

Bill Jackman glad to be back home again

By Kevin Warneke

One year ago Bill Jackman was ready to begin his college basketball career at Duke University. Now he is preparing to wait a year so he can play for Nebraska.

Nevertheless, Jackman said he is glad to be home. After a disappointing year at Duke University, the former Grant, Neb., basketball standout has returned to Lincoln in the hopes of helping Nebraska continue to rise in the college basketball ranks.

Jackman, however, must wait his turn as he must sit out a year due to NCAA regulations that deal with players who transfer colleges.

The year at Duke didn't start out all bad for Jackman, as he was tabbed a starter the first day of practice. Jackman held that starting position until after the season opener when he suffered a hip pointer.

From then on the season, for Jackman, took a nose dive as he lost his starting position and saw his playing time diminish.

"It didn't bother me at first because I had the injury and the other guys were playing so well," Jackman said.

Jackman battled back during Christmas break and regained his starting position against Wake Forest. But once again, the starting position was lost and playing time diminished.

Despite this, Jackman said he didn't consider leaving Duke until the season finale.

Jackman said Duke was getting beat by North Carolina by over 30 points, but still he didn't get in the game until near the end.

That was when he decided it might be time to move on, Jackman said.

"All the seniors, juniors and sophomores thought it was best if I left," he said.

As Jackman left North Carolina for spring break, he didn't know it yet, but he was homeward bound.

Returning to Grant, Jackman said that he started to reconsider his decision to leave Duke, until Nebraska boosters began to knock on his door.

Jackman said that numerous people contacted him to persuade him to turn to Big Red country.

"They pointed out some things that I didn't know about," he said.

After deciding not to return to Duke, Jackman said that Nebraska was the only school he considered.

"It was Nebraska all the way," he said. By leaving Duke, Jackman said he missed the opportunity to play in Europe this summer and also in Hawaii, but has had no regrets.

Jackman's departure from Duke came as a surprise to the Blue Devil coaching staff, assistant coach Chuck Swenson said.

"We thought he had made a four-year commitment," Swenson said. "He lived up to our expectations but I guess he didn't live up to his. Playing eight to 10 minutes a game as a freshman is not bad."

Although he left a school which he said he considered the "Harvard of the South," Jackman said he is only beginning to realize the many benefits Nebraska has to offer.

One, he said, is playing for a team that is on the move upward.

Although he set the high school basketball world on fire while leading Grant to back-to-back Class C championships, Jackman said he doesn't want to rest on past laurels and hopes Nebraska fans don't expect too much.

"What counts now is what happens in the present and also in the future," Jackman said.

Although his chance to play won't come for a year, Jackman said that it appears that he will be playing small forward.

Nebraska Coach Moe Iba agrees.

"I would say he would be playing small forward," Iba said. "That's because of his ability to shoot from the floor and his mobility."

The benefits of having a taller person playing the

small forward position are many, 6-9 Jackman said. "If they put a big guy on me, I'll take him outside," he said. "If they put a small guy on me, I'll post up."

But Jackman said he will be ready if the chance to play guard arises.

"If he (Iba) said we needed a big guard my hand would be up volunteering," Jackman said.

Jackman's arrival at Nebraska marks the reunion of four of the seven high school seniors who, in 1981, gave Nebraskans notice of their basketball talent by placing fourth in a Las Vegas Tournament.

Besides Jackman, center Dave Hoppen and forwards, Mike Martz and James Moore were on the

squad.

Should the occasion arise that all four are on the court together wearing Nebraska uniforms, Jackman said they probably won't even notice.

"Maybe we would if the crowd gave us a big cheer," he said.

Jackman said the year wait will be put to good use as he plans to work on his weak spots.

"I'll be working on everything," he said. "There are so many things that I am bad at."

As the days slowly count down until his first game as a Husker, Jackman said he is just "glad to be home again."

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