

The PEG Board

by Peggy Speece

It takes a lot of swallowing to get down the lumps handed out by the Kansas University athletic department last week.

And for many, those lumps have nothing to do with sentimentality. Track coach Bill Easton, fired in a surprise move April 20, was not particularly loved by his opponents.

But the big bomb dropped by Jayhawk athletic director Wade Stinson has sent up clouds which confuse the picture and leave a bad taste.

Just why was Easton fired? The answer has been given variously—"for unwillingness to follow administrative and financial procedure" (Stinson); for "personal animosity" (Easton). Certainly the now-infamous issue involving the purchase of two plastic boxes for the pole vault was only the final incident. The boxes were ordered for the Kansas Relays, held only three days before Easton's ouster, so that pole vault records would be legal under NCAA rules.

Stinson did not understand the purchase and ordered them shipped back; Easton intercepted the order at the train depot and the boxes were in use at the 40th annual Relays.

Stinson was hired at KU a year ago. One of his primary jobs was to get the athletic department on more solid financial footing—a goal of all athletic directors. Easton says that Stinson was cutting back on the track program by \$3,000 to do it. Differences arose between the two when Easton felt Stinson was trying to de-emphasize the track program.

Kansas has long been regarded a track power in the Midwest and it was Bill Easton who built the KU track empire. In 18 years at Lawrence, Easton has won 11 of the last 16 Big Eight Indoor championships, 11 of the last 13 outdoor crowns and 16 of the last 18 cross-country titles.

Bill Eaton teaches a highly competitive brand of track. His athletes are known for giving the do-or-die effort—even to the point where other Big Eight schools have felt that winning might be too important to Kansas. But no one can deny Easton's success as a coach and with few exceptions, his athletes have the highest regard for him.

There may be more concrete reasons than those given thus far by Stinson for the firing, but the information available and the timing of the action are pretty hard to digest.

Sunday came the announcement that Bob Timmons, former KU assistant coach had been hired in place of Easton. Had the announcement come a week and a half earlier, Timmons still would have been the assistant coach. Not two weeks before the firing action, Timmons had been hired as head coach at Oregon State University.

Timmons best recommendation is that a year ago he was coach at Wichita East High School in Kansas. Jim Ryun, who set a national high school record in the mile at the Kansas Relays, is a senior at Wichita East. (Incidentally Ryun broke his own record a week after he set it . . . a blazing 4:02 clocking last Friday eclipsed his Kansas Relays time of 4:04.8.)

And there are other outstanding runners at Wichita East. More than likely, according to the word on the KU campus at the time of the Relays (before anyone dreamed that Easton would not be directing the 1966 Relays), these outstanding runners would have followed Timmons to OSU. Now reports are that Ryun, at least, is likely to be strolling the Lawrence campus next fall.

Impossible though it seems, the reins of KU track have been taken away from Bill Easton. The clouds are still rising from the storm the firing caused but probably time will obscure them until in later years no one will no longer care to know the whole story. But time will never obscure the coaching success of Bill Easton nor the glorious record he gave Kansas.

Daily Nebraskan

SPORTS

BOB SAMUELSON—Sports Editor

Baseball Today; NU vs. ISU

The Big Eight's pitching powers—third place Iowa State and first-place Nebraska—will meet up in an all-important three-game series Friday and Saturday.

They'll play a doubleheader Friday at 1:30 p.m. and a 1 p.m. single game, both on the NU Diamond.

Of their 58 innings pitched, Cyclone throwers have relinquished only 12 earned runs, 29 altogether on the way to a 5-3 record in the Big Eight.

Tom Van Galder (2-1) leads that group with a 0.89 ERA and has struck out 24. Scott Morton (2-1) in his 20 innings and has also wiffed 24. Bob Zeigler has a 2.77 earned run average in his two games.

Van Galder and Morton threw complete games in Iowa State's doubleheader sweep last weekend. Rain cancelled the single game and Zeigler's bid.

It'll be up to Stan Bahnsen, Bob Hergenrader and Bob Stickels to keep the Huskers on top. With a 5-2 record, they're only 1/2 game up on the Cyclones.

NU's pitching hasn't been anything to shirk off. During league play, the staff's earned run average is 2.39 with 47 strikeouts. Hergenrader heads the starters with a 2.23 ERA and has given up only five walks in three appearances.

He was coasting splendidly last Friday for six innings, but then two K-State straight

homers called for his relief. NU won, 3-2, with a two-run seventh inning.

Bahnsen (2-1) heads the list in strikeouts with 26 and has a 2.70 earned run average. He got some offensive help in his 10-5 victory over the Wildcats.

Stickels (0-1) has pitched only one conference inning—against Colorado, striking out two and not letting a man on first. He was scheduled to go against K-State Saturday but rain interfered. The soph's loss was to Morningside.

While the Huskers will be up against the league's strongest pitching, they certainly could use .308 hitter Gary Tunison. But he's a questionable performer after a severe muscle pull in his ankle during the Kansas State series. Jim Smith is his likely replacement in left field.

Overall Nebraska is 5-4 and two victories this weekend would match last year's Big Eight total of seven. After the ISU series, nine games remain.

NU Track Team Goes To Colorado

Nebraska's track team will put its undefeated dual and triangular record on the line against Colorado in Boulder Saturday.

The Huskers went through three indoor meets with victories and has won its only outdoor encounter over Houston and Wisconsin just before the Drake Relays.

The spring corps was depleted somewhat at Drake when Lynn Headley pulled a muscle. He probably won't run Saturday, but is expected back in plenty of time for Missouri the following week in Lincoln and the Big Eight Championships.

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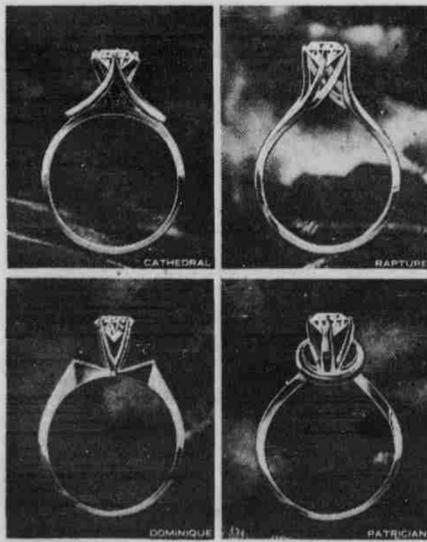
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