

Sports

Basketball coaches prepare for season

Women's coach Beck likes challenges

By Jeff Apel
Sports Editor

An automobile accident has influenced the career of Nebraska women's basketball coach Angela Beck.

Beck had just assumed her first coaching position at Southeast Missouri State in Cape Girardeau, Mo. when an automobile accident claimed the lives of two of the Indians' players.

During the same season, another Southeast Missouri State player was killed in an automobile accident, and a fourth player died the following year.

Beck said that while she had thoughts about giving up her college coaching career because of the personal impact that the tragedies had on her, she has instead tried to draw something positive from them.

The first two Indian players killed were buried in their Southeast Missouri State uniforms, so Beck said that she looks for that type of devotion from all of her players.

"I only recruit players who will give a year-round effort," she said. "Success is based on hard work, so it takes that type of a player to become successful."

Beck said that she hopes to make the Cornhusker women's basketball program successful so she is instituting a weight program to increase the size of the Husker players.

A study hall session will also be instituted into the daily routine of the Huskers, and two full-time assistant coaches have been hired to assist her.

Nebraska will also begin a more disciplined brand of basketball, and beginning next season a heavy emphasis will be placed on recruiting.

With all of these factors combined, Beck said that she is confident that she

will be able to turn the unstable women's basketball program at Nebraska into a national powerhouse.

"I know we can do good things here," Beck said. "I like the thought of having to take on a challenge because I know what I am doing."

During her two previous coaching positions at Southeast Missouri State and Bradley University in Peoria, Ill., Beck established winning traditions at both predominantly losing schools in three years.

The Indians went from a 9-15 record during Beck's first season of coaching in 1980-81 to a pair of 20-win seasons the following two years. Bradley compiled a 16-12 record last season after compiling a 9-18 mark two years before.

Although she admits that hard times will be awaiting her next season at Nebraska, Beck said that it will only be a matter of time before the Cornhuskers will be able to compete successfully with any team in the country.

"I see a great future ahead for the women's basketball program at this university," she said. "Everything that I want is here. Now all I need is the type of commitment that I'm looking for from the players."

Beck said that she is somewhat puzzled by the lack of success that previous women's basketball coaches at Nebraska have encountered.

Since its' formation in 1974, the Cornhuskers have won just over 50 percent of their games while suffering through four losing seasons. The Huskers never captured a Big Eight conference championship, and have never had a player earn All-American status.

Beck said that while she was pondering whether or not to leave a promising program at Bradley, she chose to look

past the misfortunes of the Nebraska women's basketball program.

Nebraska was a state-named college and the Husker football program had always brought stability to the entire Cornhusker athletic department, Beck said. The opportunity to become Nebraska's second women's basketball coach in four years was too good to pass up.

"I want to one day be known as one of the greatest coaches in women's college basketball ever," she said. "This will hopefully help me achieve that honor."

Beck said that she also chose to leave Bradley because she felt like Brave athletic officials were trying to use her job as a stepping stone.

When first hired at Bradley in 1983, Beck said that she was told by Brave officials that her job would be more than a way to climb the ladder of college coaching.

But after spending three years in the shadows of the highly successful Bradley men's basketball program, Beck said that she had seen enough of the Illinois-based campus.

"I left Bradley with some business unfinished," she said. "They are going to be successful (in the future), but I just felt that the situation was right for me to leave."

Beck said that her decision to leave Bradley was toughened by the fact that it meant she would have to be further away from her parents, who live in Decatur, Ill.

A family-oriented individual, Beck still calls her parents or any of her six brothers or sisters when she has a problem.

"We're very close," she said. "I guess they will just have to start getting used to wearing red."



Daily Nebraskan File Photo

Beck

Recruiting a priority for Nee

By Chuck Green
Senior Reporter

Nebraska men's basketball coach Danny Nee has found that the off-season can be more hectic than the regular season.

Since he was named coach at Nebraska last March, Nee's activities have included the hiring of staff members, recruiting players, scheduling summer basketball clinics for junior high and high school students, and establishing contacts with high school juniors for recruitment next season. He's also selling his home in Athens, Ohio, where he coached before coming to Nebraska, and looking for one in Lincoln.

"I've been working my ass off," Nee said. "It's almost like starting a new business. It's all like starting from scratch."

The transition from Ohio to Nebraska, Nee said, has been "fairly easy." He said he personally enjoys the state but his family hasn't had enough time to form an opinion. His wife, Janet, and their two children, Patrick, eight, and Nora, who is seven-months-old, just arrived in Nebraska Wednesday. Nee said he hopes to close a deal on a home in Lincoln sometime this week.

A native of Brooklyn, New York, Nee has a long basketball background. His high school career was spent at Power Memorial High School in Brooklyn, where he played with Lou Alcindor, now Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. After he graduated, he attended Marquette University in Milwaukee, where he played in 1964-65. He left Marquette to serve with the Marine Corps, after which he returned to school at St. Mary of the Plains in Dodge City, Kan. He graduated in 1971 with a Bachelor's degree in English and physical education.

His coaching career began as an assistant at Notre Dame in 1976. His last game for the Fighting Irish was an 87-84 overtime loss to Missouri in the second round of the 1980 Midwest Regional. The game was played in the

Bob Devaney Sports Center.

While at Notre Dame, Nee recruited and coached 10 players who are currently in or have played in the National Basketball Association.

After leaving Notre Dame, Nee took over a struggling program at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. In his first season in 1980-81, Nee led the Bobcats to a 7-20 record. After a slow start, Nee compiled a 107-67 record at Ohio and earned Mid-American Conference Coach of the Year honors twice in his six-year stay at Ohio.

'I've been working my ass off. It's almost like starting a new business. It's all like starting from scratch.'

—Nee

Nee said his main goal at this point is recruiting more players for the Cornhusker program.

"Obviously, replacing Dave Hoppen will be a big priority," Nee said. "Proposition 48 will be one big factor in recruiting, and right now we just need more bodies."

One body Nee is trying to get is Mike Pili, a 7-1 player from West Germany. Pili played high school basketball in Worthington, Ohio, then returned to West Germany. He is 19-years-old.

Another player that must be replaced is Deak Vance. Vance, a forward-center, played for the Huskers for the first-half of the last season as a reserve. He was declared academically ineligible during the second semester and has since left school. Bernard Day, a starter at forward last season, may also be in academic trouble, Nee said.

"He's taking classes this summer," Nee said, "and I think these classes will be crucial for him."

Nee said it's too early to make predictions about how good Nebraska will be next season, but added that he's impressed with the talent he has at his disposal.

"We've got some really good kids here and I'm excited about working with them," Nee said. "I'm impressed with the senior group (which includes Brian Carr, Day, Bill Jackman and Mike Martz). The whole team is really conscientious about off-season conditioning and improving their abilities."

A major part of Nee's program is the off-season conditioning he and his staff are putting the players through. The conditioning program includes running, weight-lifting and working out with the football team. The players began this program during the spring and restarted last Monday.

"The kids have responded very well to the program," Nee said. "They've responded well to everything so far. Their attitudes are excellent. They're all working hard to adjust to the new coaching staff, and that's important, because gaining a new coaching staff can be traumatic in that they were recruited and coached by a different bunch and then new people come in and do things a little differently. Right now, we're just trying to earn their respect."

Nee's coaching staff for next season includes Gary Barga, who coached nine years at Southeast Community College in Fairbury and for eight years at Hutchinson, Kan., Junior College. Lynn Mitchem, who coached last year at Purdue University, will also join Nee's staff. Mitchem played basketball at Butler University in Indianapolis, Ind., where he became their all-time leading scorer. He also spent 1984-85 playing basketball in Bahrain, a nation in the Persian Gulf.

Nee's staff will be rounded out by Arden Reid, a 1970 graduate of Ohio State University. Following his graduation, Reid coached the girls' basketball team at Lancaster, Ohio, High School for 16 years until he was hired by Nebraska.



Dave Bentz/Daily Nebraskan

Nee