

Fab Four take team to new heights

VOLLEYBALL from page 10

Holmquist has numbers off the chart this season.

The 6-foot-4 middle blocker out of Houston leads the nation in blocks per game (2.02) and also carries a .424 hitting percentage which ranks second all time on the NU regular season chart.

Pilakowski has impressive numbers of her own. Cook claims the left-side hitter has the highest hitting percentage (.351) for her position in the nation. She also leads the Huskers in kills (4.22) and digs (2.67) per game.

Pilakowski uses straight athletic ability to put up those numbers.

The 6-foot-1 Columbus native shattered the NU volleyball performance index record in the offseason. When Pilakowski is at the top of her jump she skys to a height of 10-foot-2.

And Pilakowski probably isn't even the best sophomore athlete at NU. That honor goes to the Big 12 player of the year—setter Cepero, the heart and soul

of Nebraska's undefeated 2000 regular season.

Cepero has made the setter position her own and there is already talk she will be the future setter of the 2004 Olympic team.

Cook compared the 6-foot-2 setter from Dorado, Puerto Rico with former Laker great Magic Johnson.

Johnson was a 6-foot-9 point guard that changed his position. Cook feels Cepero has done the same by creating a mismatch every time she steps onto the court.

"Greichaly is doing things that we haven't seen players do in a long time," Cook said. "I think a lot of coaches if they find the opportunity to get that athlete that can develop they will switch to the 6-foot-2 setter."

"When I listened to the TV match at A&M they talked about her all the time on what she can do and how she changes the game."

Cook even related another story on what kind of impact Cepero has had at her position.

Erin Aldrich, a national champion high jumper from

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John Cook
NU volleyball coach

Texas and also a former volleyball player approached Cook with a nice compliment towards Cepero.

"She said 'I want to play with Greichaly,'" Cook said. "She asked if she'd go to the national team, because if she does she would want to play with Greichaly. That's a pretty nice compliment."

In Nebraska volleyball history, the closest thing to the "The Fab Four" would be the great 1995 team led by classmates Allison Weston, Christy Johnson and Billie Winsett.

That trio won the 1995 national championship and compiled a four-year record of 110-14. In two years, "The Fab

Four" is 53-5 and has a shot at three national titles.

Holmquist said she was already hearing the comparisons to the '95 team.

"They are like idols here in the program," Holmquist said. "A lot lately he (Cook) has really going back to them and using that team as examples. We watched film on what we do in games compared to what they did in '95."

"We really see their team chemistry on the court, and he tells how they've reacted. I think he's been talking to them lately on what he can do to motivate us in different ways."

"He really focuses on them as role models for us."

Equation results in perfect season

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This is where it gets tricky, though, with giants like Hawaii and Southern California, who won't be intimidated by Nebraska's size and skill because they have it too.

No worry. Nebraska has the Greichaly Cepero factor at its side.

The sophomore Big 12 Player of the Year has been called every superlative imaginable by opposing coaches this season.

The 6-foot-2 setter is skilled beyond her years, but her greatest asset is her trickiness, always lulling the opposition to sleep, and then wham, she slips a little dump shot over the net to an open area.

It's the simple kind of thing that will win a big rally in a five-game battle against a team like Hawaii or USC.

It's a simple thing for a team that's made this season look simple. I call a perfect season for Nebraska. But if Nebraska slips up, my money's on Princeton.

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Four teams compete for NCAA victory

OPPONENTS from page 10

over 21-6 South Carolina on Friday.

Nebraska Coach John Cook said he knew very little about the three opponents coming into Lincoln. He said it was tough to predict a winner in the George Washington-South Carolina match.

Gamecocks senior outside hitter Mandy Quarterman said the Gamecocks would be fully concentrated on GWU, even with undefeated Nebraska lingering as a possible second-round opponent. However, she said even if South Carolina did meet up with the Huskers, NU's perfect regular season record no longer mattered.

"We will take the NAAs one game at a time," Quarterman said. "Everybody is 0-0

now."

Even so, Coronel is glad to open up with somebody besides Nebraska.

"At least we're not playing Nebraska in the first round," Coronel said. "We'll probably at least draw a bi-partisan crowd."

Princeton was not as fortunate. The 20-8 Ivy League champs have the unenviable task of tangling with 28-0 Nebraska before the Cornhusker throng at the Coliseum.

"To be in the Coliseum, that's what the last 28 matches have been about," Cook said. "Most teams are not used to that environment, and with finals coming up, it reduces the stress of traveling on the athletes."

Cook has been on the opposing side against Nebraska, twice losing to NU at the

Coliseum in the NAAs while coaching at Wisconsin. He remembers the challenge it provided.

"It feels like you have to play your best and hope that Nebraska has an off night," Cook said. "But it's still an uphill battle, and the crowd is just one more thing you have to deal with."

Nonetheless, Princeton is excited about the chance to take on the home-team Huskers.

"We're really fired up because we have the opportunity to play the best team in the nation," senior outside hitter Sabrina King said to *The Daily Princetonian*. "It'll be a great experience, no matter what. It'll be fun to say we were there, and we played the best of the best."

Sutton wants OSU to go back a year

SUTTON from page 10

co-existed well.

Williams is averaging 14 points per game to lead the team, while Baker is the do-all player, averaging 13.5 points, six rebounds and six assists per game.

Sutton said most of his team could be classified in Baker's category—athletic, quick players whom he can groom.

One who caught Sutton's eye was Melvin Sanders. Sanders, a sophomore junior college transfer, should take over Mason's roll as the team stopper on defense and OSU's best leaper.

Through the Cowboy's first two games, Sanders has averaged 10 points a game.

Sutton also raved about freshman Terrance Crawford, saying he was the best player to come out of Oklahoma last year.

While Sanders and Crawford are ready to be groomed, some of Sutton's youngsters won't even be available for a bath.

Two freshmen, David Anderson and Bernard Kidd, have already had knee surgery, and only Anderson is practicing.

Another prize recruit, freshman Ivan McFarlin, did not qualify academically and will join junior Antoine Broxsie, a transfer from Minnesota, on the practice squad. Broxsie finds himself on the bench because of an ongoing NCAA investigation into the Minnesota program. Sutton said McFarlin and Broxsie likely wouldn't play this season.


But Sutton still trucks on, even though he is a little frightened by this being his youngest team ever in three decades of coaching. He said he saw his youngsters playing inconsistent early on, but he hoped they mold together by the time conference play rolled around.

Adding salt to Sutton's wounds is the expansion of OSU's home court, Gallagher-Iba Arena.

Practicing away from their home floor has made it hard on the new guys who want to find their groove, and for Sutton as well.

"It is going to be a marvelous facility, but it is testing our patience," Sutton said.

Sutton's Cowboys face UNLV in Oklahoma City on Saturday.



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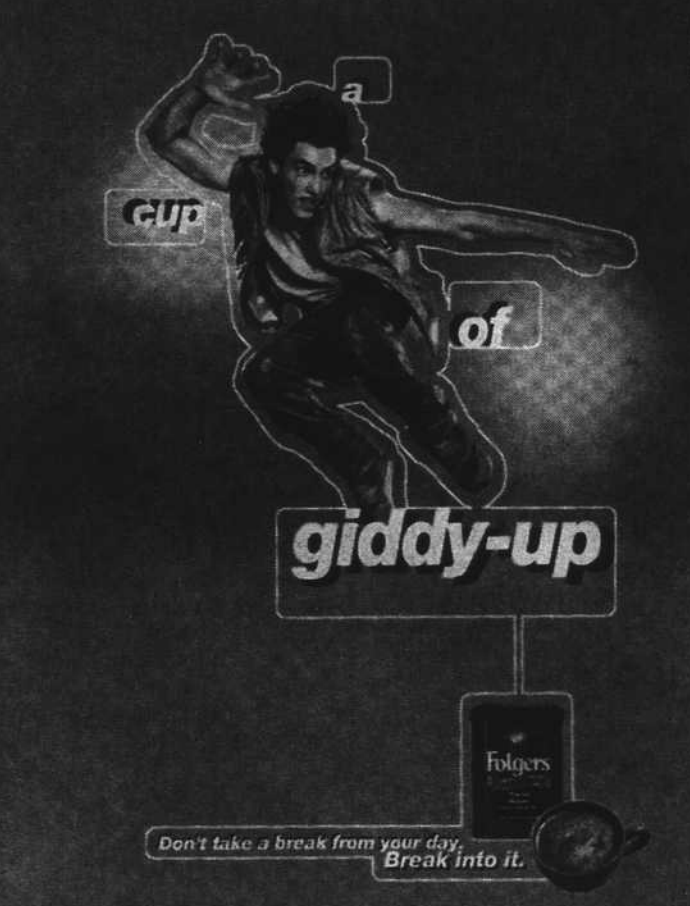
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