

Sports

New job lets Pool concentrate on one sport

By Jeff Apel
Staff Reporter

The Nebraska baseball program played a key role in helping Chuck Pool to get a new job as assistant director of public relations for the Houston Astros.

John Sanders, Nebraska baseball coach, regularly schedules a four-game baseball series with the Wichita State Wheatshockers each baseball season.

That's how Pool, Nebraska sports information assistant, first met Rob Matwick.

"Rob (Matwick) had worked in the sports information department at Wichita State for two years, but I didn't meet him until we went down there last year," Pool said. "I don't think either one of us ever thought in our wildest dreams, though, that we would both end up in Houston."

As things turned out, Matwick was hired by new Astro General Manager Dick Wagner as director of public relations for the Astros.

Wagner, with some influence from Matwick, then hired Pool as the assistant director.

"Having Rob (Matwick) get the job at Houston definitely gave me the inside track," Pool said. "We were already used to depending on each other professionally, so we had passed each others audits."

Pool's new position not only requires him to handle both the media and public relations as he did at Nebraska, but also to handle some of the advertising done by the Astros.

With the sports market in Texas, Pool said, advertising is a very critical part of the Astro's organization.

"The people of Texas have several different teams in several different sports so it's important that Houston maintains good relations with their fans," he said. "The market isn't as easily receptive because there is a lot of divided loyalties."



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—NU Sports Information Director Don Bryant

Mark Davis/
Daily Nebraskan

Pool's new position also will allow him to travel about 40 percent of the time with the Astros while Matwick will handle the remaining 60 percent.

He also will have the benefit of working a 40-hour work week for three months of the year during the off season.

"Mr. (Dick) Wagner didn't want either Rob (Matwick) or I handling all of the public relations on the road because there is always a great danger of burnout," Pool said. "As far as my hours go, I won't be working any 100-hour work weeks like I was working here, but I'll still be working quite a bit during the baseball season because I

have to be at the Astrodome in the morning and can't leave until after the game at night on nightgame days."

Pool said one of the main factors that persuaded him to accept the job with the Astros was that he would only have to deal with baseball.

At Nebraska, Pool was in charge of handling all media relations for the men's basketball, baseball and gymnastics teams and also served as an assistant public relations director for all other men's sports.

Although he said he would miss dealing with some of the programs, Pool said he is looking forward to con-

centrating on one sport at Houston.

"I'll miss all of the athletes at Nebraska, sure, because I have gotten to become really good friends with quite a few of them," he said. "In the past, though, I have always had good ideas, which I thought about doing but just didn't have time. Hopefully, since I will only be dealing with baseball, I'll now have time to develop and actually carry out those ideas."

Another factor that influenced his decision, he said, was that several of his relatives live in Louisiana and he has several close friends who live in Houston.

"It's going to be kind of hard to leave

since I have been here since 1979," Pool said. "I'll be moving closer to my relatives, though, and my friends in Houston are going to make the adjustment easier."

Sports Information Director Don Bryant, who has served as Pool's supervisor for the last six years, said losing an individual with Pool's experience will be difficult.

"Chuck has developed into a very fine sports information person so we are definitely going to miss him," Bryant said. "We think he has got a great opportunity for advancement, though, and wish him nothing except the best of luck."

'Impact' players rare

Several rookies making presence felt in NBA

At this time next year it's very likely that Nebraska basketball player Dave Hoppen will be in the lineup of a professional team in the National Basketball Association. He'll be one of about 30 new players in the league and might make a significant impact on his team.

Impact seems to be a major word in sports vocabulary these days. Coaches and general managers in all the professional sports talk about the "Impact Players" in the game. Dan Mario is an "Impact Player." So are Eric Dickerson and Walter Payton. William Perry has become a recent addition to the Impact Club.



Bob
Asmussen

In pro basketball the impact players are many: Magic Johnson, Kareem Abdul Jabbar, Larry Bird and Moses Malone are just a few of the impact players. Not just start, but players that actually can make or break a season or many seasons for a team.

At the opening of this the 40th NBA season, Patrick Ewing of the New York Knicks joins the club. The Knicks, who have injury problems with Bernard King and Bill Cartwright, have gone winless in five games despite the presence of Ewing. Not that the 6-11 former Georgetown player hasn't made an impact on the Knicks. He is without a doubt the one bright spot for the Knicks in the early part of the season.

Of this year's rookie crop, only Ewing was projected as an immediate impact player. Other rookies were projected as starters or even stars, but none were given the initial acclaim that Ewing got.

But after only a few games in the NBA, a few possible rookie impact players have surfaced.

Maybe the most surprising and thrilling of the potentials is the Manute Bol of the Washington Bullets. Bol, a Dinka tribesman from Sudan, has added much-needed weight to his 7-7 frame and

looks to have the potential for greatness.

In the Bullets 88-73 loss to Boston Saturday night, Bol played 20 minutes. He didn't score a single point in those 20 minutes, yet his impact was significant. He blocked five shots during the game and pulled down eight rebounds. Figuring that he would block a shot every four minutes, he would have blocked 12 had he played the whole 48 minutes. In the words of one NBA coach, Bol's potential is "frightening."

Bol is a rail, no one questions that. If he stood behind a football goalpost, he'd be tough to see. But, on a diet of pizza, pizza and more pizza, Bol has added weight. He no longer needs suspenders to hold up his jockstrap, and that means he's making progress. Stay tuned to the sports page, Bol could end up being the greatest defensive player ever.

One team that looked to have a shot at ending up with a rookie impact player was the Dallas Mavericks. The Mavs had three first-round picks in last June's draft and looked like they had a shot at obtaining the dominating center they so desperately need to become a title contender.

But instead of getting Ewing or Benoit Benjamin or even Bol, the Mavs got three stiff. With their first pick in the first round, Dallas took Washington's Detlef Schrempf, a player who only adds to the myth that European players are too mechanical to play in the NBA. The folks at Washington liked to call Schrempf "Herr Dr. J." The Dallas Maverick fans have a better name for him — "Herr Wasted Draft Choice."

But if the Mav fans thought they got a raw deal with Schrempf, what must they think about the selection of Indiana's Uwe Blab and St. John's Bill Wennington. In a game Saturday night with the Sacramento Kings, Blab and Wennington sat on the bench and watched as Wallace Bryant and Kurt Nimphius took turns pretending to be Dallas' center. While having Blab, Wennington and Schrempf gives the Mavs a nice international flavor (Blab and Schrempf are from Germany and Wennington is from Canada) it doesn't give them the one thing the fickle Mavs' fans will demand pretty quickly — an NBA title.

Several other rookies have the potential to be solid NBA performers, if not impact players. Sacramento's first pick, Joe Kleine of Arkansas,

seems to be a player capable of helping the Kings to the playoffs.

In Saturday's game with Dallas, Kleine got off to a horrible start and had only two points at half. But in the third quarter, Kleine started playing the way he did at Arkansas. In one two-minute stretch, Kleine scored 10 points to help the Kings build a 15-point lead. Kleine brings to the Kings something they desperately need, enthusiasm.

Kleine still thinks he's in college and that's a good thing. After the Dallas game, Kleine was talking about how his team should be 3-1 instead of 1-3. His griping sounded like that of a player who thought he had only 30 games and the 1-3 start might hurt his team's chances of getting into the NCAA tournament. Kleine brings to the Kings the same sort of infectious enthusiasm that Magic Johnson brought to the Los Angeles Lakers a few years back in leading them to the NBA title.

Can Kleine keep up the spirit for an 82-game schedule? With most players that would be a good question, but for Kleine it is a ridiculous one. Anyone that saw Kleine play in college knows he has the extra-competitive nature that could lead him to NBA stardom. Kleine looks like a good bet to be the next Jeff Ruland, a player with soft touch who doesn't mind muscling his opponents or throwing a few elbows and body blocks.

Some players to watch are Terry Porter of Portland and Alfredrick Hughes of San Antonio.

Nebraska basketball fans might remember Porter. He played for Wisconsin-Stevens Point last season, a team that gave Nebraska fits before losing. Porter doesn't have the polish of a major-college player, but he is a great defensive player and has an NBA type-shot. He is in a system at Portland that will allow him to gradually work into his type of game, rather than being thrust into a starting position right away. Porter could be an all-star in a couple of seasons.

When San Antonio selected Hughes in the first round, many NBA "experts" couldn't believe it. Peter Gammons of the Boston Globe said it was the "worst pick in the history of the NBA draft." But Hughes played well in summer leagues and the experts started eating their words.

Hughes is an outstanding offensive player who must have learned to play defense since he left Loyola of Chicago last spring.

Probably the most curious newcomer to the league this season besides Bol is Atlanta's Spud Webb. Webb is listed at 5-7 but is closer to 5-5. But Webb makes up for his lack of size with unbelievable quickness and jumping ability. He can dunk a basketball easily and his slams can really get a crowd going. While his questionable jump shot makes him a liability sometimes, he is well worth a spot on the roster if for no other reason than the excitement he brings to the game. Here's betting that Webb will be with the Hawks much longer than first round pick Jon (I-can't-believe-I-got-picked-this-high) Konack of Southern Methodist.

Here's a look at what the all-rookie team might be at the end of the season.

Center — Patrick Ewing. Are you kidding?
Forward — Wayman Tisdale — The Pacers wanted Ewing but Tisdale isn't a bad second pick.

Forward — Xavier McDaniel — Seattle — McDaniel will take the heat off of Jack Sikma and give the falling Sonics scoring and rebounding punch.

Guard — Porter — Portland — If Portland can give him the time to develop.

Guard — Chris Mullen — Golden State — if he signs.

Guard — Webb — Atlanta — if Mullen doesn't sign.

Now, how about the all-rookie stiff team.
Center — Blab and Wennington — They go as a pair.

Forward — Charles Oakley — Chicago — former Virginia Union player doesn't have the refined game he needs to play in the NBA.

Forward — Schrempf — Herr Dr. J is Herr Dr. Bad.

Guard — Sam Vincent — Boston — This won't be his fault, it will be Coach K.C. Jones'. Any coach that would play Danny Ainge and Jerry Sichting in front of the talented Vincent has some severe mental problems.

Guard — Joe Dumars — Detroit — Another in the long line of Detroit gunners who couldn't play defense if his life hung in the balance.