

Ponce aims . . .

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"Every successful basketball team needs at least three good guards," Ponce said. "And I feel that all our guards can shoot well and play good defense. Maybe not with the intensity that Moe (Iba) wants yet, but the ability is there."

Ponce said that he enjoys playing in the backcourt with Williams who should be the other starting guard, because "he really motivates me when he gets after it on defense."

Last season, Ponce started 30 of NU's 32 games enroute to a 22-10 overall record and a trip to the semifinals of the National Invitational Tournament. He said the Oklahoma game in Lincoln and the entire NIT were highlights of that season.

"The feeling I felt in the NIT was just

great," Ponce said. "The way the team jelled together and the intensity that the fans showed in those four games made me feel what the game of basketball is all about."

Ponce, himself, always has been an intense player and when he transferred here from Northern Idaho Junior College in 1981, he was forced to make some adjustments because of it.

"I've had to change my game a little since I have been here," Ponce said, "since I'm a little short I like to run a lot. But I've learned to wait for things to happen and be patient. I will still key the break when I get the chance though."

In addition to keying the fast break, Ponce said his other strengths are getting the ball up and down the court, penetrating the lane, dishing the ball

off to the open man and playing defense.

Being more poised in critical situations and taking control of the game are two areas Ponce said he must improve this season.

"Last season I didn't know what to expect during games, but this season I know the teams and realize it will be tough so I can adjust to it," Ponce said. "I have a lot of confidence in myself."

Despite the confidence that Ponce has in himself, he said he is still his own worst critic.

"I simply want to be the best that I can be," Ponce said. "I never want to let myself be content with what I have

done, because I feel there is always room for improvement. I guess with that approach I will never be satisfied with myself."

For Ponce, the 1983-84 season is very special. "I get excited every time I think about it," he said.

Ponce said his optimism stems from the fact that, as a team, the Huskers are destined for greatness and Ponce would like nothing more than to end his career at Nebraska as a winner.

"I am hoping for big things from our team," Ponce said. "We have a very tough conference, but we have a lot of talent and I have confidence that we will be in a contender position."

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David Ponce

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Nebraska's Eric Williams (left) and Stan Cloudy apply pressure to Iowa State's Reynal Harris.

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