't quite dead yet, coming alive behind the play of freshman K.C. Gowgill.

Although NU finished on the wrong end of a 74-64 score, the late 15-2 run, which brought the Huskers to within six, gave NU Coach Paul Sanderford's young team something positive out of Nebraska's first loss of the season.

"We just came out and played harder in the second half," Sanderford said. "We tried to get the ball moving more by using

Wisconsin	74
Nebraska	64

screens and were able to score."

It was freshman Cowgill who sparked NU (4-1) down the stretch. The guard scored 10 of her 12 points in the second half, leading NU's stable of underclassmen back into the game.

"As they guarded me closer on the outside, I wanted to take the ball to the basket and draw fouls," Cowgill said.

But it also was youthful mistakes that hurt NU down the stretch. With less than two minutes remaining, a shot clock violation along with a ball that bounced off of Margaret Richards' hands sealed the outcome.

Inexperience also defined the first half, as Nebraska watched awestruck as Wisconsin (3-2) lit them up.

"We came out a little bit shell shocked," Sanderford said. "We were passive on defense and didn't play well."

Wisconsin started the game on fire, shooting a torrid 66 percent from the field in the first half. They made 14 of their first 18 shots to take a commanding lead.

Early on, the Badgers relied on Jessie Stomski, who scored eight of Wisconsin's first 13 points. NU was not able to stick to its defensive game plan as they allowed Stomski to light them up as she finished with 20 points.

"We need to work on coming to guard people," Sanderford said. "We weren't very physical, and we let them do what

they wanted."

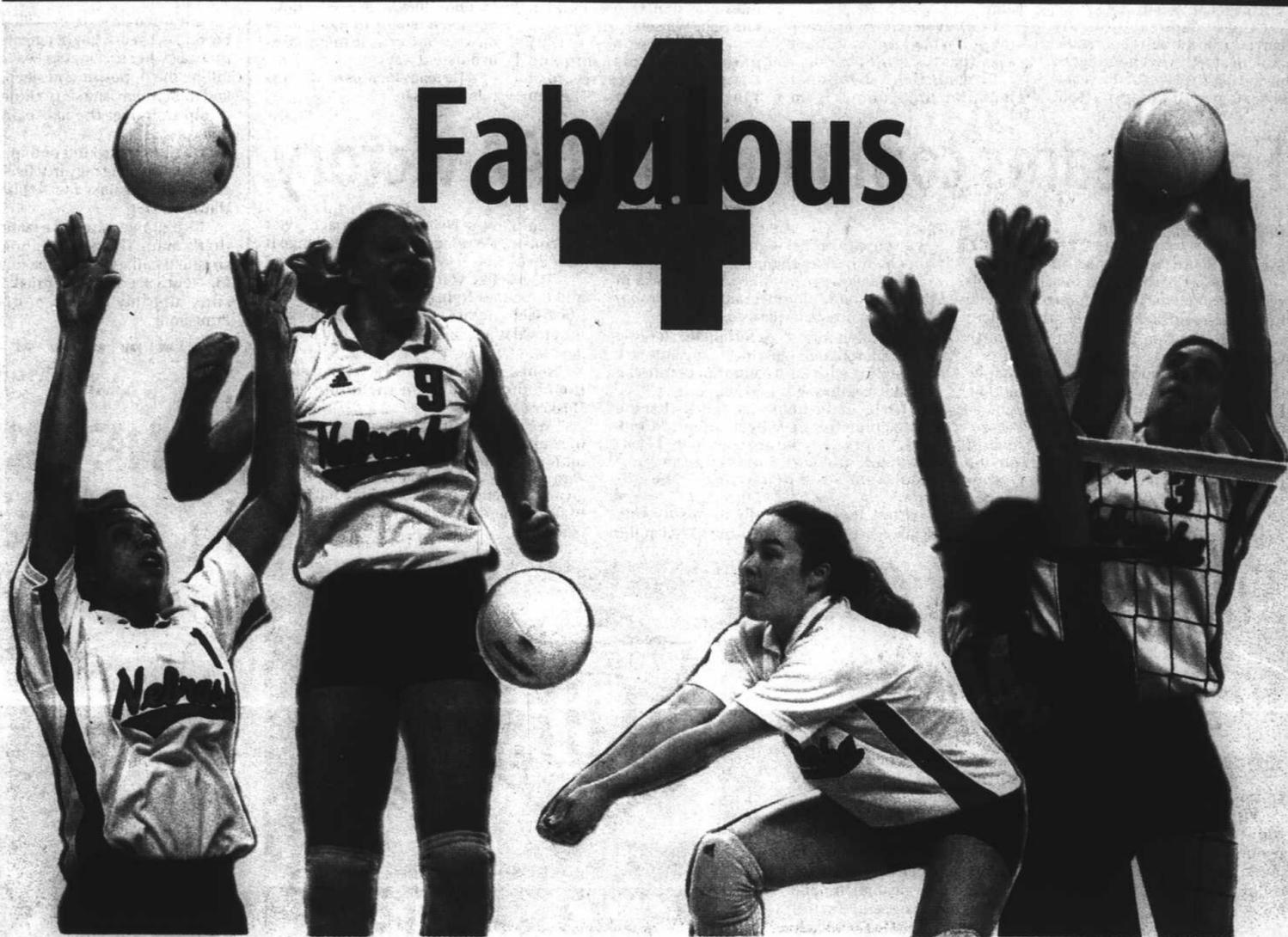
Nebraska countered with a strong inside game with Casey Leonhardt, who had 12 points and 10 rebounds for Nebraska.

It was the bench that kept NU in the game. Along with Cowgill, Candace Blackburn chipped in 10 points and five assists.

"We got a big lift off the bench," Sanderford said. "We had a good balance."

Despite the loss Cowgill said the team could use this to their advantage.

"This is a good confidence builder. We battled during the second half and were able to come back," she said. "If we put together a full game, who knows what could have happened."



Four sophomores backbone of No. 1 Cornhuskers

BY SEAN CALLAHAN

Maybe former Nebraska Volleyball Coach Terry Pettit picked the wrong year to retire.

True, when first-year Coach John Cook was handed a tradition-rich Cornhusker volleyball program, he was left with several difficult obstacles.

Most notably, he didn't have senior All-American Nancy Meendering, who opted to red-shirt after trying out with the

U.S. National team for most of the spring and summer.

But Cook's cupboard was far from bare. In fact, the first-year coach had three more All-American candidates and arguably one of the nation's top defensive specialists. All four are sophomores.

How about a nickname - "The Fab Four." The group - Amber Holmquist, Greichaly Cepero, Laura Pilakowski and Lindsay Wischmeier - may be

the backbone of the Husker squad.

Cook said without Meendering he knew this was the group of players that had to take the leadership roles.

"We knew it was a special class," Cook said. "There's a great middle in there, a great left side that we didn't know at the time, but we knew Pilakowski was a great athlete. Greichaly, we knew could be an All-American setter."

"The other person every-

body forgets about is Lindsay Wischmeier. She's really the heart and soul of that group. She's the one that pulls those guys together, she's the one that's always pushing them in the weight room in all those different areas mentally."

Wischmeier's blue-collar attitude definitely doesn't go unnoticed by her three fellow sophomore All-American candidate teammates.

Holmquist said she considered Wischmeier the most important piece to the puzzle on the Huskers 28-0 perfect regular

season.

"She's the one that may not get as recognized, but she gets the incredible digs in the back row and she's the one that holds the team together on the court," Holmquist said. "I think her role is more important than anybody else's."

That's a strong statement considering the fact Holmquist, Pilakowski and Cepero all lead the nation statistically at their respective positions.

Please see VOLLEYBALL on 9

NCAA's gives GW a break from pain

BY BRIAN CHRISTOPHERSON

Of the four teams competing in the first and second rounds of the NCAA volleyball tournament at the NU Coliseum this weekend, nobody has been on a bigger roller-coaster ride this year than George Washington University.

Losing a match this weekend won't hurt the George Washington team nearly as much as losing the chance to play, the chance to get away from the pain that still lingers with both players and coaches.

The game has made them concentrate on something else besides the death of their coach, Yvette Moorehead, who committed suicide in August.

"The first three weeks were so hard," new GWU Coach Jo Coronel said. "Then school started, and the girls were able to focus on volleyball and school."

"The worst part is going to be when the season is over and you have more time to think about her death."

The Colonials dedicated their season to Moorehead, and capped it off in dramatic fashion with a marathon five-game win over Xavier in the Atlantic 10 Conference Championship game.

"We toasted some Gatorade to that win," said Coronel, who claimed Atlantic 10 Coach-of-the-Year honors in his first season.

Now, the 25-5 Colonials hope to keep this memorable season ticking with a first-round win

Sutton longs for last year's OSU team

From injuries to inexperienced players, the Cowboys may find it hard to live up to last year's Sweet 16 squad.

BY JOSHUA CAMENZIND

Eddie Sutton is very adamant that he is not ready to retire from coaching.

Still, the 64-year-old basketball coach at Oklahoma State said at last month's Big 12 Media Days that in the preseason, he had thought about taking a year off from coaching.

No, Sutton's health is not deteriorating - he just has a young team trying his patience every now and then.

"I got a good staff, so sometimes I get a little impatient and go sit down and drink a Diet Pepsi," Sutton said. "I told my son (Assistant Coach Sean Sutton) the other day that if it gets too bad that he was taking over, and I was taking a sabbatical."

"I am going to pull a Phog Allen. I remember one year that he did not like his team so he just said he would come back next season."

Not many can blame Sutton for wanting to take time off after coaching last year's team, which lost to Florida in the Sweet 16. The 30-year veteran of college coaching had his team all laid out before him last year.

Sutton knew Doug Gottlieb, who was arguably the best passer in school history, would run the show. He knew

if things broke down he could give the ball to Desmond Mason, a first-round NBA draft-pick, and Mason would make something happen.

Want outside shooting? Sutton would call a play for either Joe Adkins or Glendon Alexander. Sutton also could turn it up inside by giving the ball to either Brian Montonati or Alex Webber.

In a nutshell, Sutton's team coached itself at some points, and it became one of the best in OSU history. But this year's team hasn't made it easy on Sutton, despite a 2-0 record gained by wins over the University of Missouri-Kansas City and North Texas.

Sutton knows 20 turnovers a game won't get it done if OSU hopes to stay among the Big 12 elite.

One of the Cowboy returnees, junior Fredrik Jonzen, said his new teammates were athletic but would require Sutton to take on a much more hands-on role this year.

"He is really going to have to be a teacher this year," Jonzen said. "During practices last year, everybody knew what we were doing and, he was just stopping practices for minor things. This year it is big things, and he stops us in practice a lot and talks to the guys."

Sutton said he welcomed the challenge.

"I have always thought of myself as

"I have always thought of myself as a teacher, and this year, we certainly have a lot of teaching to do."

Eddie Sutton
Oklahoma State coach

a teacher, and this year, we certainly have a lot of teaching to do," he said.

All of the new players lack big-time experience outside of Victor Williams, who should take over the point guard duties at OSU without a hitch. Williams transferred to Oklahoma State from Illinois State, where he was the Missouri Valley Freshman of the Year. He practiced with the veteran Cowboys while sitting out his transfer year in 1999.

"He is one of the best guards I have ever played with," said forward Andre Williams, a sophomore who led all Big 12 freshmen with 1.25 blocks per game last season.

Sutton said the point guard Williams would be challenged for playing time by would-be Maurice Baker, who has gotten rave reviews for his athleticism. But so far, the two have

Please see SUTTON on 9

Please see TOURNEY on 9

Please see OPPONENTS on 9