

sports

Professional football scouts glory in Big Eight talent

By Buck Mahoney

The Big Eight Conference must seem like heaven to a talent scout for a professional football team.

Jack Butlar, an office manager and part-time talent scout for Blesto VIII, a scouting firm, said the Big Eight has more people playing pro football today than any other conference in the country.

"The Big Eight has the best football you'll find anywhere in the country," Butlar said. "Week in and week out they play the toughest football anywhere."

All eight teams in the conference have athletes that are potential pros, according to Butlar. He said the competition in the Big Eight makes everyone better and the scouts know that athletes on the poorer teams in the conference have played against some of the best athletes in the country.

Athletes on other teams have not seen the caliber of competition found in the Big Eight, he said.

Top talent

Butlar said Nebraska and Oklahoma are the top teams in the conference, so they naturally have most of the best talent.

"There at Nebraska, you've got Rick Berns at running back, George Andrews at end or linebacker, whatever you want to call him, and you've got Kelvin Clark, Barney Cotton, Steve Lindquist, Randy Poeschl, Jeff Lee, Tom Sorley, Frank Lockett and Jeff Hansen," Butlar said.

Butlar would not say what he thought of the individual athletes or their strengths or weaknesses. He also would not say if he thought any of them would be drafted in the top rounds.

Lee not on roster

The inclusion of Jeff Lee on the Nebraska list is interesting. Lee, a former

NCAA high hurdle champion in indoor track was a split end for the Huskers last season, but he was not on the roster this year.

Butlar would not say what the scouting report on Lee is, but he did say Lee was looked at closely.

Blesto VIII scouts for nine teams in the National Football League and Butlar said they employ three levels of scouts.

Area scouts are the lowest level in the company. They are responsible for every school in the area where they live. When they find a potential player, they report to the company and the athlete is scouted by a regional scout.

The regional scouts report on the athletes the area scouts suggested, and then if the athlete is still considered a potential player, he is scouted for the last time by the national scouts.

Computer programmed

All information gathered by scouts is

stored in a computer for later reference by the pro teams.

Determining what makes a good athlete is a complicated process, according to Butlar.

"Speed, agility, balance and body control are all very important," he said. "We mathematically grade the athletes performance in games. We also watch them at practice and look at films."

Size also is an important factor. Butlar said that the athletes are indexed by height, weight and speed.

"We want an offensive guard to be 6-foot-3 or 6-foot-4, and run the 40 in 4.7," he said. "We want an offensive tackle to be 6-foot-5 or 6-foot-6, but we'll take one 10 feet tall if we can get him."

After an athlete is determined to have potential, he is watched by the scouts for the remainder of his college career, Butlar said, so most athletes have been studied for about four years.

Cowboys' team filled with new faces but feeling good

Editor's note: This is the fourth in a series of articles previewing Big Eight Conference basketball outlooks this season.

No one knows for sure, but it's possible that Oklahoma State basketball coach Jim Killingsworth was giving lessons on how to shave, instead of jump shot drills at the Cowboys opening practice this year.

The roster for this year's Cowboy team shows youth and inexperience down the line, with one senior, three juniors, three sophomores and seven freshmen listed.

Killingsworth, in his second year as head coach at Oklahoma State, has only three lettermen with playing experience back from last season's 10-16 team that finished seventh in the Big Eight Conference.

Lost front line

The Cowboys should be strong at the guard positions but they lost five front line players to graduation.

"Potentially we're better off than a year ago," Killingsworth said, "but everyone knows we're drastically short on experience. We had a team last year we didn't recruit and had already established its style and type of play."

"It made it hard to implement what we wanted. Physically we are about the same but potentially we have more going for us."

Senior guard Mark Tucker was the second leading scorer on last year's team with a 15.4 average. He scored over 400 points last year and hit for 30 points in two of the Cowboys' last three games. He scored 15, 15, 1, and 31 against Nebraska in four games last season.

Sophomore stars

Sophomore guard Randy Wright started the last 14 games of the season a year ago and led the team in assists.

Sophomore guard Reggie Barnett is the third letterman at guard Killingsworth may rely on this year.

Oklahoma State's roster includes four other guards including junior college transfer Ed Odom, who averaged 26.4 points per game at Claremore Junior College last year; freshman Matt Clark, who averaged 24.5 points per game his senior year in high school; sophomore Dickey Nutt and walk-on Tim Sibley.

Junior college transfers Don Youman and Jon Moorhead show the most potential at forward, according to Killingsworth.

"Some people aren't great shooters but they score a lot," he said. "Then, there are those who are great shooters but don't score much. These two young men can score."

Defense special list

Youman is a left-hander who averaged 19.5 points per game at Bakersfield Junior College last season. Moorhead comes from Western Texas Junior College where his specialty was defense, according to Killingsworth.

The other possibilities at forward are 6-foot-6 freshman Mark Connolly and Craig Stunkel.

The height is there at center but age again seems to be a problem. The Cowboys' three centers are all 18-year-old freshmen.

Brad Currelly, 7-foot, 215 pounds from New Port Riley Florida, is the only one of the three committed to playing center at the moment.

Brad Livingstone at 6-foot-9 possesses a fine shooting touch, and 6-foot-9 Jimmy Reason has a long-range scoring ability.

Killingsworth does not seriously expect his team to challenge for the Big Eight title, but he remains optimistic.

"We'll probably lose a few early games we shouldn't because of our lack of experience. But, I'm going to be very disappointed if by mid-season or slightly later we don't turn into a good team."

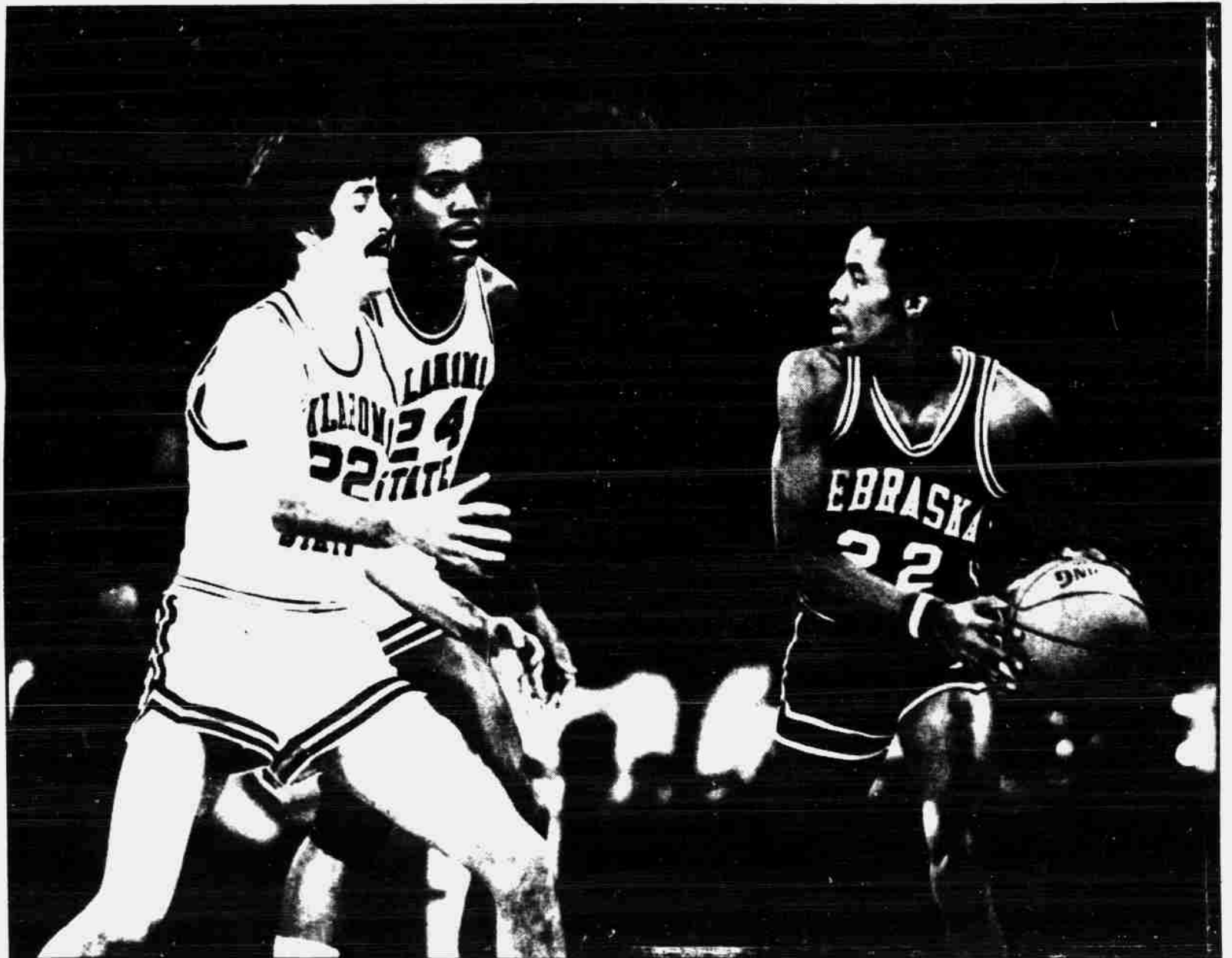


Photo by Ted Kirk

Wrestlers regroup for ISU match

By Ed McClymont

The Nebraska wrestling team, after just facing about as tough a one-two punch as there is in the nation, must knock heads with another national power this Saturday.

Coming off resounding losses to Oklahoma and Oklahoma State, the Huskers will try to regroup against the Cyclones of Iowa State.

"We're coming into this meet with an open mind," coach Bob Fehrs said. "We were kind of star struck and tensed up against Oklahoma and Oklahoma State because of our inexperience."

UNL is starting at least four and possibly five freshmen on the varsity squad.

The team has been trimmed down to 21 from 26 due to injuries. According to Fehrs, the injuries were not to key personnel, but the individuals who are hurt would have provided some depth. And it is depth where the Huskers are hurting the most.

Push starters

"We don't have the backup people we need to push the starters a little harder," Fehrs said.

Presently there are three wrestlers who Fehrs rates as the best on the squad. Agron Vasha, a sophomore, wrestled well on the Oklahoma trip, winning at OU and was leading at OSU 4-1 before losing by a pin. Fehrs says Vasha could be a top performer throughout the year.

Two other individuals who have impressed Fehrs are freshmen Rich Lenker and Al Freeman.

"Lenker has been an excellent performer so far, and he has a lot of potential," Fehrs said. "And Freeman has had his ups and downs, but has done an outstanding job."

Freeman, an Iowa native, felt the Oklahoma trip was a good experience for the squad, even though the outcome of the matches were really decided before the weekend started.

Schedule hard

"We knew we were probably going to get beat, and because of it we wrestled really bad against Oklahoma, but we wrestled better against OSU," Freeman said.

Some people might feel an early season schedule such as Nebraska's might be hard on a team, but Freeman said he enjoys it.

"It's the only way to get better," Freeman said. "It takes a lot of pride, but I think we'll get better. I don't see why we can't beat everyone after Iowa State."

Fehrs feels the team's improvement throughout the rest of the year hinges on two factors.

"If we don't have the injuries like we have so far, and we get the necessary experience, I think we can turn things around and have a winning season," he said.

"We're going to have to keep a positive attitude for the first five weeks, and use this period as a barometer of what we can do at the end of the year," Fehrs said.

The Iowa State dual begins with a junior varsity match at 6 p.m. and the varsity match will follow at 7:30 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.