

Sports

Huskers, Wildcats to clash in Manhattan tonight

By Kevin Warneke

The Nebraska men's basketball team will be out to secure their sixth victory of the conference race when they invade Kansas State territory tonight.

Nebraska had no difficulties with the Wildcats in their initial matchup at Lincoln earlier in the season. Sparked by Dave Hoppen's 27 points, the Huskers cruised to a 59-43 victory.

But Nebraska Coach Moe Iba said playing in Manhattan will be a different story.

"I think they (Kansas State) have a hard

time playing on the road," Iba said. "When I look at films of when they've played at Manhattan and then on the road, they look like two different teams."

Iba said Kansas State defeated Iowa State at home 81-55 but then lost 59-40 on the road.

Kansas State, which has lost four straight games, has seen its lineup go through a juggling act. On the bench in recent games has been the Wildcats' leading scorer and rebounder center Les Craft.

Craft, who averages 10.2 points a game, and Eddie Elder, who pulls down an average of 5.3 rebounds a game, have been

regulated to reserve duty in the past games.

This lineup change is not a weakness that Nebraska can take advantage of, Iba said.

"I don't think it's a weakness," Iba said. "It's a situation where he (Jack Hartman) has to do what he can to get his team to play."

Although Kansas State is sixth in the Big Eight with a 3-5 conference record, Iba said that they are a good ballclub, especially at home.

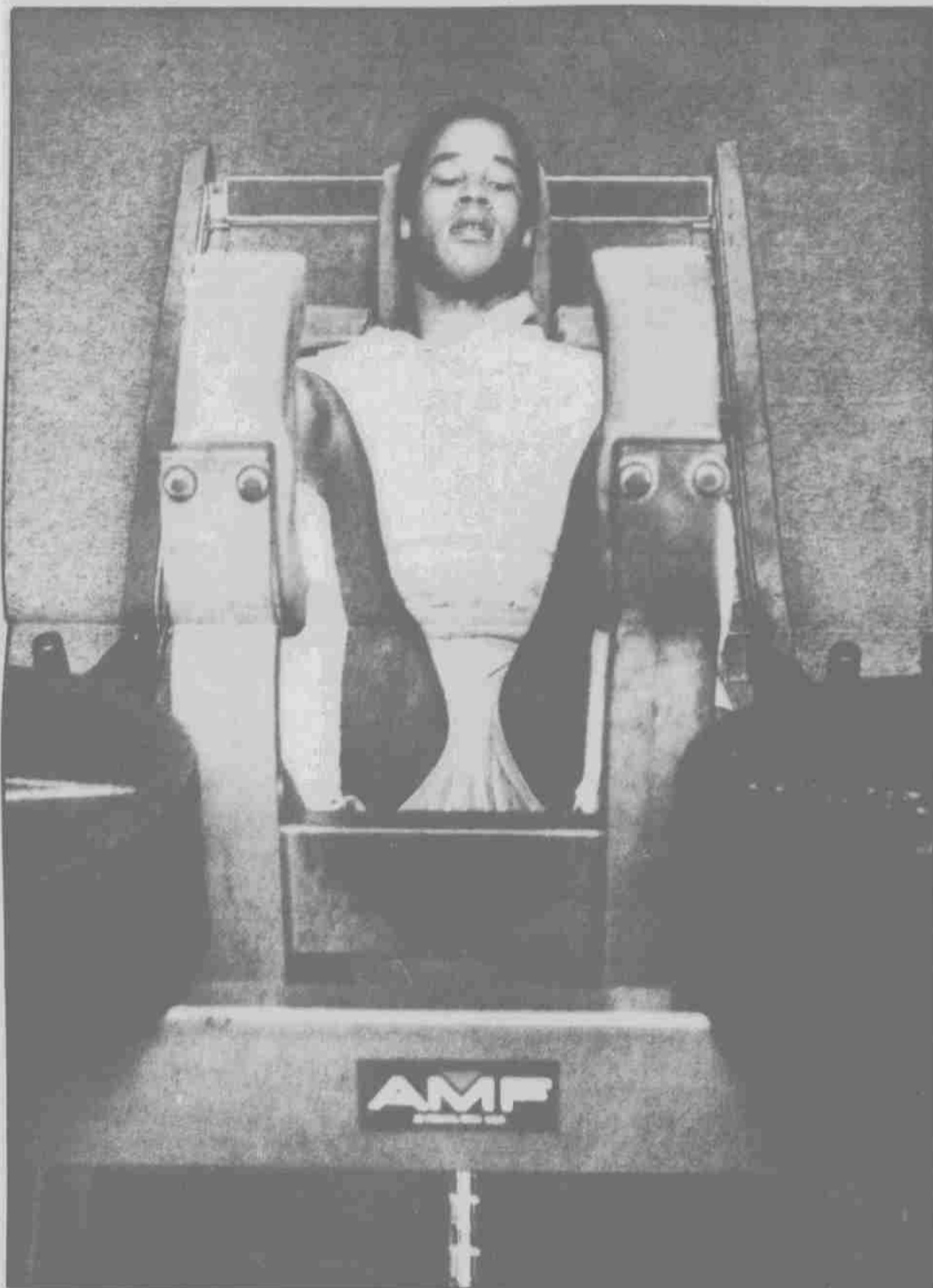
"Kansas State is a very well organized team," he said. "They play very well offensively and defensively."

"It's just as hard to play Kansas State in Manhattan as it is to play Oklahoma State in Stillwater."

Iba said there will be no lineup changes for Nebraska against Kansas State. This means that forwards Claude Renfro and Stan Cloudy, guards David Ponce and Greg Downing and center Dave Hoppen will get the starting nod.

Hoppen is the one Kansas State will need to control. Kansas State Coach Jack Hartman said.

"They have an outstanding big freshman in Dave Hoppen," Hartman said. "We'll be giving away some size to him."



Staff photo by Craig Andresen

Jon Kelley works out in the Lincoln Southeast weightroom Tuesday. Kelley is one of only two running backs offered scholarships by Nebraska.

Kelley welcomes Husker challenge: continues 'class' recruiting tradition

By Randy Wymore

Nebraska football coach Tom Osborne is famous for a lot of things, one of which is the brand of people he recruits. Always clean-cut boys next door, Osborne continually gets the cream of the crop.

Lincoln Southeast High School senior Jon Kelley is no exception.

Kelley, a 6-2, 205-pound running back joined Maryland's Novell Jackson as the only running backs to receive Cornhusker scholarship offers.

Southeast Coach Chuck Mizerski was a coach in St. Louis before coming to Lincoln four years ago. Mizerski says that Kelley is an original talent.

"I coached in the St. Louis area for seven years," he said. "And Jon is as good a back as I've ever seen in St. Louis."

Kelley was recruited by Oklahoma, Wyoming, Iowa State and Army. But even with a West Point appointment, there was no doubt for Kelley as to where he belonged. He only made one visit—and that was to Nebraska. He said he didn't feel it was fair to "play around" and visit the others without a sincere intention of going there.

"I wanted to go here (Nebraska) since I was pretty small," he said. "So it wasn't that big of a decision."

Outside of the opportunity to go to West Point, which Kelley considered "an honor," Iowa State did the most talking.

"They (Iowa State) talked about my being able to start there sooner than I would here," he said. "But I liked Nebraska's program so much and the coaching staff that I didn't think that was enough to make me want to go there."

Kelley cited the Huskers' program, tradition and "great weight program" as other deciding factors in his move to put his name on the national letter of intent.

The fact that he is one of only two running backs that were offered Nebraska

scholarships could make a lot of recruits sit back and forget about any possible competition from other newcomers. Not Kelley.

"At the beginning of the year, he (Osborne) told me that he'd probably only recruit two or three running backs," he said. "He kept his word on that and that's good and everything, but there's still going to be a lot of walkons from out of town so that doesn't mean we'll be the only two shooting for that spot."

Rest assured that a little extra competition doesn't scare Kelley away. He looks forward to the challenge.

"I like competition, so that will be all right with me."

During the press conference to announce those who had accepted Nebraska scholarships on Feb. 9, Osborne said that Nebraska athletes were at a disadvantage because Nebraska isn't close to metropolitan areas. Osborne went on to say that if Kelley would have come from a place like Dallas, he would have been approached by 30 to 40 schools. Mizerski agrees with this assessment. Kelley passes it off.

"That's nice of Coach Osborne to say and everything," he said. "But I guess I'll never really know if that's true."

Kelley added that even if he had come from someplace other than Lincoln, or Nebraska for that matter, and the Huskers offered him a scholarship, he still would have put his name on the line.

With a list of high school honors that includes being named to the Lincoln Journal-Star's All-State, Super-State and All-City teams, the High School Coaches Association All-American team and rushing for just under 1,000 yards, Kelley carries a high market value.

He also carries something much more valuable on the Cornhusker market. Class.

Thacker: Improvement better than winning

By Jack Denker

Angela Thacker just seems to keep winning, even though it isn't her uppermost priority.

Throughout Thacker's high school and UNL track career, she has been victorious in virtually everything she has set out to do. But by Thacker's standards, steady improvement takes precedence over winning.

"The best part of track is after you finish the race," she said. "I just like the self-satisfaction of running better times and possibly winning."

This doesn't mean that Thacker, a freshman sprinter and long jumper for the Huskers, doesn't take great pride in achieving victory, it's just that for her, winning isn't everything.

"I want to win the long jump at the Big Eight meet," Thacker said, "but as long as my times keep coming down in the other events, that would be OK, too."

All this may seem somewhat unusual coming from an 18-year-old woman, who was named Female Athlete of the Meet at the Husker Invitational Saturday, where she won the long jump, the 300-yard dash and placed second in the 60-yard dash.

"That meet will probably stand out as my first big college track meet, because it was so competitive, and I did well in it," she said.

As evidence of her success at her events at the Invitational, Thacker came home with two watches, a clock radio and a duffel bag, rewards for a high finish.

Thacker said the awards add to the competition but, "I don't get nervous before a race knowing that if I lose I won't get a watch," she said.

In addition to all those accomplishments, she also broke a Bob Devaney Sports Center and school record with a 21-2½ long jump two weeks ago.

"She is a tremendous athlete," Nebraska women's Coach Gary Pepin has said of Thacker on various occasions.

Thacker grew up in St. Louis. At Roosevelt High School, there she was a state champion in the 200-, 300- and 400-meter dashes her junior year, plus the 100 and 200 her senior year. She also placed second in the long jump both of those seasons, earning national recognition in 1981 as one of the top freshman recruits in the nation.

Consequently, she was heavily recruited her senior year by Nebraska, Houston, Arizona State, Tennessee State, Georgia and New Mexico.

Initially she said she didn't plan on going to Nebraska. Instead, she was all set to go to Arizona State. But when the Huskers won the indoor National Championship last year, Thacker said she began considering going to UNL. She said she didn't decide to enroll at Nebraska until a telephone conversation with Coach Pepin that convinced her to come.

Thacker said she is extremely pleased with that decision because she is now a member of a very talented team and is

learning a lot about the sport from the Husker coaching staff.

"He's (Pepin) a great person and a great coach because he knows what he is doing," Thacker said. "Sometimes our practices are really hard, but you know that's good for you. You really look up to him because he's one good coach."

Learning the proper running techniques was instrumental for the success of her first indoor season, she said. The long jump and 300 are her favorite indoor events, while the 200 is her favorite outdoor event, she said.

"It's my potential and the right coaching that have helped me peak in track," Thacker said.

Despite the fact that setting long range goals is not one of her practices, Thacker did admit that the 1984 Olympics are always in the back of her mind.

"But right now I'm just concentrating on getting my times down and having good indoor and outdoor seasons," she said.