

HUSKER EXTRA

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP IN KANSAS CITY
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2017 | journalstar.com/sports | SECTION C

■ Volleyball coverage: C1-C2, 11-12; Regular sports: C3-10



NO. 5 NEBRASKA	25	25	18	25	3
NO. 3 FLORIDA	22	17	25	16	1

KC MASTERPIECE

DRIVE FOR 5: Foecke, Hunter play big roles in Huskers' fifth title.

RED ALL OVER: Cook, NU deliver in front of a record-setting crowd.



GWYNETH ROBERTS PHOTOS, JOURNAL STAR

John Cook (top) and the Huskers celebrate their NCAA volleyball championship at the Sprint Center in Kansas City, Mo., on Saturday.

Huskers became unstoppable in season's late stages

BRENT C. WAGNER
Lincoln Journal Star

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — So many times in sports a team comes up short.

This team, this year, did not.

Five months ago when the season began, coach John Cook laid out a plan for the Nebraska volleyball team. We want to be good early in the season, great once the conference season begins, and unstoppable in the NCAA Tournament, Cook said. And he really believed they could do so, even when others did not.

He was right. Over the past eight weeks, and 19 matches, no team could stop

Please see **MASTERPIECE**, Page C11

Nebraska's titles

2017 (32-4): def. Florida 3-1 in Kansas City, Missouri

2015 (32-4): def. Texas 3-0 in Omaha

2006 (33-1): def. Stanford 3-1 in Omaha

2000 (34-0): def. Wisconsin 3-2 in Richmond, Virginia

1995 (32-1): def. Texas 3-1 in Amherst, Massachusetts



Nebraska outside hitter Mikaela Foecke (2) attacks Florida middle blocker Rachael Kramer (5) and outside hitter Shainah Joseph (15) in the first set of the NCAA volleyball national championship Saturday at the Sprint Center in Kansas City, Mo.

■ **Online:** More photos, plus highlights and postmatch video @HuskerExtra.com.

■ **Inside:** Foecke, Hunter prove championship mettle, Page C2; Championship poster, Page C12.

Cook decided to chase Penn State; now look who's winning race

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — There was a lesson of sorts amid all that gold confetti Saturday night.

Never, ever underestimate the power of a list.

Rewind to December 2014 in Seattle.

The Nebraska volleyball team had just lost in the Elite Eight of the NCAA Tournament for the third straight season. Not even 12 hours after a loss to BYU, Husker head coach John Cook had a list

32 areas where the program needed to improve to get over the proverbial hump.

Well, well, well. Wonder what the wizard had on that list.

Nebraska won the national championship in 2015, reached the Final Four last season and now this: a 25-22, 25-17, 18-25, 25-16 triumph in the national title match against Florida before 18,516 spectators — most of them in red and white — at the Sprint Center.

Yeah, this Cook guy knows what he's doing.

Call him the Coach K of his beautiful sport.



STEVEN M. SIPPLE

Please see **SIPPLE**, Page C11

Standing Ovation
Congratulations on a wonderful season, Huskers.

First National Bank
The Bank of Husker Nation™

Member FDIC