

Sports

Nee is out; coach search continues

By Bob Asmussen
Sports Editor

Nebraska Athletic Director Bob Devaney said Tuesday he has talked to three coaches about the NU's basketball coaching job left open by Moe Iba's resignation.

One of the three, Ohio University coach Danny Nee, has withdrawn his name from consideration.

Devaney said he also has talked to Jacksonville, coach Bob Wenzel and Illinois State coach Bob Donewald. Jacksonville qualified for the NCAA tournament this season. Illinois State was 15-14.

Devaney said because basketball recruits must sign by April 9, Nebraska must hire a coach quickly.

"We've got to hurry on it," Devaney

said. "I'm going to have to work at it."

Devaney said he is trying to reach other coaches about the Nebraska job. One of these is Cleveland State coach Kevin Mackey. The Vikings have become the Cinderella of this year's NCAA tournament, advancing to the final 16.

"The guy is very personable," Devaney said of Mackey.

Cleveland State has knocked off Indiana and St. Joseph's to reach the regional semifinal. Cleveland State will meet Navy, another Cinderella, in a regional semifinal game Friday in East Rutherford, N.J.

Devaney said Nebraska plans to bring in three or four candidates soon and have them meet himself, Chancellor Martin Massengale and one or two of the NU regents.

One thing that Devaney said will

hurt Nebraska's chances of landing a top coach: former coach Moe Iba was under pressure to leave despite an NCAA invitation and a 20-win season.

"We want a winning program," Devaney said. But he questioned what Nebraska basketball fans expect.

Devaney said he thinks some people expect Nebraska to hire a coach with a national reputation, such as Bobby Knight of Indiana or Eddie Sutton of Kentucky.

"It's not that easy," Devaney said. "Those people have jobs where basketball is king."

Devaney said it is unlikely that the new basketball coach will make more of a salary than Nebraska football coach Tom Osborne. Football produces

revenue that supports most of the rest of the athletic program, he said.

Nebraska assistant coach Tom Baack's name has been mentioned as a successor to Iba. Devaney said it would be hard to promote Baack to the coaching job.

"It's one thing to promote a coach like Tom Osborne, where the program is successful," Devaney said. "It's another thing to promote a coach from a program under fire."

Devaney said he wants to meet the returning basketball players and get their input on a successor.

"I will talk with them and listen to what they have to say," Devaney said.

Devaney said an early practice violation by the Nebraska coaching staff has hung over the staff this season.

"I was not happy with that early practice incident," Devaney said. "Actually, the NCAA doesn't seem to jump on anybody for doing it."

Devaney said that one incident put the rest of Iba's career at Nebraska in the background.

"Moe had never tried to buy a player," Devaney said. "He had done things right straight down the middle of the road as far as recruiting."

"It seemed that (the early practice) played a more important part in his career here than any other of the good things he has done."

Devaney said Nebraska's search for a new coach won't be hurt any because Iba resigned so late in the season.

"Moe didn't hurt the progress at all," Devaney said. "This didn't slow us down."



Mark Davis/Daily Nebraskan

Iowa State's Jeff Hornacek goes up for a shot earlier in the season against Nebraska. The Cyclones have reached the final 16 teams in the NCAA tournament.

Top seed Kansas an NCAA favorite

By the Associated Press

Jud Heathcote says he can't find a weakness on the Kansas team that awaits his Michigan State Spartans in the semifinals of the NCAA Midwest Regional.

"They're a great running team with the size to work inside and great perimeter shooters to work from the outside," Heathcote said Monday in a telephone news conference with the four head coaches of Midwest semifinalists.

Michigan State's date with the Jayhawks — the Midwest Regional's top seed — is at 11:10 p.m. Friday. The first semifinal at 8:37 p.m. in Kansas City's Kemper Arena matches Jim Valvano's North Carolina State Wolfpack against Johnny Orr's Iowa State Cyclones, who lost by two points to Kansas in the finals of the Big Eight Tournament in Kemper March 9.

Heathcote said Kansas' versatile lineup is keeping his entire staff awake at night.

"We're always trying to figure out what the other club cannot do, and adjust our game plan accordingly," he said. "Kansas is a great running team, but they also have great size. They can beat you so many different ways."

Valvano and Orr readily agreed that the Jayhawks, ranked No. 2 behind Duke in the Associated Press Top Twenty, are the team to beat in the Midwest.

They'll have something besides talent going for them as well. Kemper is a familiar facility close to home in a city that seethes with Kansas fans. It sits just 40 miles east of the Kansas campus in Lawrence, and the Jayhawks have played four games in Kemper already this year.

"Let's face it, we're not exactly playing in friendly territory," Valvano said. "I don't think Georgia Tech should be playing a (Southeast) Regional game for the Final Four in Atlanta. And I don't think we should be playing Iowa State and Kansas right there (in Kansas City)," he said. "But that's the way it falls."

The Wolfpack lost to the Jayhawks in North Carolina earlier in the season.

"We played them early in Greensboro and hung with them for a half," Valvano said. "We're a much better team than we were then, but so are they. They should be the favorite right now."

"I absolutely agree," said Orr, whose Cyclones were 1-2 against the Jayhawks this year in Big Eight competition. The Cyclones lost big in Lawrence but beat Kansas by three points on their home court in Ames, Iowa.

"I congratulate Larry and his team on the job they've done," Orr said. "For the Big Eight to have two teams in the final 16 of the NCAA Tournament is great. I would certainly say the Jayhawks are the favorite. But trying to pick a favorite is not a good thing in these tournaments. You've seen the upsets and what can happen. It's hard to say one team's a favorite."

Brown couldn't agree more.

"Everybody in the tournament is now so close to reaching the goal they've set from the first day of practice, everybody is going to be under the same kind of pressure," the Kansas coach said. "We're just going to take it one game at a time. Being the No. 1 seed is fine, but it's not going to have any affect on North Carolina State, Iowa State or Michigan State and I don't think it will have any affect on us."

NU defeated by Aztecs in Fresno

From Staff Reports

The Nebraska baseball team lost 3-2 Monday to San Diego State in the Best of West Classic in Fresno, Calif.

Nebraska's Phil Harrison took the loss, giving up seven hits, five walks and striking out five Aztec batters.

Nebraska scored a run in the first inning. Larry Mims got on with an error and then stole second base. Mims advanced to third base on an error then scored on a passed ball by the Aztec catcher.

San Diego State scored a run in the fourth inning to tie the game. Eric Woods got on with a walk and advanced to second when Harrison walked Steve Montejano. Aztec Dan Lopes singled to load the bases. Woods scored when Deron Johnson grounded out.

Woods scored the go-ahead run for San Diego State in the sixth inning. He got to second on a Nebraska error and moved to third on Montejano's single. Phil Woolsey walked with the bases loaded to force in Woods.

Nebraska tied the game in the ninth inning. Rich King doubled and moved to third base on Mark Kister's groundout. Burt Beattie singled to score King.

San Diego State scored the winning run in the 11th inning. Tom LeVasseur got on with a fielder's choice. Johnson doubled to drive in LeVasseur and got the game winning run batted in.

Nebraska, 6-1 and ranked No. 22 in the country, played Fresno State Tuesday at 7 p.m. Pacific time. Nebraska will also play Washington State.

Even mother didn't cheer for this little leaguer

As the NBA season reaches the crucial stage, everyone's thoughts turn, of course, to baseball.

It reminds me of when I was a wee lad. In those years little league baseball was the thing to do. That was before girls took the forefront of a young boy's thoughts, only to be replaced later by commerce and trade. Ah, the American cycle.



Bill Allen

made the transition to girls faster than most guys. I sat halfway through "The Bad News Bears" before I realized they were supposed to be bad. They made our team look like the '27 Yankees.

Charlie Brown could have been our ace pitcher. Since a day care center sponsored our team, we were called the Toddlers. My coach called me Diapers, but he never told me why. The rest of the team also called me by various names, but mostly they called me when they wanted water.

I really felt I was an underrated player who was never given the chance to reach my full potential. Sure, I was fat, but I was slow. My speed did improve, though. By the end of the season no one carried the ball to the first baseman when I got a hit. They rolled it.

I led the league on base percentage. I drew a lot of walks. I didn't draw walks because I was a cagey, intelligent hitter and presented a small strike zone. I drew walks because the other

teams' pitchers liked to watch the ball bounce off my face.

I'll tell you one thing, though, I never forgot the lessons of my hero Pete Rose. I never walked to first base, even when I drew a walk. I insisted on being carried. Then they substituted a pinch runner for me.

I played right field on defense. It was the field my coach referred to as "Oh, no" field, because every time someone hit the ball in my direction he would yell "Oh, no, they hit to Diapers. Henderson, run out there and get the ball."

My mother, of course, went to every game. You've all heard stories of little leaguers' mothers who believed their son or daughter was the best player on the team and that the coach was biased against them.

Not my mother. It was really depressing to hear my own mother yell, "Don't put that bum in!" every time I stepped up to bat, which wasn't often. The coach only put me in at all because the day care center owner insisted everyone get

to play.

Being sponsored by a day care center wasn't that great. How many teams do you know that have a baby in diapers on their uniforms?

I did have my rare minute of glory though. Almost.

It was, of course, the bottom of the ninth inning, and there were, of course, two outs. We were behind by one run in a consolation game to determine which of the worst two teams in the league would actually win a game.

I was, of course, at bat. Just as the pitcher was about to deliver the ball, my dedicated coach came back from the bathroom, saw the situation and yelled "Oh, no."

Henderson immediately ran out into right field, looking for the baseball.

The coach called time out and sat me on the bench. Ferguson went to bat in my place and struck out in three swings.

My mother still thought the coach made a smart move.

And to think it all starts with little league baseball.

I was possibly the worst little league baseball player of all time. That probably explains why I