

Les Robbins
16717 Elm Circle
Omaha, Nebraska 68130-2052

April 21, 2025

Dr. Jeffrey P. Gold, President
Office of the President
University of Nebraska System
Varner Hall
Lincoln, NE 68508

Dear President Gold:

I applaud the recent honoring of John Cook by the naming of the John Cook Arena at the Devaney Center after him. This 'incredible honor' and recognition is well deserved.

Everybody answers to somebody. AD Dannen answers to you. So, therefore I am asking for your grace and careful thought to a matter that is extremely troubling to me and many others.

The email dated February 14, 2025 was and still is considered by me personally as a blatant dismissal of a matter which I am passionate about resolving. To not even give me the respect and decency of hearing my workable solution to the 4 from '74 matter is unacceptable.

I am not sure what the real reason is for the University of Nebraska not righting this wrong. Perhaps it's a legal issue, financial concern or simply not wanting to address accountability. Whatever it is, I am committed to pursuing this quest so these four Title IX pioneers can be fully honored, completely recognized and be at peace with their contributions and their place in the history to the University of Nebraska Volleyball Program.

Included in this packet are all the documents given to AD Dannen.

Please let me know when we can meet in person to talk. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Regards,



Les Robbins
402-690-6101

CC: Cheryl Nolte
Denise Stange
Vicki Ossenkop
Ann Garrett
Pat Sullivan

Troy Danner
Athletic Director

4 from '74

Les Robbins
16717 Elm Circle
Omaha, Nebraska 68130-2052

Hand delivered Saturday October 5, 2024

Troy Dannen, Athletic Director
University of Nebraska Lincoln
800 Stadium Drive
Lincoln, NE 68501

Dear Mr. Dannen:

I welcome you to Nebraska and appreciate what you have done so far. I'm going to get right to the point.

Perhaps you are not aware of the regrettable situation relative to the first women's volleyball team that played under the guidance of the Husker Athletics Department with scholarship players in 1974. Attached is some information which bears reading to enlighten you of this matter.

This travesty of justice first came to my attention during a recent conversation with Cheryl Henry a long-time friend of our family. The more she explained it, the more enraged I became at how unfair she and her fellow teammates have been treated.

Cheryl Nolte, Vicki Ossenkop, Denise Stange and Ann Garrett have not been given the recognition deserving of actively participating in the fall 1974 volleyball season.

Even though a so-called compromise accommodation was given to them affording them certain benefits other University of Nebraska letterwinners receive, they are still being treated as second class members with an asterisk of this prestigious group of decorated student athletes.

Title IX enacted in 1972, only two years prior to their senior season, is most commonly associated with gender discrimination in sports and is credited with advancing participation of women in athletics. Hence, this factored into Cheryl and the others receiving their first scholarships in the fall of 1974.

If the other attached evidence is not in of itself compelling, take the words of their coach Pat Sullivan who stated in her April 11, 2023 email, "I was there. The seniors on that varsity team were all integral players. Based on playing time alone, Cheryl Nolte, Vicki Ossenkop, Denise Stange and Ann Garrett were all letter winners." Need I say more?

This is unfair to these deserving women, now wives, mothers and grandmothers. They sacrificed by devoting their college years to transforming the beginnings of Husker volleyball team, practiced hard, played, earned and deserve the full recognition availed to all other Volleyball Letter winners who succeeded them.

When we attend Husker volleyball matches, we enter the Bob Devaney Sports Center thru the southwest doors close to where we park, no lines to contend with as minimal fans enter there. We walk down the west hallway by the track and swimming pool coming face to face with the volleyball letterwinners board. Last Sunday night I was especially taken back, disgusted and it burned me to see and know that this display is incomplete and void of the pioneers who were the first UNL team to receive athletic scholarships under Title IX. Can you imagine how they must feel?

Funding a replacement board is not the issue. So, ask yourself, what really is the reason?

As a Rotarian for 30 plus years, now senior active status, the treatment of these four ladies does not meet the Four-Way Test which ethically guides members in their professional, business and personal lives. Is it the truth? Is it fair to all concerned? Will it build goodwill and better friendships? Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

The 50th anniversary of this first team should be celebrated with these four ladies and their coach being held up high certainly at the Devaney Center during a volleyball game before the end of December and also perhaps during a timeout at a football game.

As a lifelong Husker fan, please honor these four deserving ladies with full recognition of all the benefits of the N Club and by putting their names on the display board at the Devaney Center and while you are at it, on the Hewitt columns in the west side of Memorial Stadium. Thank you!

Regards,



Les Robbins
402-690-6101

CC: Cheryl Henry
Denise Stange
Vicki Highstreet
Pat Sullivan
Lincoln Arneal

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN
WOMEN'S ATHLETICS

WPE 206
December 13, 1974

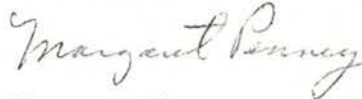
Dear Cheryl ,

As you know, this is our first year for granting financial aid for women athletes and we have some first year snags which caused considerable delay and uncertainty concerning the date that financial aid checks would be ready. The first semester checks are now at the Bursar's Office, Administration Building 204. If you have not already picked up your check, please do so soon.

We know now that second semester checks will not be ready until the end of March. This late date is due to the fact that we must wait until after the last date for dropping classes (March 7) before specific amounts of the grants can be determined, and then there is the processing period. This means that you will have to pay your tuition for second semester before your check is ready. I'm sorry about this, but hope that knowing in advance will be helpful in planning your finances.

Here's wishing you a pleasant holiday.

Sincerely,



Margaret Penney
Coordinator of Financial Aid for
Women Athletes

MP:lgm

Fall of 1974: 1st season that Women's Athletic Scholarships were given to volleyball players at the University of Nebraska.

Senior Recipients:

Cheryl (Nolte) Henry #21	Played 4 seasons: 1971, 72, 73, 74
Vicki (Ossenkop) Highstreet #11	Played 3 seasons: 1972, 73, 74
Denise Stange #16	Played 3 seasons: 1972, 73, 74

THE ORIGINAL MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO NEBRASKA ATHLETICS

HUSKERS

ILLUSTRATED

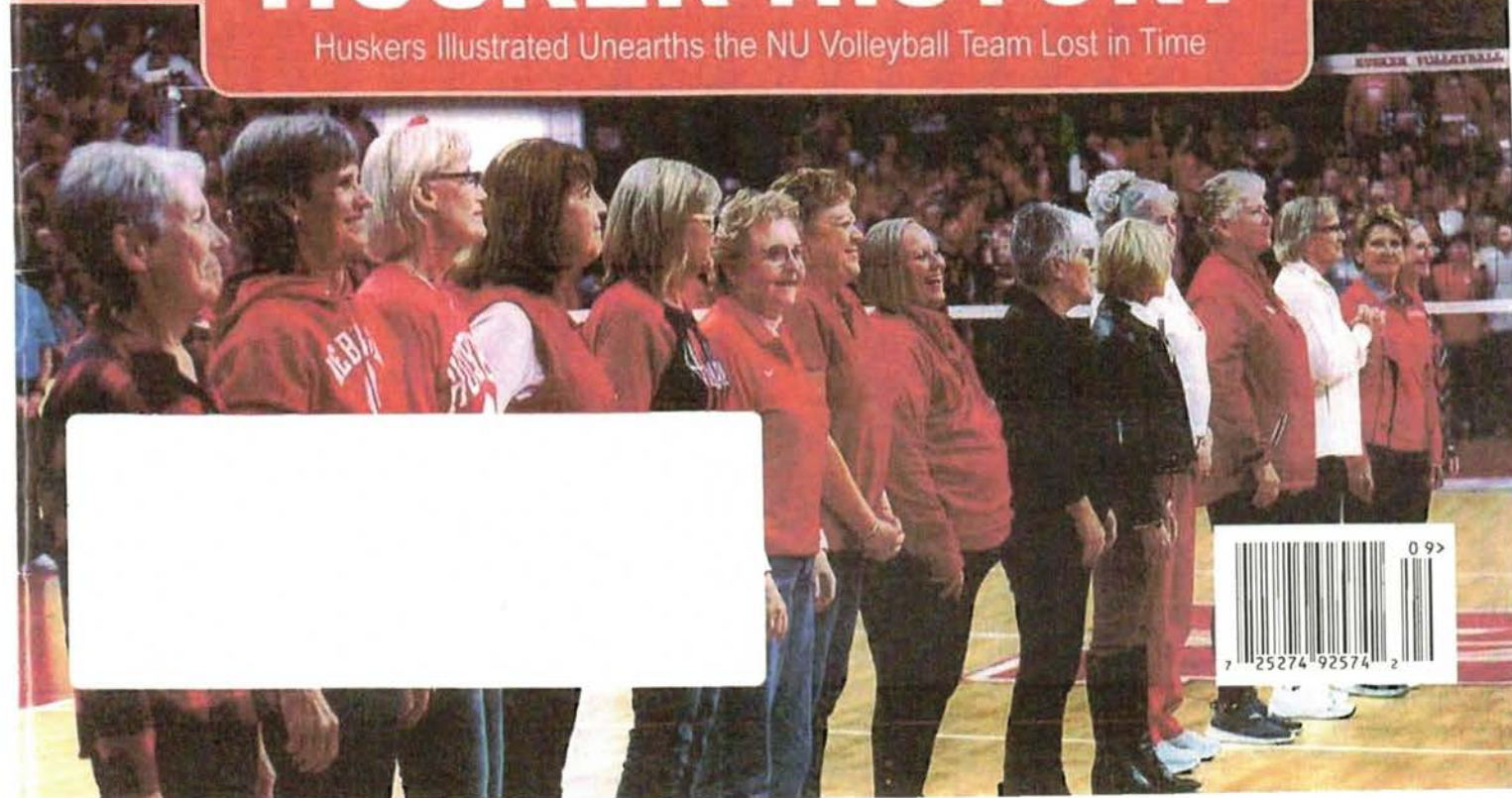
FEBRUARY 2023

VOLUME 42 | NO. 09 | \$6.95



AMENDING HUSKER HISTORY

Huskies Illustrated Unearths the NU Volleyball Team Lost in Time





The 1974 Husker volleyball team, Nebraska's first that played under the guidance of the athletics department with scholarship players. Front row: Vicki (Ossenkop) Highstreet, Laury (Harmon) Riley, Susie Heiser, Marcia Bartak, Ann Richardson. Back row: Coach Pat Sullivan, Janice Kruger, Cheryl (Nolte) Henry, Eldeana Edeal, Linda (Brown) Dutton, Denise Stange, Jan Zink, Ann Garrett, manager Sandy Stewart, manager Deb Van Fleet.

Rewriting History

The 1974 Volleyball Team Claims Its Spot in Husker Annals

By Lincoln Arneal

The 1974 Nebraska volleyball team exists in the pages of Cheryl (Nolte) Henry's scrapbook – filled with clippings of photos and stories of its exploits.

The team exists in the memories of first-year coach Pat Sullivan, the dozen players and the scant fans who watched them play home matches in Mabel Lee Hall.

The team also exists in a letter sent to Henry on Dec. 13, 1974, apologizing for the delay in her financial aid. It was the first time NU female student-athletes had received scholarships for participating in athletics. Nebraska had run into "snags which caused considerable delay and uncertainty" about the disbursement date.

However, the 1974 team does not exist

in the official record book of Nebraska volleyball. Despite being the first team supervised by the athletics department and awarded athletic scholarships, 1975 is the first season recognized in program history.

That means the wins and losses don't count in Sullivan's career coaching record, and the three seniors on that team – Henry, Vicki (Ossenkop) Highstreet and Denise Stange – are not recognized as letter winners in the media guide or on the wall outside the Nebraska locker room.

"We tell our kids this – we were the first, you know?" Henry said. "Then, we take them to Devaney, and our names aren't there."

The reasons provided by the NU athletics department why the 1974 team

isn't recognized are a lack of records and tradition. In 2000, the athletics department celebrated 25 years of women's sports at Nebraska, commemorating 1975 as the first season. Also, a complete list of results for the first year didn't exist, so adding them to the record book was all but impossible.

"We just kind of fell through the cracks," Highstreet said. "It's like they were trying to catch up, and they really didn't catch up."

According to Nebraska media guides, the first official season of competition for most women's sports happened during the 1975-76 academic year, including volleyball, gymnastics, tennis, softball and swimming and diving – even though all those sports competed the previous year. Women's basketball is the outlier and cites

the 1974-75 team as its inaugural season, going 9-7 under Jan Callahan.

However, for the first time, the complete results of the first volleyball team with scholarship student-athletes have been compiled through newspaper archives. In 1974, the Huskers went 25-10-1 and finished second in the Nebraska state tournament and sixth in the AIAW, or Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women, regional tournament.

Now with those records and conversations stemming from a reunion last fall to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the passing of Title IX, members of the 1974 team can be included in the storied history of Nebraska volleyball.

"Can I live without being recognized? Well, that's fine. But if you're going to recognize it, let's do it historically accurate," Stange said. "Why are you ignoring us if we got scholarships? We're no different than the next year - '75. They were not the first class. The names are all over, starting with '75. Their names are engraved on the walls at the Devaney Center. We aren't that much of an ego people, but if you're going to tell the story as a university and tell it historically, let's do it accurately."

The Coach

Sullivan was on the job hunt in 1973. She was about to finish her master's degree at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, when she traveled to Minnesota for a national physical education conference hoping to find a place to start her career.

While there, she ran into Gail Whitaker, who had graduated from Smith College a year earlier and was the tennis coach at Nebraska. Whitaker connected Sullivan with Madge Phillips, the head of the NU PE department, who was looking for someone to teach and coach swimming. After an interview, Sullivan was offered a job.

After some hesitation, Sullivan received encouragement from friends on the East Coast. Seek out new experiences, they said.

"So I did, and I took their advice and would be forever grateful for that advice," Sullivan said. "Because it was so different. It's so different from the Northeast, and it opened up lots of doors and provided new experiences. I just put myself out there."

After Sullivan's first year, the volleyball coach position opened after Margaret Penney, the coach of the team that operated under the PE department, stepped down.



The Nebraska volleyball letter-winners board at the Devaney Center does not list members from the 1974 team.

The Nebraska administration knew Sullivan had volleyball coaching in her background, so she readily agreed to add another sport to her duties.

"I really wanted to be involved in the volleyball world," Sullivan said. "That was really where I felt like I belonged."

Despite feeling at home on the volleyball court, juggling her duties was challenging. For two years, Sullivan pulled double duty, coaching volleyball and then switching her focus to swimming. A few times, the sports overlapped.

Sullivan recalled one weekend when Nebraska was hosting a volleyball tournament in Mabel Lee Hall, and the swimming team was competing in the Big Eight relays in Kansas. Sullivan left the volleyball team in the hands of a local club coach while she accompanied the swimmers to Lawrence, Kansas.

On the volleyball court, Sullivan inherited a large group of talented players from the PE supervised team. According to a 1974 season preview in the Lincoln Journal Star, the team went 14-3, winning the state title and eventually placing sixth in the regional tournament. Behind a talented group, she helped NU improve on the court and achieved a winning record as an athletics department team.

"I was biting off a big chunk when I went to Nebraska, but we just built," Sullivan

said. "We were very successful in Year 1 and just kept on going, and I just kept on learning. You don't ever quit."

Although the team was successful in the PE era, Sullivan added more credibility. Practices became more structured and intense. The group began doing different drills. Everything had a purpose. Individual development led to team development.

"Practice definitely went up a level," Highstreet said. "The intensity - that definitely grew with her coming. She had the strategic mind for it. I think that legitimized what we were doing a little bit more."

While she was only five years older than some of her players, Sullivan commanded the room and earned the players' respect. She didn't talk down to players if they didn't understand a concept but would break it down into steps to help them master it.

Janice Kruger, a sophomore on the 1974 team, described Sullivan as a player's coach and quite skilled at teaching the nuances with new techniques. Sullivan used motivation to keep improving and pushing her players forward. She'd take a simple concept like adding a short set to the middle blocker, teach the setter the move, implement the footwork for the attack and work on the timing between the two players.

"She keeps everybody rowing in the same direction, and it was managed in such

WPE 206
December 13, 1974

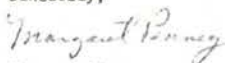
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Here's wishing you a pleasant holiday.

Sincerely,



Margaret Penney
Coordinator of Financial Aid for
Women Athletes

MP:lgm

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN
WOMEN'S ATHLETICS



DEC 13 1974
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA 68503

THE UNI

Cheryl (Nolte) Henry's letter from the NU athletics department apologizing for the delay in her financial aid for the 1974 volleyball season.

a way that people know what's going on," Kruger said. "People know expectations, and people have fun doing what they're doing. She was the best I've ever had. And I had a really good high school coach. Pat took it to another level."

The Reunion

They came from Florida, Oregon, Massachusetts and all corners of Nebraska.

In late October, members from Nebraska's first volleyball teams gathered for a weekend to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the passing of Title IX legislation and the beginning of women's athletics at NU. Sullivan and 14 members

from the early days gathered for a weekend of honoring the past, catching up with friends and enjoying the legacy they helped create.

Initially, the gathering was more limited. When invites were sent out, it was just for members of the 1975 team. However, when Sullivan saw the list, she sent an "extended email" to Nebraska volleyball's director of operations, Lindsay Peterson, making the case to include the seniors of the 1974 team and the manager for both teams, Sandy Stewart.

"I said we have one chance to get this right," Sullivan said. "This kind of a celebration isn't going to happen again

anytime soon, and these people are already old. So make this happen."

Soon invitations went out to the 1974 seniors and a few others left off the initial list. The ceremony would now honor the first two Husker volleyball teams.

Once the weekend arrived, the festivities started on a Friday with the former players visiting a Husker practice session. They shared a few thoughts with the current team and swapped stories.

NU coach John Cook said he received several notes afterward from players back for the reunion about how they appreciated interacting with the team and getting to know them. As fun as it was for the original members to meet the modern iteration of the Huskers, he thought the student-athletes also gained a new perspective from hearing about the early days of the volleyball program.

"I thought it was really great for our players to hear their stories because we talk about having an attitude of gratitude for everything they get now because they get a lot and more than any time in college sports for women," he said. "We tell them the greater the rewards, the greater the responsibility. We're trying to instill that in them. So it was good for them to hear that."

That evening, the reunion included a banquet at Devaney Center where Cook talked to the group, and they shared memories from their playing days and caught up on each other's lives. They also toured the Husker locker room, training facilities and medical treatment room — a far cry from what they used in Mabel Lee Hall.

Even though they stayed connected a bit over the years through phone calls, emails and Facebook, Kruger said it was a different energy when everyone was in the same room.

"That was a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful treat to be able to connect there," Kruger said almost three months later. "It's almost like it was just yesterday. It's a strong connection. It was just special times with special people. When you're that young and you're going through so many changes and growth, those things are significant in your life."

On Saturday, they gathered at Susie Heiser's family tailgate before being introduced as a group at Memorial Stadium during the Nebraska-Illinois football game.

That evening at the volleyball match against Maryland, 15 members of the 1974 and 1975 teams were honored after the second set, each individually introduced. The crowd never sat down, giving them a standing ovation the entire time they were on the court.

"That gave us all goose bumps," Stewart said. "Having our picture up on the big screen at the Devaney Center and being introduced individually, we were getting the applause that we never got. That was really special."

The current edition of the Huskers honored the original teams by wearing special jerseys that mimicked the look of the first team – a red outline of the state with the number inside and a red Iron N under the panhandle.

Despite her early protests about the invite list, Sullivan said the weekend couldn't have gone much better.

"I wish we had a little bit more time just to connect, but I'm really pleased with the way the university handled their part to honor those people," she said. "It was really about them and their contributions to the early days of Nebraska athletics."

The Season

During the summer of 1974, the athletics department underwent transformative change. To comply with Title IX legislation passed two years earlier, sports began to migrate to the jurisdiction of the athletics department, and scholarships were offered for the first time. No longer would Sullivan report to the PE department. Her new boss would be Bob Devaney, the athletic director and recently retired football coach.

The change increased the women's athletics budget from \$15,000 to \$60,000, with half allocated for full-tuition waivers. According to an article in the Daily Nebraskan, 39 women received scholarships across seven sports: volleyball, women's basketball, gymnastics, softball, swimming and diving, tennis and field hockey. (Track and field competed in its first season in the spring of 1975, while field hockey was dropped after the 1976 season.)

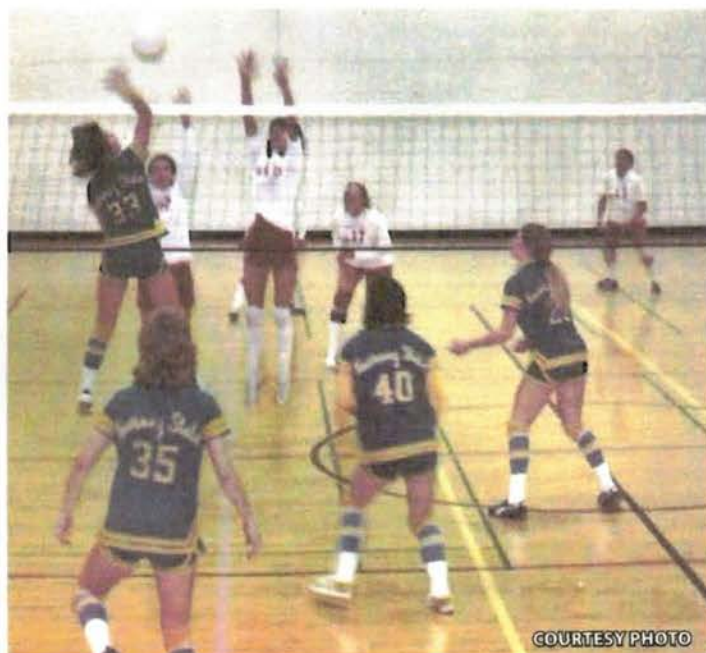
The budget also paid for food, lodging, equipment, officials and transportation. It also included funds for a search to hire an assistant athletic director just for women's athletics, which led to 25-year-old Aleen Swofford's hiring in the summer of 1975. It was a whole new world for the players, who often had to pay for food and lodging when the programs were part of the PE department.

For the first four who received scholarships – Henry, Stange, Highstreet and Heiser – there wasn't much fanfare. Social media didn't exist to share the news. There were no signing ceremonies. Scholarships weren't life-changing financial windfalls. When Kruger received a scholarship the following year, she learned about it through a casual conversation with Sullivan.

"I don't even know if people knew" who was on scholarship, Kruger said. "It wasn't something we talked about really. It wasn't a real big deal."

It wasn't a smooth process either. Henry didn't receive notification that her scholarship check was ready until Dec. 13 – the Friday before finals and three weeks after the volleyball season had ended. (In a twist, the woman in the bursar's office who sent the scholarship letter was Penney, the former PE era coach.)

While there could have been some division between



The Husker volleyball team plays Kearney State College at Mable Lee Hall in 1974.

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-OMAHA

at

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN

Wednesday, October 16, 1974

UN-L Roster

NAME	NUMBER	HOMETOWN
Marcia Bartak	10	Merna, NE
Linda Brown	14	Winona, MN
Eldeana Edeal	20	Lexington, NE
Nancy Hamilton	22 (red)	Lincoln, NE
Susie Heiser	12	Columbus, NE
Ann Garrett	19	Burchard, NE
Janice Kruger	17	Randolph, NE
Cheryl Nolte	21	Nehawka, NE
Vioki Ossenkop	11	Waverly, NE
Ann Richardson	18	Kearney, NE
Denise Stange	16	Yutan, NE
Paula Walberg	13	Elmwood, NE
Jan Zink	15	Sterling, NE

COACH: Pat Sullivan

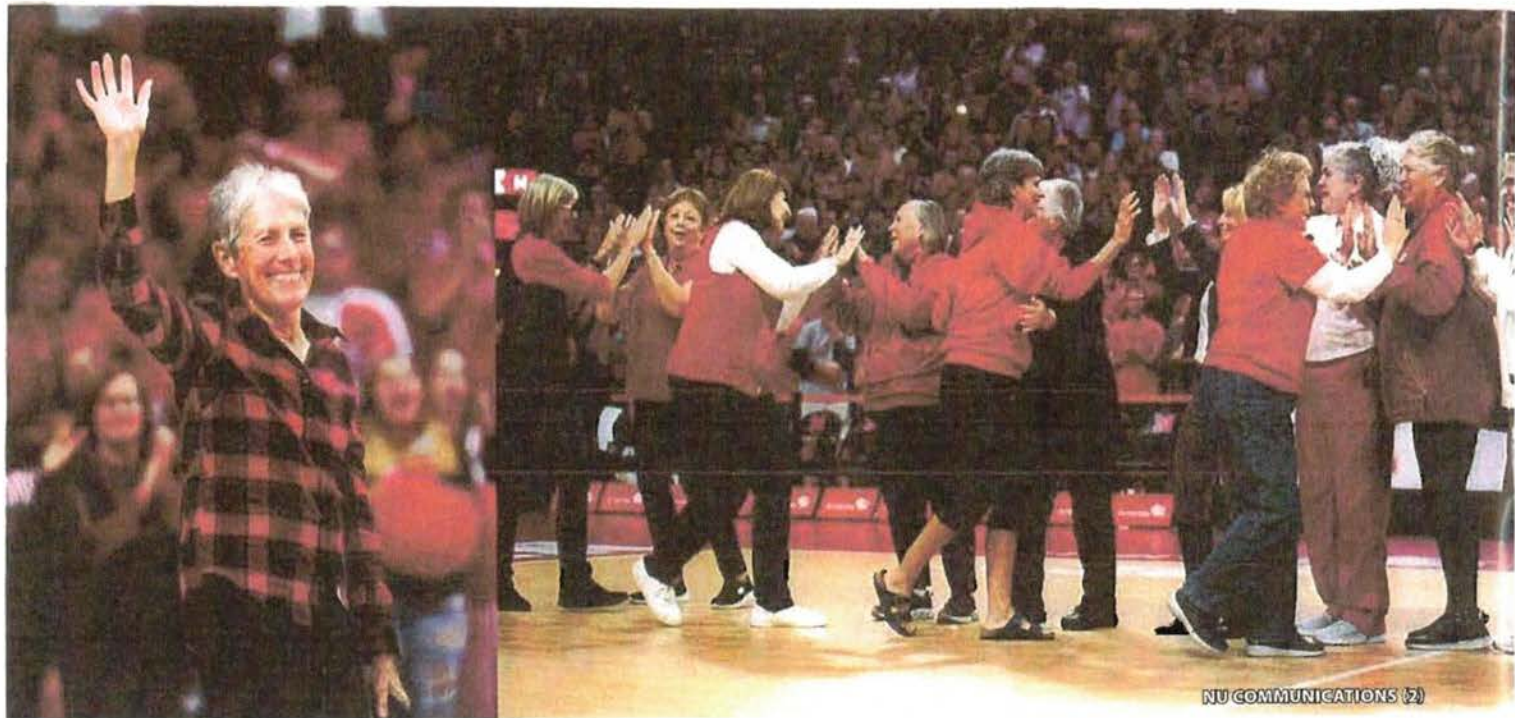
MANAGERS: Sandy Stewart
Deb Van Fleet

UN-O Roster

Patty Dennis	45	Wickey Gehringer	23
Connie Holys	33	Joy Leger	55
Pat Linson	31	Judy Melius	15
Mary Jo Miklas	25	Janice Nelson	21
Cindy Rudloff	41	Lindy Rudloff	51

COACH: Connie Claussen

A program from a 1974 match between Nebraska and Nebraska-Omaha shows an NU roster dominated by Nebraskans.



NU COMMUNICATIONS (2)

Pat Sullivan, the first Nebraska volleyball coach, waves to the crowd at the Nebraska-Maryland match in October when the 1974 and 1975 Husker volleyball teams were recognized at the Devaney Center. Each player was introduced after the second set as the approximately 8,000 in attendance gave them a standing ovation.

scholarship players and those not receiving aid, Sullivan ensured it didn't get in the way of any relationships. The low-key nature of awarding the first scholarships was part of her general approach. Sullivan tried to keep what was happening on the court separate from what was happening in the outside world.

On the court, it was smooth sailing for most of the 1974 season. The Huskers went unscathed through the first few weeks, winning their opening nine matches against in-state competition. After dropping a match to Chadron State, NU faced its toughest battles of the year at a tournament in Kansas. NU beat Missouri but split sets against Drake before losing to Kansas and regional power Southwest Missouri State.

The Huskers finished the regular season 14-4-1 before the state tournament. NU suffered its second loss of the year to Nebraska-Omaha but rebounded to make the title match against Kearney State. The Lopers controlled the match and won the title, but with a runner-up finish, the Huskers qualified for the AIAW Region VI tournament. NU went 4-2 in pool play to advance to the top eight. However, it stumbled on the final day and finished in sixth place with another loss to Kansas.

While reminiscing with players during the reunion, Sullivan pulled back the curtain for the first time on what was happening behind the scenes that first season. She was constantly working on getting all she could to support her team. She talked about

how they got kicked out of the UNL Rec Center racquetball courts, even though they had keys to the building. Sometimes, small details get overlooked when you're launching an athletics department — like keeping records. However, whenever she could, Sullivan was there fighting for her players.

Support beyond the court was nonexistent. If a player needed an ankle taped, she better get in line to have a coach do it or learn how to tape it herself. If a player wanted to work out, she could use one universal weight-lifting machine, but she'd have to develop the workouts herself.

The players who had played as part of the PE department team didn't know about the transition until it was almost complete.

"It was unbeknownst to us at that time that (Sullivan) was an employee of the athletics department and fighting new Title IX battles for our team," Stange said. "As oblivious college seniors, we just continued to practice hard and improve as a team just as in the previous years because we loved the sport of volleyball."

The Legacy

The history of Nebraska volleyball begins before 1974.

As alluded to several times above, the sport was played under the supervision of the university's PE department for four years before transitioning to the athletics department and awarding scholarships. The team often played nearby schools and

participated in now-defunct AIAW regional tournaments. During the 1960s, many women's athletic competitions that existed as intramurals began evolving into club and extramural competitions.

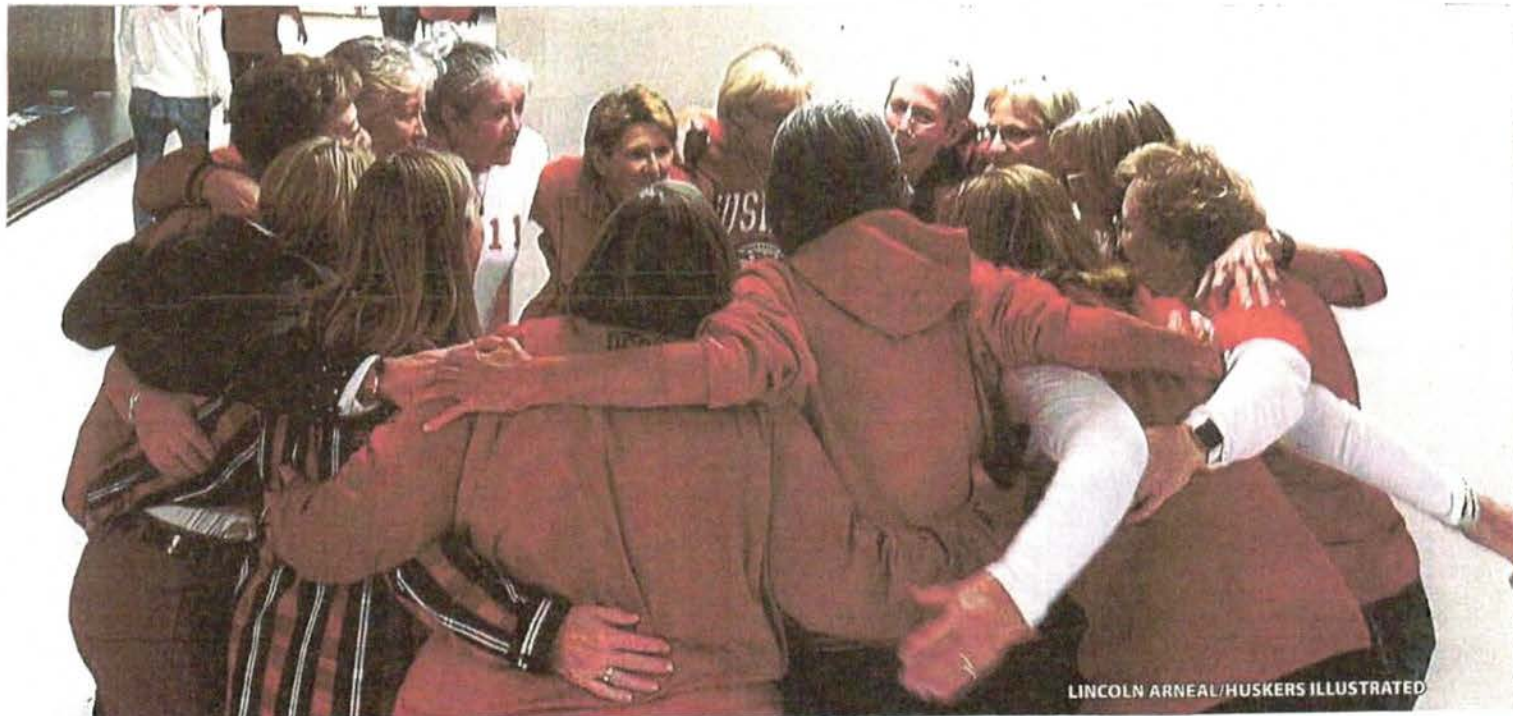
Stange is grateful for the dozens of women who played volleyball as part of the PE department before she arrived on campus. She called those players the true pioneers, playing the sport even before Title IX.

"It wasn't like there was no volleyball at UNL until '74 or '75," she said. "That's why we don't want to step on their toes either. It was just by chance of timing and our age that we were in that first group. It's nothing special we did."

Volleyball also existed on the high school level in Nebraska long before the first NU team took the court. Having a foundation of high school players allowed the Huskers to pack rosters with Nebraska natives and win most matches early on. That early success has allowed Nebraska never to have a losing season in program history.

Sullivan said the high school coaches produced strong, fundamentally sound players. So when she got them in the gym at Nebraska, she wasn't starting from scratch. Then, when she did start recruiting, she stayed local and didn't have to travel far to find high-level players, and it helped that Nebraska kids wanted to go to Nebraska.

"I don't know that I was smart enough to know what I was doing was what needed to happen," Sullivan said. "At the time, we



Members of the 1974 and 1975 Husker volleyball teams huddled just off the court after being honored. "I'm really pleased with the way the university handled their part to honor those people," Sullivan said. "It was really about them and their contributions to the early days of Nebraska athletics."

were going to move fast because pretty quickly, other people were going to catch up. So we needed to lay that groundwork. We needed to hold on to the kids from Nebraska. I needed to get better fast."

Women's athletics would continue to expand at Nebraska. With Swofford's hiring in 1975, one of her first initiatives was to start a women's sports information department — which might explain why records for 1974 teams don't exist. Women's sports employed their own athletic trainers, and Stewart assisted with fall sports. Golf was added for the 1975-76 school year. Scholarships and the budget continued to grow and women could begin lifting weights in Schulte Field House, where the football team worked out.

As time passed, the original Nebraska volleyball team moved on and spread out while continuing to impact the volleyball world all over the country.

Sullivan stepped away after the 1976 season and went into administration as an assistant athletic director. She thought it would be a long-term career move. The following year, she set up the first academic support system for women student-athletes, ran tournaments and provided support for whatever the women's programs needed.

After helping out with a regional club volleyball team, Sullivan realized she still had a passion for coaching. She left Nebraska and headed back East to become the volleyball coach at George Washington. Sullivan led the Colonials for nine seasons,

accumulating a record of 289-140. After retiring from coaching in 1987, she earned her doctorate in higher education from GW in 1989 and was inducted into the school's athletics hall of fame in 1995. She remains the winningest coach in program history.

Sullivan wasn't the only person from that first team who went on to coaching success.

Kruger coached at Nebraska-Omaha and led the Mavs to a trio of third-place finishes in the NCAA Division II tournament and won two AVCA national coach of the year awards. She later worked at Maryland for 20 years and became the all-time winningest coach in the Atlantic Coast Conference with 363 victories.

After short stints as an assistant at Houston and LSU, Stewart coached Iowa from 1982-88, winning 136 games. The Big Ten coach of the year in 1983, she is still the winningest coach in Hawkeye program history.

Many others coached at the high school level or worked as referees. Their passion for the sport shouldn't be a surprise as many early players weren't recruited and chose to play the sport independently. Plus the coaching path was natural since many were physical education majors and were going into teaching.

For now, the 1974 team's legacy isn't found in any record book at Nebraska, but they know they set the program on an early path to success. After Sullivan left, Nebraska hired Terry Pettit, who would eventually win NU's first national

volleyball championship in 1995, just more than two decades after the original Huskers played in front of family and friends with ankles they taped themselves.

Sullivan said she is proud of the groundwork those early teams laid. However, she's also passionate that all the players get credit for their contribution, especially that 1974 team. She regrets not correcting the oversight earlier.

When she returned for the 25-year celebration of women's athletics at NU, Sullivan noted the 1975 team was recognized as the first. Alarm bells went off in her head, but she didn't know how to correct the record.

"I feel like we've got a window here to make something happen," Sullivan said. "Had I not been coaching somewhere else and heavily involved in like a million other things in my career, I would have taken care of that way back in 1977. I would have made that happen then, but that wasn't high on my list. We weren't posting stuff online. There weren't media guides that everybody was looking at. We didn't have that. I just took it for granted."

"I remember when we went back for 25 years, even at that point, they were saying '75 was the first team. I just thought, 'Well, you're wrong.' But what am I going to do about it now? Yeah, I should have jumped on it. I should have, would have, could have, right? But it's not too late."

Consider the record corrected.

From: [Marquita Armstead](#)
Sent: Wednesday, March 22, 2023 3:45 PM
To: cheryl_henry@cox.net; olmstead-stange@cox.net; vickihighstreet@gmail.com; amzzespy@yahoo.com
Cc: [Mattie Fowler](#); [John XICook](#); [Lindsay Peterson](#); [Trev Alberts](#)
Subject: 1974 Volleyball Team

Good afternoon Huskers,

First and foremost, we want to thank you for helping build the foundation for one of the most successful women's collegiate athletics programs of all-time. We also extend our gratitude again to everyone for joining us at the Nebraska Volleyball Title IX Reunion celebration last fall.

After much internal discussion and consideration of the historical records of women's athletics at the University of Nebraska, as well as the historical records of letterwinners at the University of Nebraska dating back to 1890, we remain firm in our stance of the 1975-76 academic year being the first year that letters were issued to student-athletes participating in women's intercollegiate athletics at the University of Nebraska. This is not just for volleyball, but for all women's sports at the University of Nebraska, and we will not retroactively change our letterwinner records.

However, because of the historical records you have provided and knowing the impact you had on the beginnings of Nebraska Volleyball before 1975, we would like to honor the players from the 1974 team who were not able to be part of the 1975 team. Each of you will be afforded the following benefits that all University of Nebraska letterwinners receive:

- The ability to receive N Club Cards which permit former players to access the:
 - N Club Lounge in Memorial Stadium during home football games
 - General admission into all regular-season sporting events except football, volleyball and men's basketball (not valid for special events, i.e. NCAA Tournaments or Big Ten Conference Tournaments)
- The ability to purchase a letterwinner plaque
 - Can be purchased through our N Club Director Mattie Fowler Burkhardt at mfowler@huskers.com
- Invitations to N Club events such as the letterwinner tunnel walk, N Club golf outing and volleyball alumni weekends

Additionally, we will be adding a permanent display of the 1974 team photo with roster and results to the public glass display cases on the concourse at the Devaney Center.

We look forward to all future celebrations of Nebraska Volleyball with you!

Best,

<BD157737F30F4CB69773B756C927A08B.png>

Marquita Armstead | Executive
Associate AD/SWA

Nebraska Athletics, [800 Stadium Drive, Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0120](#)

From: Denise Stange <olmsted-stange@cox.net>

Sent: Sunday, April 9, 2023 7:42 PM

To: Marquita Armstead <marmstead@huskers.com>

Cc: Lindsay Peterson <lpeterson@huskers.com>; Trev Alberts <trevAlberts@huskers.com>; patsullivanvt@gmail.com; Cheryl Henry <Cheryl_Henry@cox.net>; Vicki (Ossenkop) Highstreet <vickihighstreet@gmail.com>; amzzespy@yahoo.com

Subject: 1974 Volleyball Team

Non-NU Email

Marquita,

This is in response to your email of March 22, 2023, regarding the University's position on the status of the 1974 Volleyball Team. A fellow teammate forwarded it to me as my email address was incorrectly entered. Please note, my correct email address is as follows:

olmsted-stange@cox.net (there is no "a" in olmsted)

While I am very grateful for having been able to attend the Nebraska Volleyball Title IX Reunion celebration in October and for all the University did to make it such a memorable weekend for past players, it is still a fact the 1974 team was not included in the original list of invitees. It was only through the efforts of the coach of that year, Pat Sullivan, and a few other former teammates, that the three seniors of that team, Cheryl Nolte Henry, Vicki Ossenkop Highstreet and I, were included. Coach Sullivan pushed for our inclusion because she was the first Coach of the volleyball program under Title IX that fall of 1974, and could attest to the fact we three were among the recipients of athletic scholarships that season.

It greatly perplexes me why, as stated in your email, that the University remains "firm in our stance" that the 1975-1976 academic year was the first for athletic scholarships and letters to be offered to women athletes in intercollegiate athletics. Your email provides **no explanation** for such a position after "much internal discussion and consideration of the historical records". And yet, you are willing to "honor" us with "N" Cards, the ability to purchase a letter winner plaque and invitations to N Club events. Additionally, you indicated a permanent display of the 1974 team photo with roster and results will be added to a public display case at the Devaney Center. For what reason and with what verbiage if the 1974 is not recognized as part of the past of the University's Volleyball program under Title IX? So which is it – is the 1974 team legitimate and are we official letter winners or are we not? The hypocrisy of the actions of the University on this matter is beyond comprehension. Consider the following:

The entire 1974 volleyball season record has been researched, completed and reported. Lincoln Arneal's research and article for the February 2023 issue of HUSKER ILLUSTRATED leaves no doubt that a varsity collegiate volleyball program was a reality in the fall of 1974. There is not a lack of records for that season.

Coach Pat Sullivan was an employee of the University's Athletic Department in the fall of 1974, reporting to Athletic Director Bob Devaney, and has attested to the fact we were awarded athletic scholarships at that time.

Cheryl Nolte Henry has the original letter from the University stating that 1974 was the first year granting financial aid for women's athletics and that her "check" was available for pickup. I do not believe the University would have given financial aid to a participant in a non-varsity sport.

We have recently learned that the 1974 Volleyball schedule and roster will be included in the media guide and that Pat Sullivan's coaching record will be updated to include that season. How can the 1974 team be recognized on one hand and the recognition of team scholarship and letter recipients denied in other aspects?

Based on the above, what additional information would be required to correct this omission of the 1974 Nebraska Volleyball team as the first in which scholarships and letters were awarded to women athletes in volleyball under Title IX? The lack of any explanation for the rationale behind the University's stance of the 1975-76 academic year being the first that letters were issued to women athletes in intercollegiate sports is more than perplexing. You are offering us senior members of the 1974 team benefits befitting letter winners but not admitting we were letter winners. As someone else has stated, it seems as though you are saying we are letter winners, but you do not want to say it out loud or acknowledge it publicly. It feels somewhat like you are just throwing us a bone to quiet us down and put the matter to rest.

During my nearly seven years of academic studies at the University of Nebraska I was taught to be a critical thinker and question information to a point where it could either be supported with logical thinking and research or be regarded as lacking foundation. Without explanation from the University for their decision, and in the light of the facts presented supporting the validity of the 1974 volleyball team as the first to receive women's athletic scholarships in volleyball under Title IX, I find the University's decision to be lacking in foundation. Please provide the explanation for the University's firm stance on this matter.

I continue to press the University to correct and **accurately** portray the history of the beginning of the volleyball program under Title IX. This would have to include the 1974 volleyball team, with Coach Pat Sullivan, as the first volleyball team awarding scholarships and letters to women athletes under Title IX. In addition, a formal recognition by the University of the letter winners of that 1974 season is in order.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Denise Stange,

1974 Nebraska Volleyball Scholarship Recipient

On Tue, Apr 11, 2023 at 2:28 PM Marquita Armstead <marmstead@huskers.com> wrote:

Denise,

Thank you for your email. I am new to Nebraska and only became involved in this discussion as the current sport administrator of the Volleyball program so listening to all the perspectives has been a history lesson.

In our internal conversations, it was revealed that this subject has been discussed various times over the years, and the Athletic Department has maintained that 1975 was the first official year of intercollegiate athletics for women. During this most recent discussion tenured staff members disclosed that this subject was also discussed with the late Barb Hibner, and she confirmed that the 1974 participants did not earn a varsity letter. Given that others more closely aware of the timeframe were not inclined to change the records does also weigh into this decision.

Our plans as described in my previous email were an attempt to recognize those involved in the early days of our Volleyball program, and to offer similar benefits to the 1974 seniors. Additionally, to clarify, the official media guide will not be updated to include the 1974 schedule/results, and the program all-time record and series records will remain unchanged. We understand that this may be disappointing, but we feel it is an acceptable compromise and will be our final decision on the matter.

Marquita

 **Marquita Armstead** | Executive Associate AD/SWA
W: (402) 472-5964 | marmstead@huskers.com

----- Original message -----

From: Patricia Sullivan <patsullivanvt@gmail.com>

Date: 4/11/23 8:32 PM (GMT-06:00)

To: Marquita Armstead <marmstead@huskers.com>

Cc: Cheryl Henry <cheryl_henry@cox.net>, Denise Stange <olmsted-stange@cox.net>, John Cook <jcook@huskers.com>, Lindsay Peterson <lpeterson@huskers.com>, Trev Alberts

<trevalberts@huskers.com>, amzzespy@yahoo.com, vickihighstreet@gmail.com

Subject: Re: 1974 Volleyball Team

Marquita,

I really wish we could be having this very important conversation face to face. Please let me know if that's ever an option.

The time period 1973-78 was one of real transition at Nebraska. And I appreciate your willingness to understand the history of the program. During that exact time period I served the physical education department (1973-74) as an instructor/women's swim coach. In the summer of 1974, women's athletics very quickly began to change. That summer I was hired, by the athletic department, to continue coaching swimming and to also coach volleyball. I coached volleyball in 74, 75 and 76. After the 76 season I was offered the opportunity to become the first assistant athletic director for the women's programs-a position I held for only one year before moving on to George Washington University. Terry Petit was hired in the summer of 77 to coach volleyball. Barb Hibner was hired to replace me in the summer of 78.

I was at Nebraska during its early women's athletic transitions. You've indicated that Barb Hibner "confirmed that the 1974 participants did not earn a varsity letter". As stated on the N-Club website regarding the awarding of athletic letters: "Letterwinners are determined by each sport based upon meeting athletic criteria and playing time as a varsity intercollegiate student-athlete."

I was there. The seniors on that varsity team were all integral players. Based on playing time alone, Cheryl Nolte, Vicki Ossenkop, Denise Stange (athletic scholarship recipients) and Ann Garrett were all letter winners.

You've also said that others who were "more closely aware of the timeframe" were not inclined to change the records. I was there during that exact timeframe and very much aware of the accurate status of the '74 team as a varsity sport. The individuals mentioned played in all contests and were integral team members and leaders.

I strongly encourage you to welcome those four individuals into the N-Club by awarding their varsity letters for the volleyball season 1974.

Pat Sullivan
Nebraska Volleyball Coach
1974, 75, 76

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Cheryl Henry
16612 Elm St.
Omaha, NE 68130-1826





A PERMANENT DISPLAY FEATURING THE 1974 VOLLEYBALL TEAM HAS BEEN ADDED TO THE GLASS DISPLAY CASES ON THE SOUTH CONCOURSE AT THE DEVANEY CENTER.

LINCOLN ARNEAL/HUSKERS ILLUSTRATED

When Letter-Winners Aren't Letter-Winners

Athletic Department Will Honor
1974 Volleyball Team's Impact

By Lincoln Arneal



When the Casper, Wyoming, recreational league volleyball season started for Ann (Garrett) Zespy last season, she received some bad news.



retroactively despite the new information about the 1974 team.

"After much internal discussion and consideration of the historical records of women's athletics at the University of Nebraska, as well as the historical records of letter-winners at the University of Nebraska dating back to 1890, we remain firm in our stance of the 1975-76 academic year being the first year that letters were issued to student-athletes participating in women's intercollegiate athletics at the University of Nebraska," Armstead wrote.

Despite the lack of official recognition, Armstead said the athletic department wanted to honor their impact on the beginning of NU volleyball by offering the former student-athletes the benefits of the N Club, Nebraska Athletics' letter-winner alumni group. They will be allowed into a club area for football games, admission into Olympic sporting events, the ability to purchase a letter-winners plaque and receive invites to other N Club events.

In addition, Nebraska will add a permanent display of the 1974 team photo with roster and results to the public glass display cases on the south concourse at the Devaney Center, which also houses Olympic jerseys from former players and memorabilia from the Huskers' foreign trips.

The athletic department didn't contact any of the seniors on the 1974 team before issuing the email. Armstead declined an interview request to explain the decision, and an NU spokesperson said "the athletic department and volleyball program do not wish to do any interviews on this subject moving forward."

Members of the 1974 team followed up seeking the rationale for the decision to give them the benefits of a letter-winner, but without official recognition.

Armstead responded on April 11, writing the topic has been discussed several times internally over the years and that they would not be changing the current status of recognizing letter-winners for

women's athletics in 1975. She added that the late Barb Hibner, the long-time senior woman administrator who joined the athletic department in 1978, said the 1974 participants were not awarded letter awards.

The athletic department's explanation left some members of the 1974 team perplexed by the decision, even with complete results, historical records showing the oversight of the athletic department of women's sports and proof of awarding of scholarships.

Despite not receiving official recognition, Highstreet is ready for someone else to carry the torch, saying the fight has worn her out. For many years, she worked at the university and led the charge to include that first team in the annals. Highstreet talked to university and athletic department employees behind the scenes trying to gain recognition for the 1974 team.

"It's a legacy thing for us," she said. "We're pretty proud of the fact that we were the first letter-winner class, but nowhere does it say that besides in our heads."

N

1974 Nebraska Volleyball SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Location	Result	Score	Record
9/25	Peru State	Mabel Lee	W	15-3, 15-7	1-0
9/28	JFK College A	Mabel Lee	W	15-9, 10-15, 15-9	2-0
10/2/74	Creighton	Mabel Lee	W	15-8, 15-6	3-0
10/2/74	Concordia	Mabel Lee	W	15-0, 15-5	4-0
10/5/74	Midland	Mabel Lee	W	15-5, 15-8	5-0
10/5/74	JFK College	Mabel Lee	W	15-8, 17-15	6-0
10/9/74	Nebraska Wesleyan	Mabel Lee	W	15-2, 15-8	7-0
10/9/74	Wayne State College	Mabel Lee	W	15-0, 15-7	8-0
10/16/74	Omaha	Mabel Lee	W	15-5, 15-0	9-0
10/19/74	Chadron State	Mabel Lee	L	11-15, 12-15	9-1
10/22/74	NE Nebraska Tech CC	Norfolk, NE	W	15-4, 15-6	10-1
10/26/74	Missouri	Lawrence, KS	W	15-11, 15-9	11-1
	Drake	Lawrence, KS	T	10-15, 15-9	11-1-1
	#8 SW Missouri State	Lawrence, KS	L	10-15, 2-15	11-2-1
	Kansas	Lawrence, KS	L	8-15, 5-15	11-3-1
10/29/74	Omaha	Fremont, NE	L	12-15, 15-12, 11-14	11-4-1
	Midland	Fremont, NE	W	15-9, 15-9	12-4-1
11/1/74	Kearney State	Mabel Lee	W	12-15, 15-11, 15-10	13-4-1
11/4/74	Concordia	Seward, NE	W	11-15, 15-9, 15-9	14-4-1
11/8/74	Creighton	Wayne, NE	W	15-3, 12-15, 15-2	15-4-1
	JFK College	Wayne, NE	W	15-12, 15-13	16-4-1
11/9/74	Omaha	Wayne, NE	L	7-15, 15-7, 10-12	16-5-1
	NE Nebraska Tech CC	Wayne, NE	W	15-10, 15-5	17-5-1
	Chadron State	Wayne, NE	W	15-9, 15-2	18-5-1
11/10/74	Omaha	Wayne, NE	W	15-5, 15-9	19-5-1
	Chadron State	Wayne, NE	W	15-5, 15-6	20-5-1
	Kearney State	Wayne, NE	L	4-15, 9-15	20-6-1
11/21/74	Kansas	Mabel Lee	L	13-10, 8-15, 11-15	20-7-1
	Mt. Marty (SD)	Mabel Lee	W	15-5, 15-2	21-7-1
	North Dakota State	Mabel Lee	W	15-5, 15-5	22-7-1
11/22/74	St. Catherine (MN)	Mabel Lee	W	15-13, 15-6	23-7-1
	Graceland (IA)	Mabel Lee	W	15-13, 15-9	24-7-1
	SW Missouri State	Mabel Lee	L	10-15, 15-13, 9-15	24-8-1
11/23/74	Augsburg (MN)	Mabel Lee	L	12-15, 5-15	24-9-1
	Kansas State	Mabel Lee	W	15-1, 12-15, 15-7	25-9-1
	Kansas	Mabel Lee	L	10-15, 11-15	25-10-1

Les Robbins

From: Lincoln Arneal <larneal@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 25, 2024 12:22 PM
To: Patricia Sullivan
Cc: Cheryl Nolte Henry; Denise Stange Omsted; Ann Garrett Zespy; Vicki Ostrander
Highstreet; Les Robbins
Subject: Re: 1974 Nebraska Volleyball Team

Thanks for sharing, Pat. The most annoying part of this is the last sentence, where they "consider the matter close." Even with a different administration, they refused to engage in dialogue with anyone outside the athletic department. They just huddled up with their people, said this is how it's always been done and then decided to stick with the status quo.

It's frustrating that they failed to pick up the phone and have a conversation, especially with you, who was there, about what it was like back then. They rely on some decision made by someone (my guess is Barb Hibner) and stick with that decision because it requires the least work on their end. As someone who has put in the work and talked to Aleen Swofford, who agrees that 1974-75 should be the start of the history books, not reaching out for any conversation is lazy.

The good news is that I have continued researching and have talked to more than 20 athletes and coaches from that era. I'm working on several articles about other teams, including swimming and diving, gymnastics and field hockey. After the volleyball season, I hope to finish these and have something to share that outlines why 1974 is the correct official start of women's athletics at Nebraska.

Lincoln

On Sat, Nov 23, 2024 at 9:38 AM Patricia Sullivan <patsullivanvt@gmail.com> wrote:

Just want to be sure you all have been able to see my email to you, my response to Kristen Brown and Kristen's response to me. I'll resend the messages individually if you haven't seen them all.

Best,
Pat

On Fri, Nov 22, 2024 at 10:18 AM Patricia Sullivan <patsullivanvt@gmail.com> wrote:

I received a response to my email to Kristen Brown a couple days ago. Her message, as well as my final message, are below. Let me know if you can't access them for some reason.

Kristen has seen Cheryl's scholarship letter, read my comments and listened to our pleas. At some point probably more than 40 years ago when the first media guides were being produced for all women's teams at Nebraska and when Nebraska volleyball was really beginning to be on the national radar screen, some athletic department group made the decision to call 1975 the first year of women's athletics because of the hiring of Aleen Swofford and June Davis. As we've said before, the early '70's were murky years in women's athletics all over the country.

When I look at the picture of the 1974 team it makes so much sense, for so many legitimate reasons, that 1974 be recognized as the first year of women's volleyball. From an administrative standpoint Nebraska could have made the case for beginning different women's sports in different years. But I can completely understand why they would have chosen 1975. Of course, I can also make solid case for "righting a wrong".

In any case, my friends, I hope you will always remember your senior year as an amazing volleyball experience. What a season! You have left a striking legacy for so many women who have followed in your footsteps. I'm so proud of you!

All the best,

Pat

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Patricia Sullivan** <patsullivanvt@gmail.com>

Date: Fri, Nov 22, 2024 at 10:00 AM

Subject: Re: 1974 Nebraska Volleyball Team

To: Kristen Brown <kbrown@huskers.com>

CC: Mitzi Lenz <mlenz@huskers.com>

Kristen,

Thank you for your timely response. I appreciate and understand the discussions that have taken place within Nebraska's athletic department regarding the first years of Nebraska volleyball. In the early 1970's colleges and universities all over the country made sometimes difficult decisions regarding initial varsity athletic dates for women in challenging, somewhat arbitrary but not capricious ways. It is entirely understandable, from an administrative perspective, that Nebraska would have chosen 1975 as a starting point. That's when the first women's athletic director and first sports information director were hired. A different decision could have been made from a student-athlete perspective using the points we have already listed: scholarships, supervision from the athletic department, and so on.



Last week, at the Indiana game, the current Nebraska team wore what's now called their "throwback" jerseys - the ones modeled after the 1974 jerseys. Four women in the picture - Cheryl Nolte Henry, Denise Stange, Ann Garrett Zespy and Vicki Ossenkop Highstreet - were seniors in that year. All other players were able to move on and receive their varsity letters beginning in 1975. My hope, as you close this matter, is that those four women can be recognized as varsity athletes by receiving their varsity letters, having their names acknowledged on the volleyball letterwinners board, and full recognition of N Club members.

Again, thank you for your attention to this matter. Those first years of Nebraska volleyball were so important to the ultimate development of the program and even more important to the women who clearly paved the way.

All the best,
Pat Sullivan

On Wed, Nov 20, 2024 at 9:58 AM Kristen Brown <kbrown@huskers.com> wrote:

Pat,

Thank you for your email as well as the welcome to the University of Nebraska! The last four months have flown by, but it has been a wonderful transition to Lincoln, the university and athletics department!

I appreciate the background information you provided. It is my understanding this issue has been discussed at great length over the years and especially the last 2 years in light of the 50th Anniversary of Title IX. I have had the opportunity to review information provided to the department by Les Robbins. I have seen a series of emails sent to your group by my predecessor. I have also discussed this with several individuals familiar with the decisions that were made by previous athletic administrations here to uphold the original determination of the 1975-76 academic year being the first varsity season for women's athletics at Nebraska.

We have discussed this as the current athletics leadership team and will maintain that decision. I hear your point about the women's basketball media guide listing the 1974-75 record, and to be frank, there is no legitimate rationale as to why it has been included other than that is what each women's basketball sports information director inherited when they stepped into their role. That being said, the women's basketball webpage/media guide does specifically note that the first full Varsity season was 1975-76. It should also be noted that even though the webpage/media guide lists the 1974-75 team record, no varsity letters were given in women's basketball or in any women's sport prior to 1975-76.

For what it is worth – and what we believe likely happened here – many institutions across the country had a transition period from the time Title IX legislation was passed until the first official season of women's varsity athletics was declared. In that interim time period, scholarships may have been given by the university/athletics department, competition may have taken place, and programs may very well have been under the supervision of the athletics department; however, those programs were not designated as varsity sports quite yet. For those of us on the leadership team, including myself, who have worked at other institutions, this is consistent with how varsity women's athletics was phased in at other places.

Again, thank you for sharing this information. We are grateful for you and your former players' contributions to the University of Nebraska and for the foundation that was laid for this program to be what it is today. We consider this matter closed.

Best,

Kristen



Kristen
Deputy
Director

Nebras
Stadium
Neb. 68

W: (40:
| kbrow

From: Patricia Sullivan <patsullivanvt@gmail.com>

Date: Monday, November 18, 2024 at 6:59 PM

To: Kristen Brown <kbrown@huskers.com>

Subject: 1974 Nebraska Volleyball Team

Caution: Non-NU Email

Good evening, Kristen. A belated welcome to the University of Nebraska and Nebraska Volleyball. As the first volleyball coach at Nebraska, I'd like to share some background information.

The University of Nebraska's volleyball media guide lists 1975-76 as the first year of women's volleyball. This year's celebration of 50 years of Husker women's volleyball should legitimately have celebrated 51 years. The University of Nebraska's 1974 volleyball team should be included in the athletic department records. This is a matter of concern in terms of historical accuracy and it is a matter of concern for those women who participated on the team during the 1974-75 academic year. Acknowledging their participation as letterwinners and affording them the recognition they deserve by correcting the record books is a reasonable solution.

The inception of Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 spurred on discussions regarding women's athletics at the University of Nebraska. Beginning in the fall of 1974 the volleyball team functioned under the direct supervision of the University's athletic department, with scholarships having been awarded to student-athletes and a coach reporting to the athletic director (Bob Devaney). As the coach of that team, in the late summer of 1974 (the beginning of the 1974 season) I was asked to provide a list of current volleyball team members who should be awarded athletic scholarships beginning in the fall of 1974. Those scholarships were awarded for the 1974-75 academic year. Cheryl Nolte Henry ('75) has her original letter from the University stating that 1974 was the first year for scholarships for women's athletics and that her check was available for pickup. I do not believe the University would have awarded athletic financial aid to an unrecognized, non-varsity sport. Four women on that team, Cheryl Nolte, Vicki Ossenkop, Denise Stange and Ann Garrett should be recognized as letterwinners on a very successful 1974 team.

The first full-time athletic director for women was hired by the athletic department in the summer of 1975. At the same time a full-time women's sports information director was hired. However, the 1974 team, coach and season was under the direct supervision of Bob Devaney. The 1974 volleyball season record has been researched, completed and reported and it leaves no doubt that the varsity volleyball program existed in the fall of 1974. As a matter of support for women's sports being recognized in 1974-75, I refer to the women's basketball media guide where the first team of record was coached by Jan Callahan in 1974-75.

There is so much information to acknowledge and support the inclusion of the 1974 volleyball team as Nebraska's first. I was there. I cannot think of a logical reason why the 1974 season has not been recognized. I welcome a direct conversation about that first year. My number is 802-681-8921.

Patricia A. Sullivan, EdD

Nebraska Volleyball Coach

1974, 1975, 1976

Les Robbins
16717 Elm Circle
Omaha, Nebraska 68130-2052

November 25, 2024

Troy Dannen, Athletic Director
University of Nebraska Lincoln
800 Stadium Drive
Lincoln, NE 68501

Dear Troy:

I happily and joyfully witnessed the three Husker wins this weekend. Great for the players, coaches, fans and programs, especially football!

I'm checking back on the 4 from '74 packet regarding Husker volleyball players from 1974 I hand delivered to you at the President's tailgate on Oct 5th which included a letter with a request you give me a call to discuss this matter.

I left you a detailed voicemail on Tuesday October 29th requesting you give me a call.

Quite frankly, your non responsiveness is troubling.

It shouldn't matter whether or not I am a long-time donor, ranking #1366 on the Husker Athletic Fund pecking order, plus being a generous financial contributor and active volunteer to UNL College of Business & Center for Entrepreneurship.

In the end, I'm a lifelong Husker fan and supporter who doesn't have a dog in the fight and am simply asking you to right a wrong. You see, after reflecting on this, it seems to me the 4 from '74 may have been unjustly, for no explainable reason, and unfairly treated by the Husker Athletic Dept. which is contrary to Title IX that's very intent and purpose was to prohibit discrimination of women in education programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance.

At this point I would appreciate a face-to-face conversation, just the two of us, about this important topic.

Thank you for your consideration. Go Big Red!

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Les', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Les Robbins
402-690-6101

Les Robbins

From: Mitzi Lenz <mlenz@huskers.com>
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2025 2:15 PM
To: lesrobbins@cox.net
Cc: Nebraska Athletic Director; Kristen Brown
Subject: RE: Response to letter dated 11.25.24

Good afternoon Les,

Thank you for your email. Troy and Kristen respectively decline your offer to meet regarding the 4 from '74 matter. As Troy mentions multiple times below, he considers this matter resolved and will not be discussing any further.

Thank you for your understanding.

All the best,

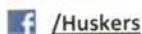
Mitzi



Mitzi Lenz | Executive Assistant to the Athletic Director

Nebraska Athletics, 800 Stadium Dr., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0210

C: (402) 440-9825 | W: (402) 472-7140 | mlenz@huskers.com



From: Les Robbins <lesrobbins@cox.net>
Sent: Monday, February 10, 2025 3:12 PM
To: Nebraska Athletic Director <ad@huskers.com>
Cc: Mitzi Lenz <mlenz@huskers.com>; Kristen Brown <kbrown@huskers.com>
Subject: RE: Response to letter dated 11.25.24

Caution: Non-NU Email

Troy,

Some time has passed. I certainly appreciate all the great accomplishments the athletic department has achieved, even since my last email to you. This is what happens when you do as Coach Cook stated "Think Big!"

I have what I believe to be a workable solution to the 4 from '74 matter. I would like to share it with you and Kristen personally at your offices.

Please let me know when you both are available. Thanks!

Regards,

Les

From: Les Robbins <lesrobbins@cox.net>
Sent: Friday, December 13, 2024 9:54 AM
To: 'Nebraska Athletic Director' <ad@huskers.com>
Subject: RE: Response to letter dated 11.25.24

Troy,

Thanks for getting back to me.

I would welcome a brief get together. No rush. Please have Mitzi contact me. Thanks!

Regards,

Les

From: Nebraska Athletic Director <ad@huskers.com>
Sent: Friday, December 13, 2024 6:50 AM
To: lesrobbins@cox.net
Subject: Re: Response to letter dated 11.25.24

Les,

More than willing to get together sometime (it may be a bit) but to be straight up front with you, this item is resolved in the eyes of the department and not something I plan to revisit.

I appreciate your long-time support of the department and your passion for the Huskers, but this scenario was common with the transition to varsity women's sports not only at schools I have worked, but was revealed and clarified as other institutions celebrated their 50th anniversaries over the past year.

I'll have Mitzi reach out if you still would like to get time, but with my calendar right now, I need some runway. Hope you understand.

Troy



Troy Dannen | Director of Athletics

Nebraska Athletics, 800 Stadium Drive, Lincoln, NE 68588-0120

W: (402) 472-3011 | ad@huskers.com

 [/Huskers](#)

 Huskers.com

 [@Huskers](#)

From: lesrobbins@cox.net <lesrobbins@cox.net>
Sent: Wednesday, December 11, 2024 6:10 AM
To: Nebraska Athletic Director <ad@huskers.com>
Subject: RE: Response to letter dated 11.25.24

Caution: Non-NU Email

Troy,

Thank you for your response.

I have done a lot of thinking about this matter and believe I have a workable solution. I am an eye ball to eye ball kind of guy and don't like getting into these emails back and forth. Please provide me some dates, times and a place where the two of us can meet. Thanks!

Regards,

Les

From: Nebraska Athletic Director <ad@huskers.com>

Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2024 12:09 PM

To: lesrobbins@cox.net

Subject: Response to letter dated 11.25.24

Les,

I received your letter dated November 25. I did provide the packet you provided to Kristen Brown, our Deputy Athletic Director who oversees the sport of volleyball. She did research the question on our end and responded via email to Patricia Sullivan, on November 9. My lack of direct responsiveness is due to Kristen taking the lead on this project.

I've attached a copy of Kristen's email for reference, and I trust and believe in its conclusion and its accuracy. I understand the sensitivity and emotion as I have seen similar situations at other institutions as the 50th anniversary of Title IX was celebrated across the country.

In my opinion, the matter is resolved and closed with Kristen's response.

I trust, Les, you see where I am at on this issue. I appreciate your interest and pursuit of the matter. Look forward to our opportunity to connect again, albeit on matters other than this!

GBR!

Troy



Troy Dannen | Director of Athletics

Nebraska Athletics, 800 Stadium Drive, Lincoln, NE 68588-0120

W: (402) 472-3011 | ad@huskers.com



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Donna Kelly

WELCOME HOME COACH

DBK

NEBRASKA VOLLEYBALL



Volleyball Letterwinner

Cheryl Henry

Nebraska Volleyball Letterwinner

Cook receives 'incredible honor' from board

CHRIS DUNKER

Lincoln Journal Star

To honor John Cook, who led Nebraska volleyball from 2000 until earlier this year, racking up numerous national and conference titles and coach of the year honors, the University of Nebraska Board of Regents on Friday approved the naming of the John Cook Arena at the Devaney Center.

The \$400,000 project, which will be paid for through non-state aided funds, will include new signage inside and outside the arena, as well as a bronze statue of Cook to be placed outside the Devaney Center.

Regent Jim Scheer of Norfolk said the proposed name change had been in the works for more than six months, predating Cook's retirement in January.

Please see REGENTS, Page C3



MEGAN NIELSEN, THE WORLD-HERALD
The UNO men's basketball team poses for a photo with the University of Nebraska Board of Regents during Friday's meeting. The board recognized the team for its breakthrough season.

Nebraska Cornhuskers women's volleyball

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The **Nebraska Cornhuskers women's volleyball** team competes as part of [NCAA Division I](#), representing the [University of Nebraska–Lincoln](#) in the [Big Ten](#). Nebraska plays its home games at the [Bob Devaney Sports Center](#) and has sold out every home match since 2001.^[2] The team has been coached by [Dani Busboom Kelly](#) since 2025.

The program was founded in 1975 and is one of the most decorated in women's volleyball, with more wins than any other program and five [national championships](#).^[3] Nebraska has been ranked in every weekly poll since the introduction of the [AVCA National Poll](#) in 1982 and has spent more weeks ranked number one than any other program. The Cornhuskers' 102 All-Americans are the most in the country.^{[4][5]} Nebraska regularly leads the NCAA in average attendance and has participated in several of the highest-attended women's volleyball games ever played.^[6] On August 30, 2023, Nebraska and [Omaha](#) played at [Memorial Stadium](#) in front of 92,003 people, the highest-attended women's sporting event in the world.^{[7][8]}

History

[\[edit\]](#)

Pat Sullivan (1974–76)

[\[edit\]](#)

Until the 1972 passing of [Title IX](#), Nebraska's volleyball program existed for four years as an "extramural" sport operating as a part of the school's physical education department.^[9] Pat Sullivan was hired in 1974, and she led the program's first season of varsity competition. Though the school offered its first scholarships for female student-athletes to members of this team, which went 25–10–1 and placed sixth in the [AIAW's](#) Region VI tournament, the university recognizes 1975 as its inaugural season due to "a lack of records [from 1974] and tradition."^[10] Sullivan compiled an 83–21 record over two official seasons, including an AIAW regional final appearance in 1975 and NU's first [Big Eight](#) championship in 1976.^[11] Sullivan would later go on to coach volleyball at [George Washington University](#) for nine seasons, as well as be a professor there.^{[12][13]}

- ^[10] *"Rewriting History - Huskers Illustrated"*. *huskersillustrated.com*. 2023-02-22. Retrieved 2023-08-08.

https://www.huskersillustrated.com/volleyball/stories/the-1974-volleyball-team-claims-its-spot-in-husker-annals/article_7cb4a557-1318-5ea5-a1f5-75a6279a7f75.html

History

- Pat Sullivan (1974–76)
- Terry Pettit (1977–99)
- John Cook (2000–2024)
- Dani Busboom Kelly

Coaches

Coaching history

No.	Coach	Tenure	Overall	Conference	Achievements
1	Pat Sullivan	1975–76	83–21 (.798)	5–0 (1.000)	Conference champion (1976) Conference tournament champion (1976)
2	Terry Pettit	1977–99	694–148–12 (.820)	254–15–1 (.943)	
3	John Cook	2000–2024	722–103 (.875)	438–57 (.885)	
4	Dani Busboom Kelly	2025–	0–0 (–)	0–0 (–)	

Nebraska Cornhuskers women's volleyball

The **Nebraska Cornhuskers women's volleyball** team competes as part of NCAA Division I, representing the University of Nebraska–Lincoln in the Big Ten. Nebraska plays its home games at the Bob Devaney Sports Center and has sold out every home match since 2001.^[2] The team has been coached by Dani Busboom Kelly since 2025.

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History

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Nebraska Cornhuskers women's volleyball



Founded	1975
University	<u>University of Nebraska–Lincoln</u>
Athletic director	<u>Troy Dannen</u>
Head coach	<u>Dani Busboom Kelly</u> (1st season)
Conference	<u>Big Ten</u>
Location	<u>Lincoln, Nebraska</u>
Home arena	<u>Devaney Center</u> (capacity: 8,309)
Nickname	<u>Cornhuskers</u>
Colors	Scarlet and cream ^[1]

AIAW/NCAA Tournament champion

1995, 2000, 2006, 2015, 2017

AIAW/NCAA Tournament runner-up

1986, 1989, 2005, 2018, 2021, 2023

AIAW/NCAA Tournament semifinal

1986, 1989, 1990, 1995, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2021, 2023, 2024

AIAW/NCAA Tournament appearance

1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015,

program's first season of varsity competition. Though the school offered its first scholarships for female student-athletes to members of this team, which went 25–10–1 and placed sixth in the AIAW's Region VI tournament, the university recognizes 1975 as its inaugural season due to "a lack of records [from 1974] and tradition."^[10] Sullivan compiled an 83–21 record over two official seasons, including an AIAW regional final appearance in 1975 and NU's first Big Eight championship in 1976.^[11] Sullivan would later go on to coach volleyball at George Washington University for nine seasons, as well as be a professor there.^{[12][13]}

Terry Pettit (1977–99)

Terry Pettit was hired as Nebraska's second head coach in 1977.^[14] Pettit, an Indiana native, was an English teacher and volleyball coach at Louisburg College in North Carolina^[15] when a fellow coach found out about Nebraska's open job and directed Pettit to apply.^[16] From 1977 to 1999, he led the Cornhuskers to a record of 694–148, winning twenty-one conference championships and the 1995 national championship.^[17]

In his twenty-three years as head coach,^[18] Pettit built the program into a national power. Under his guidance, Nebraska appeared in eighteen consecutive NCAA tournaments, including six national semifinals, two national runner-up finishes, and NU's first national title. Pettit's teams won a conference championship in all but two seasons during his tenure. His list of honors includes induction into the AVCA Hall of Fame in 2009, USA Volleyball All-Time Great Coach Award, and several national and regional coach of the year awards from various publications.^{[19][20]} Under Pettit, Nebraska became one of the first schools to offer scholarships to female athletes. In 1978, Terri Kanouse and Shandi Pettine were the first players to receive full scholarships for volleyball, and just three years later, the university allowed Pettit to offer up to twelve scholarships.^[21] Pettit coached thirty-six AVCA All-Americans at Nebraska, the highest number of any school in that time span.^[17]

Pettit's only national championship as a head coach came in 1995.^[15] After dropping an early-season match to Stanford, NU swept twenty-two consecutive opponents and won thirty-one straight matches. Nebraska defeated Texas 3–1 to win the title, and AVCA National Player of the Year Allison Weston was among three Huskers named first-team All-Americans. Before the 1999 season, Pettit hired former assistant John Cook as associate head coach. Following Nebraska's loss in the national semifinals, Pettit retired and Cook became head coach. In 2020, Pettit was inducted into the Nebraska Athletics Hall of Fame.^[22]

2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024
Conference tournament champion
Big Eight
1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1994, 1995
Conference regular season champion
Big Eight
1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1995
Big 12
1996, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010
Big Ten
2011, 2016, 2017, 2023, 2024

John Cook (2000–2024)

Cook succeeded the retiring Pettit before the 2000 season after a seven-year stint as head coach at Wisconsin. He was Pettit's assistant coach from 1989 to 1991.^[18] In twenty years at Nebraska, Cook has guided the Huskers to four national championships, five other national semifinal appearances and an NCAA tournament berth in each season. Cook was named National Coach of the Year in 2000 and 2005, Central Region Coach of the Year four times, and conference coach of the year six times. He was awarded the USA Volleyball All-Time Great Coach Award in 2008, and was inducted into the AVCA Hall of Fame in 2017. Under Cook, Greichaly Cepero, Christina Houghtelling, and Sarah Pavan won AVCA National Player of the Year, and Pavan won the Honda-Broderick Cup in 2007 as the Collegiate Female Athlete of the Year.



Nebraska's 2000 NCAA Tournament championship team was honored by President George W. Bush at the White House on May 31, 2001

In his first year as NU's head coach, Cook guided the Huskers to their second national championship. After starting the season outside the national top ten, Nebraska went 20–0 in Big 12 play and defeated Cook's former team, Wisconsin, in a five-set national title match to cap a 34–0 season and become the second undefeated team in NCAA volleyball history.^[23] Sophomore setter Greichaly Cepero was named National Player of the Year and won the Honda Sports Award as the best female athlete in collegiate sports.^[5] Nebraska finished the 2001 and 2002 seasons 20–0 in conference play, but lost late in the tournament to Stanford and Hawaii, ending both seasons 31–2. Nebraska's seventy-seven game Big 12 winning streak ended with a loss at Kansas State in 2003 as the Cornhuskers failed to make it out of a regional.



No. 4 Nebraska defeated No. 10 Texas 3–2 at Gregory Gymnasium on Oct. 20, 2004

Nebraska earned the number one overall seed in the 2004 NCAA tournament, which began an NCAA-record eighty-eight consecutive weeks the Cornhuskers were ranked atop the AVCA weekly poll. The Huskers fell to two-time defending champion USC but freshman Sarah Pavan was named AVCA National Freshman of the Year. Pavan became one of the most decorated players in volleyball history, including four First-Team All-American honors and the 2006 National Player of the Year award. Nebraska was again the top seed in the 2005 NCAA Tournament and swept through the first five rounds, but was upset by Washington in the national title match.^[24]

Nebraska lost only once in the 2006 regular season as its streak at the top of the rankings continued. The Cornhuskers were the top seed in the NCAA Tournament for the third consecutive year and returned to the national title match after a five-set win over Minnesota.^[25] Nebraska dropped the first set to Stanford but won the next three to win the school's third championship in front of a then-NCAA volleyball-record crowd of 17, 209.^[26] Nebraska swept twenty-four of its thirty-three opponents and

lost just fourteen sets all season and became the first team to win the championship while hosting the finals since [UCLA](#) in 1991.^[5] Pavan won numerous awards after the season and sophomore [Jordan Larson](#) was named a first-team All American.^{[27][28]}

Nebraska's season opener in 2007 marked the program's 1,000th game, a sweep of [Tennessee](#) in the AVCA Showcase.^[29] The Cornhuskers' eighty-eight week streak at number one came to an end in October, but NU won its fourth straight Big 12 title. After surviving an upset bid by unseeded [Michigan State](#) in the [NCAA Tournament](#), Nebraska fell to [California](#) in the regional final.^[30] Pavan joined Texas softball pitcher [Cat Osterman](#) as the only repeat Big 12 Female Athlete of the Year and Nebraska placed a then-record five players on All-America teams.^[31] Nebraska won its fifth consecutive Big 12 title in 2008^[32] and advanced through the first three rounds of the [NCAA Tournament](#) to face Washington.^[33] After losing the first two sets, Nebraska came back to tie the match, and used a nine-point run to win set five.^[34] Nebraska met undefeated [Penn State](#) in the national semifinal and again fell behind 2–0. The Huskers rallied to deal the Nittany Lions their first two set losses of the season, snapping their NCAA-record 111 consecutive set wins, but lost the match in five sets.^[35]



Nebraska's 2006 NCAA Tournament championship team was honored by President George W. Bush at the [White House](#) on Jun. 19, 2007

Nebraska's NCAA-record ninety-game home winning streak came to an end at the beginning of the 2009 season.^[36] In the [2009 NCAA Tournament](#) Texas became the first team to beat NU three times in one season after ending the Huskers' five-year stretch atop the Big 12.^[37] In 2010, the University of Nebraska announced it would be ending its fifteen-year relationship with the Big 12 and joining the [Big Ten](#). The Cornhuskers won the Big 12 in 2010, departing with an all-time conference record of 278–22.

Move to the Big Ten

The University of Nebraska joined the Big Ten Conference in 2011. This meant for the first time NU would regularly play longtime rival Penn State along with other nationally relevant programs including Minnesota, Wisconsin, and [Illinois](#). The Huskers won the Big Ten in their first year of competition but failed to make a regional semifinal for the first time since 1993.^[38] Nebraska did not win another Big Ten title until 2016 and failed to make the national semifinals in six straight seasons, the longest stretch for the program in over thirty years. Nebraska's drought ended in [2015](#) when the Cornhuskers swept former Big 12 rival Texas to win the program's fourth national championship in front of an NCAA-record crowd in Omaha. Mikaela Foecke had nineteen kills in the title game and became the third freshman named the NCAA tournament's Most Outstanding Player. The Cornhuskers spent much of the following season ranked number one in the country and won the program's first conference title since 2011.^[39] In the [2016 NCAA Tournament](#), Nebraska fought off two match points to defeat Penn State in the regional semifinals^[40] but fell to Texas in the national semifinals.^[41]

Nebraska's 2017 season opened with consecutive losses to Florida and Oregon, but the Cornhuskers finished the regular season with just two more losses, ultimately sharing the Big Ten title with Penn State. NU defeated the top-seeded Nittany Lions in five sets to advance to the national title match, defeating Florida 3–1 to win the school's fifth national title in front of a then-record crowd of 18,516.^[42] Outside hitter Mikaela Foecke was again named the tournament's Most Outstanding Player, making her one of four players to win the honor more than once. NU made a program-record fourth straight trip to the national semifinals in 2018 but fell to Stanford in a five-set national title match.

After a pair of regional final losses in 2019 and 2020 (though the 2020 Tournament was held in the spring of 2021), NU defeated No. 2 Texas and No. 3 Pittsburgh in the 2021 Tournament to reach the school's tenth national title match; Nebraska's five-set loss to Wisconsin set a new NCAA volleyball attendance record.^[43] Following the season, freshman libero Lexi Rodriguez became the second Cornhusker and first libero to win AVCA National Freshman of the Year.

On August 30, 2023, Nebraska hosted "Volleyball Day in Nebraska" at Memorial Stadium, with a temporary court on the football playing field. The event featured an exhibition between two of the state's three Division II schools, Nebraska–Kearney and Wayne State, followed by a regular-season match between the Cornhuskers and Omaha. The event was declared a sellout on April 27, three days after tickets went on sale. The official attendance for Nebraska's 3–0 victory was 92,003, the highest ever for a women's sporting event in the United States. It also set an all-time attendance record for a sporting event in Memorial Stadium history.^{[44][7]}

Dani Busboom Kelly

Dani Busboom Kelly, a former Nebraska player (2003–2006) and assistant coach (2012–2016), was named head coach of the team following the retirement of John Cook on January 29, 2025.^{[45][46]} Busboom Kelly was previously the head coach at Louisville from 2017–2024.

Coaches

Coaching history

No.	Coach	Tenure	Overall	Conference	Achievements
1	Pat Sullivan	1975–76	83–21 (.798)	5–0 (1.000)	Conference champion (1976) Conference tournament champion (1976)
2	<u>Terry Pettit</u>	1977–99	694–148–12 (.820)	254–15–1 (.943)	National champion (1995) Conference champion (1977–92, 1994–96, 1998–99) Conference tournament champion (1977–86, 1988–91, 1994–95) AVCA National Coach of the Year (1986, 1994) AVCA Hall of Fame (inducted 2009)
3	<u>John Cook</u>	2000–2024	722–103 (.875)	438–57 (.885)	National champion (2000, 2006, 2015, 2017) Conference champion (2000–02, 2004–08, 2010–11, 2016–17, 2023–24) AVCA National Coach of the Year (2000, 2005, 2023) AVCA Hall of Fame (inducted 2017)
4	<u>Dani Busboom Kelly</u>	2025–	0–0 (–)	0–0 (–)	

Assistant coaching history

- Russ Rose (1978–79)
 - Linda Luedtke (1980)
 - John Corbelli (1981)
 - Barry Janzen (1982–83)
 - Jay Potter (1984–87)
 - Jeff Nelson (1986)
 - Terri Killion (1988–89)
 - John Cook (1988–90, 1999)
 - Cathy Noth (1988–98)
- Brian Begor (1991–92)
 - Val Novak (1993–94)
 - Todd Raasch (1995)
 - Nikki Best (1996–99)
 - Staci Wolfe (2000–02)
 - Craig Skinner (2000–04)
 - Charlene Johnson-Tagaloa (2003–06)
 - Lee Maes (2005–07)
 - Lizzy Stemke (2007–10)
- Erik Sullivan (2008–10)
 - Dan Conners (2010–11)
 - Dan Meske (2010–14)
 - Dani Busboom Kelly (2012–16)
 - Chris Tamas (2015–16)
 - Kayla Banwarth (2017–19)
 - Tyler Hildebrand (2017, 2020–21)
 - Jaylen Reyes (2018–)
 - Kelly Hunter (2020–)
 - Jordan Larson (2023–2024)

Coaching staff

Coach	Position	First year	Alma mater
Dani Busboom Kelly	Head coach	2025	Nebraska
Jaylen Reyes	Assistant coach / Recruiting coordinator	2018	BYU
Kelly Hunter	Assistant coach	2020	Nebraska
Jordan Larson	Assistant coach	2023	Nebraska

Season-by-season results

Season	Team	Overall	Conference	Standing	Postseason	AVCA poll ^[a]
Pat Sullivan (<i>Big Eight Conference</i>) (1975–1976)						
1975	Pat Sullivan	34-8	^[b]		<u>AIAW Regional Final</u>	
1976	Pat Sullivan	49-13	5-0	1st	<u>AIAW Tournament</u>	
Pat Sullivan:		83-21	5-0			
Terry Pettit (<i>Big Eight Conference</i>) (1977–1995)						
1977	Terry Pettit	42-12-7	6-1-1	1st	<u>AIAW Regional semifinal</u>	
1978	Terry Pettit	35-25-2	3-0	1st	<u>AIAW Runner-up</u>	
1979	Terry Pettit	41-8-3	6-0	1st	<u>AIAW Regional Final</u>	
1980	Terry Pettit	35-15	5-0	1st	<u>AIAW Regional Final</u>	
1981	Terry Pettit	29-10	12-0	1st		
1982	Terry Pettit	27-6	9-1	1st	<u>NCAA Division I Regional semifinal</u>	15
1983	Terry Pettit	29-4	10-0	1st	<u>NCAA Division I first round</u>	16
1984	Terry Pettit	27-4	10-0	1st	<u>NCAA Division I Regional Final</u>	7
1985	Terry Pettit	28-3	10-0	1st	<u>NCAA Division I Regional Final</u>	6
1986	Terry Pettit	29-6	10-0	1st	<u>NCAA Division I Runner-up</u>	6
1987	Terry Pettit	30-5	12-0	1st	<u>NCAA Division I Regional Final</u>	10
1988	Terry Pettit	28-5	11-1	1st	<u>NCAA Division I Regional semifinal</u>	5
1989	Terry Pettit	29-4	12-0	1st	<u>NCAA Division I Semifinal</u>	5
1990	Terry Pettit	32-3	12-0	1st	<u>NCAA Division I Regional semifinal</u>	2
1991	Terry Pettit	27-5	12-0	1st	<u>NCAA Division I Regional Final</u>	7
1992	Terry Pettit	22-6	12-0	1st	<u>NCAA Division I Regional semifinal</u>	17

1993	Terry Pettit	25-6	10-2	2nd	NCAA Division I second round	8
1994	Terry Pettit	31-1	12-0	1st	NCAA Division I Regional Final	1
1995	Terry Pettit	32-1	12-0	1st	NCAA Division I Champion	1
<u>Terry Pettit</u> (<i>Big 12 Conference</i> ^[c]) (1996–1999)						
1996	Terry Pettit	30-4	19-1	1st	NCAA Division I Semifinal	3
1997	Terry Pettit	27-7	16-4	T-2nd	NCAA Division I Regional Final	8
1998	Terry Pettit	32-2	19-1	1st	NCAA Division I Semifinal	3
1999	Terry Pettit	27-6	17-3	1st	NCAA Division I Semifinal	11
<u>Terry Pettit:</u>		694-148-12	257-14-1			
<u>John Cook</u> (<i>Big 12 Conference</i>) (2000–2010)						
2000	John Cook	34-0	20-0	1st	NCAA Division I Champion	1
2001	John Cook	31-2	20-0	1st	NCAA Division I Semifinal	3
2002	John Cook	31-2	20-0	1st	NCAA Division I Regional Final	5
2003	John Cook	28-5	17-3	2nd	NCAA Division I semifinal	13
2004	John Cook	30-2	20-0	1st	NCAA Division I Regional Final	5
2005	John Cook	33-2	19-1	1st	NCAA Division I Runner-up	2
2006	John Cook	33-1	19-1	1st	NCAA Division I Champion	1
2007	John Cook	30-2	19-1	T-1st	NCAA Division I Regional Final	5
2008	John Cook	31-3	18-2	T-1st	NCAA Division I Semifinal	3
2009	John Cook	26-7	16-4	3rd	NCAA Division I Regional Final	5
2010	John Cook	29-3	19-1	1st	NCAA Division I Regional semifinal	7

John Cook (<i>Big Ten Conference</i> ^[c]) (2011–2024)						
2011	John Cook	25-5	17-3	1st	NCAA Division I second round	12
2012	John Cook	26-7	15-5	T-2nd	NCAA Division I Regional Final	7
2013	John Cook	26-7	16-4	2nd	NCAA Division I Regional Final	7
2014	John Cook	23-10	14-6	4th	NCAA Division I Regional Final	8
2015	John Cook	32-4	17-3	2nd	NCAA Division I Champion	1
2016	John Cook	31-3	18-2	1st	NCAA Division I Semifinal	4
2017	John Cook	32-4	19-1	T-1st	NCAA Division I Champion	1
2018	John Cook	29-7	15-5	T-3rd	NCAA Division I Runner-up	2
2019	John Cook	28-5	17-3	T-2nd	NCAA Division I Regional Final	7
2020 ^[d]	John Cook	16-3	14-2	3rd	NCAA Division I Regional Final	6
2021	John Cook	26-8 ^[e]	15-4	2nd	NCAA Division I Runner-up	2
2022	John Cook	26-6	16-4	2nd	NCAA Division I Regional Semifinal	9
2023	John Cook	33-2	19-1	1st	NCAA Division I Runner-up	2
2024	John Cook	33-3	19-1	T-1st	NCAA Division I Semifinal	4
John Cook:		722-103-0	438-57-0			
Dani Busboom Kelly (<i>Big Ten Conference</i>) (2025–present)						
2025	Dani Busboom Kelly					4
Dani Busboom Kelly:		-	-			
Total:		1499-272-12	700-71-1			

- ☐ National champion
 ☐ Conference regular season champion
 ☐ Conference regular season and conference tournament champion
- ☐ Division regular season champion
 ☐ Division regular season and conference tournament champion
- ☐ Conference tournament champion

Venues

Nebraska Coliseum

NU compiled an all-time record of 511–36 at the 4,030-seat Nebraska Coliseum, losing just three home matches in thirty-three seasons of conference play. In 1991, the Cornhuskers played home games at the Bob Devaney Sports Center while the Coliseum was being renovated specifically to host volleyball matches. NU has hosted at least one NCAA Tournament match every year since 1984, including a 52–4 postseason record at the Coliseum. Nebraska established an NCAA record with their 88th consecutive home win in 2009,^[47] a streak that ended at ninety when UCLA defeated NU in front of an NCAA regular season-record crowd of 13,870.^[48] In 2008, the AVCA's Kathy DeBoer described the Coliseum as "the epicenter of volleyball fandom".^[49]



Nebraska Coliseum logo

The Coliseum was one of few collegiate arenas designed specifically for volleyball. It is noted for its classical architecture and intimate atmosphere. At the Coliseum, the Huskers began an NCAA record for most consecutive sellouts in a women's sport, a streak that continues at the Devaney Center.^[50] The Coliseum was the subject of a CBS Sports documentary in 2011.^[51]

Bob Devaney Sports Center

Nebraska's volleyball program moved to the Bob Devaney Sports Center in 2013, which was vacated when Pinnacle Bank Arena was built for NU's basketball teams. The Devaney Center's capacity was decreased from 13,596 to 7,907 with luxury suites on the south side of the court.^[52] The capacity was modestly increased to 8,309 prior to the 2023 season.^[53] Despite the increase in capacity from the Coliseum, the Huskers' sellout streak still continues and stands at 339, the longest in any NCAA women's sport.^[54] Nebraska has led the country in attendance every year since moving to the Devaney Center,^[f] averaging over 8,000 fans per game each season.^[55] The move to the Devaney Center has made Nebraska's volleyball program profitable each year, a rarity in women's college athletics.^[56] With no financial support from tax dollars, tuition, or student fees, the team is entirely self-sufficient.^[57]

Highest-attended matches

Nebraska has played in 10 of the 16 highest-attended matches in NCAA volleyball history.^{[g][58]}



A Nebraska National Guard flyover of Memorial Stadium prior to a volleyball match that set a women's sporting event attendance world record

Highest-attended NCAA volleyball matches

Rank	Attendance	Date	Winner	Loser	NCAA round	Venue
1	92,003	Aug. 30, 2023	No. 4 Nebraska	Omaha	Regular season	<u>Memorial Stadium</u> (Lincoln, NE)
2	21,860	Dec. 22, 2024	No. 2 Penn State	No. 4 Louisville	<u>National final</u>	<u>KFC Yum! Center</u> (Louisville, KY)
3	21,726	Dec. 19, 2024	No. 4 Louisville No. 2 Penn State	No. 1 Pittsburgh No. 3 Nebraska	<u>National semifinal</u>	
5	18,755	Dec. 18, 2021	No. 4 Wisconsin	No. 10 Nebraska	<u>National final</u>	<u>Nationwide Arena</u> (Columbus, OH)
6	18,516	Dec. 16, 2017	No. 5 Nebraska	No. 2 Florida	<u>National final</u>	<u>Sprint Center</u> (Kansas City, MO)
7	18,374	Dec. 14, 2017	No. 2 Florida No. 5 Nebraska	No. 3 Stanford No. 1 Penn State	<u>National semifinal</u>	
9	18,113	Dec. 15, 2018	No. 1 Stanford	No. 7 Nebraska	<u>National final</u>	<u>Target Center</u> (Minneapolis, MN)
10	17,808	Dec. 13, 2018	No. 1 Stanford No. 7 Nebraska	No. 4 BYU No. 3 Illinois	<u>National semifinal</u>	
12	17,561	Dec. 19, 2015	No. 4 Nebraska	No. 3 Texas	<u>National final</u>	<u>CHI Health Center</u> (Omaha, NE)
13	17,551	Dec. 17, 2015	No. 4 Nebraska No. 3 Texas	No. 9 Kansas No. 2 Minnesota	<u>National semifinal</u>	
15	17,430	Dec. 18, 2008	No. 2 Stanford No. 1 Penn State	No. 3 Texas No. 4 Nebraska	<u>National semifinal</u>	

Awards

National Player of the Year

- Karen Dahlgren—1986

- Allison Weston – 1995
- Greichaly Cepero – 2000
- Christina Houghtelling – 2005
- Sarah Pavan – 2006

National Freshman of the Year

- Sarah Pavan – 2004
- Lexi Rodriguez – 2021

National Coach of the Year

- Terry Pettit – 1986, 1994
- John Cook – 2000, 2005, 2023

All-Americans

Nebraska has had 54 total players account for 106 AVCA All-American selections, including 52 First-Team AVCA All-American selections.^{[59][60]}

First team

- Cathy Noth – 1983
- Annie Adamczak – 1985
- Karen Dahlgren – 1986
- Lori Endicott – 1988
- Virginia Stahr – 1988
- Val Novak – 1989, 1990
- Janet Kruse – 1989, 1990
- Stephanie Thater – 1991, 1992
- Allison Weston – 1993–95
- Christy Johnson – 1994, 1995
- Lisa Reitsma – 1995, 1996
- Fiona Nepo – 1996, 1998
- Nancy Metcalf – 1998, 1999, 2001
- Laura Pilakowski – 2000
- Greichaly Cepero – 2000, 2002
- Amber Holmquist – 2001, 2002
- Melissa Elmer – 2004, 2005
- Sarah Pavan – 2004–07
- Christina Houghtelling – 2005
- Jordan Larson – 2006, 2008
- Brooke Delano – 2010
- Gina Mancuso – 2011
- Lauren Cook – 2012

Second team

- Cathy Noth – 1984
- Karen Dahlgren – 1985
- Enid Schonewise – 1986
- Tisha Delaney – 1986
- Lori Endicott – 1987
- Virginia Stahr – 1989
- Stephanie Thater – 1990
- Chris Hall – 1991
- Janet Kruse – 1991
- Kelly Aspegren – 1994
- Fiona Nepo – 1997
- Lisa Reitsma – 1997
- Megan Korver – 1998
- Amber Holmquist – 2000
- Jenny Kropp – 2001
- Greichaly Cepero – 2001
- Laura Pilakowski – 2002
- Melissa Elmer – 2003
- Jennifer Saleaumua – 2004
- Tracy Stalls – 2006, 2007
- Christina Houghtelling – 2007
- Rachel Holloway – 2007
- Sydney Anderson – 2008

Third team

- Jennifer Saleaumua – 2005
- Rachel Holloway – 2006
- Jordan Larson – 2007
- Sydney Anderson – 2009
- Kadie Rolfzen – 2013, 2014
- Justine Wong-Orantes – 2015
- Amber Rolfzen – 2016
- Kenzie Maloney – 2018
- Lexi Sun – 2019, 2020
- Madi Kubik – 2021
- Harper Murray – 2023

- Kelsey Robinson – 2013
- Kadie Rolfzen – 2015, 2016
- Justine Wong-Orantes – 2016
- Kelly Hunter – 2017
- Mikaela Foecke – 2018
- Lauren Stivrins – 2018, 2020
- Lexi Rodriguez – 2021, 2023, 2024
- Merritt Beason - 2023
- Andi Jackson - 2024
- Tara Mueller – 2008
- Brooke Delano – 2009
- Lindsey Licht – 2010
- Hannah Werth – 2010, 2012
- Gina Mancuso – 2012
- Amber Rolfzen – 2015
- Kelly Hunter – 2016
- Annika Albrecht – 2017
- Mikaela Foecke – 2017
- Lauren Stivrins – 2019
- Nicklin Hames – 2020
- Kayla Caffey – 2021
- Lexi Rodriguez - 2022
- Bergen Reilly - 2023, 2024
- Harper Murray - 2024

National records

Team^{[61][62]}

- Wins: **1,466**
- Winning percentage in a season: **1.000** (2000, tied with four others)
- Consecutive winning seasons: **50** (1975–2024)
- Consecutive non-losing seasons: **50** (1975–2024)
- Assists in a match: **116** (Nov. 5, 1988 vs. Texas)
- Blocks per set in a season: **4.18** (2001)
- Weeks ranked No. 1: **108**
- AVCA All-America athletes: **53**
- AVCA All-America awards: **102**

Individual

- Hitting percentage in a match (min. 10 kills): **1.000** (Tracy Stalls – Nov. 24, 2007 vs. Texas Tech; Megan Korver – Sep. 25, 1998 vs. Iowa State; Lauren Stivrins – Sep. 28, 2018 vs. Northwestern)
- Assists in a match: **Lori Endicott, 109** (Nov. 5, 1988 vs. Texas)
- Blocks in a season: **Melissa Elmer, 250** (2005)
- Blocks per set in a season: **Melissa Elmer, 2.17** (2005)

Beach volleyball

The **Nebraska Cornhuskers women's beach volleyball** team began play in the spring of 2013 as the school's twenty-second intercollegiate sport. In 2016, the NCAA began sponsoring a beach volleyball tournament (previously the sport was run by the AVCA), but Nebraska did not attempt to qualify. Increasing popularity of the sport in the Midwest has resulted in a significant uptick in participation; Nebraska is now one of four Division 1 competitors in the Midwest (alongside Eastern

Illinois, Lindenwood and Missouri State). Several universities at lower levels have also formed programs, including one of the Nebraska State Colleges, Wayne State.^[63] Still, events in the Midwest are scarce and NU generally plays the bulk of its season during a spring break trip to California and Hawaii. John Cook, previously coach for both volleyball programs, has said the school views beach volleyball primarily as a training and recruiting tool for its indoor team, with the rosters usually fully overlapping. Championship-winning success from the indoor program has not translated to the beach volleyball scene— the team has a 3-52 record all-time against ranked opponents. Jaylen Reyes took over as Head Beach Coach for the 2023 season.^[64] Beach volleyball competes as an independent, making it one of only three programs at Nebraska not affiliated with the Big Ten.

On March 9, 2016, Nebraska hosted Missouri Baptist at the erstwhile Hawks Championship Center. The match, closed to the public due to space limitations, was the first collegiate beach volleyball match held in the state of Nebraska. The Cornhuskers swept the Spartans 5–0. A rematch the next season yielded identical results. Another 23 matches have been held at the athletic complex.^[65] Additionally, in February 2024, Nebraska hosted a triangular at its campus recreational courts.^[66]

In 2007, prior to official AVCA/NCAA competitions, Jordan Larson and Sarah Pavan defeated student-athletes from seven other schools to win the Collegiate Beach Volleyball Championship, an invitational tournament featuring two players per school.^[67]

Coaching history

No.	Coach	Tenure
<u>John Cook</u>	2013–22	54–62 (.466)
Jaylen Reyes	2023–	31–16 (.660)

Season-by-season results

Year	Coach	Overall	Postseason	Final rank
Independent (2013–present)				
2013	<u>John Cook</u>	4–5		7
2014		3–2		7
2015		6–2		
2016		5–5		
2017		5–7		
2018		4–14		
2019		12–12		
2020		7–3	Canceled ^[h]	
2021		Did not compete ^[i]		
2022		8–12		
2023	Jaylen Reyes	15–5		
2024		16–11		
2025		0–0		
Overall: 85–78 (.521)				

Notes

- a. The AVCA began weekly polling in 1982
- b. The Big Eight did not sponsor a regular season or conference tournament in 1975
- c. Neither the Big 12 nor the Big Ten play conference tournaments
- d. Season played in spring 2021
- e. Does not include Nebraska's forfeit win over Rutgers
- f. Excluding the 2021 spring season in which many arenas did not host fans due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- g. The NCAA lists the same attendance for national semifinal matches.
- h. Canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- i. Nebraska did not compete in the 2021 beach volleyball season as the indoor season, typically in fall, was moved to spring due to the COVID-19 pandemic

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