

Sports

Dutch player VanPoelgeest looks forward to four years of playing, living in Nebraska

By Bob Asmussen
Night News Editor

Editor's note: This is the first in a series of stories featuring foreign students who are currently athletes at Nebraska.

In the term "student-athlete," the "student" part seems to be left off a lot these days. Drug scandals, recruiting violations and misuse of complimentary tickets have dominated the sports pages recently.

Nebraska basketball player Richard VanPoelgeest, from The Hague, the Netherlands, is trying to put the student back in the term student-athlete.

"I want to finish my degree in business," VanPoelgeest said. "The education part is more important than basketball."

Not that basketball isn't important to VanPoelgeest. He is 6-9 1/2 and weighs 222 pounds. Last season, playing for a club team in Amsterdam, VanPoelgeest averaged 34 minutes a game and scored 15.8 points per contest. He also pulled down about nine rebounds per game.

VanPoelgeest said an agent in the Netherlands gave his name to coaches in the United States. He said he didn't care which area of the country he went to.

"This (Nebraska) would be a place where there wouldn't be many distractions from my work," VanPoelgeest said.

VanPoelgeest said he considered three criteria when deciding where to go to school. First, he considered the facilities and the place itself. Second, he considered the coaches, and third, he looked at his chance to play at the school. He said 12 schools contacted him, and he visited four schools: Nebraska, Pacific, Utah State and Hawaii. Other schools that expressed interest included Pittsburgh and Marist.

VanPoelgeest said he likes Ne-

braska coach Danny Nee.

"He's a real nice guy in normal life, very nice to be with," VanPoelgeest said. "He's very business-focused when he's dealing with the team. He separates the two very well. When you're off the court, you have to be able to talk normally to your coach."

VanPoelgeest said he doesn't want to have to sit on the bench in his first season.

"I didn't come over here to sit on the bench," VanPoelgeest said. "They need me over here because they needed a power forward."

"I think I will do fine. I want to try and have four good years in college basketball."

VanPoelgeest said he likes Lincoln and has been able to adjust to life in a new country.

"The people are very nice, very polite," VanPoelgeest said. "The whole atmosphere is good."

He said one thing that surprised him was the size of cars and width of city streets.

"The most impressive to me was that the streets were so wide," VanPoelgeest said. "In Holland we have very narrow streets and small cars."

"Lincoln is also very clean. The Hague is not so clean."

One major adjustment VanPoelgeest said he has had to make is not being with his girlfriend of three years, who stayed in the Netherlands.

"She already knew I was intending to go to America," VanPoelgeest said. "I can phone her once in a while and write her lots of letters."

VanPoelgeest said he is going to concentrate on his schoolwork and basketball to keep his mind off thinking about home.

"The only lifestyle change I've made is that I'm concentrating a little more on sports," VanPoelgeest said. "My attitude has changed toward my sport and my schoolwork. In Holland, I never studied. Here I will have to study."

Receiver follows father's footsteps

By Tim Hartmann
Staff Reporter

When freshman wide receiver Morgan Gregory signed a letter of intent with Nebraska, it completed a full circle for him.

Gregory, son of former Cornhusker Ben Gregory, was born in Lincoln in July, 1968. His family moved to Buffalo, N.Y., where his father played professional football for the Buffalo Bills, and then to Denver, Colo. Now, via a scholarship, Gregory has returned to Lincoln.

This is Gregory's first real living experience in Lincoln, however, as he has lived in Denver since he was 4. While in Denver, Gregory attended Manual High School, where his father is an assistant coach. He earned first-team all-state honors as a wide receiver and a defensive back.

As a receiver, the 6-0, 180-pound Gregory caught 29 passes for 950 yards and 13 touchdowns in his senior year. He also starred in the Colorado high school all-star game, where he caught six passes for 115 yards and a touchdown.

Gregory was recruited by such schools as Kansas, Colorado, Iowa and Wyoming, but he chose Nebraska, even though the Huskers are known as a running team.

"Nebraska passes more than people think," he said. "It was too good of a program to pass down."

Coming out of high school Gregory also had scholarship offers from New Mexico and Colorado State, but those were for basketball. At Manual, Gregory averaged 17.3 points per game and garnered Denver Public League all-conference honors in basketball.

Playing basketball at Nebraska is something Gregory would consider if it didn't interfere with football.

"There's not really that much time (away from football)," he said. "If it could be worked out I wouldn't mind it."

Right now Gregory is concentrating on football, and he's off to a good start. In the first freshmen game, against Ellsworth Junior College, he caught four passes. The next freshmen game is Sept. 19 against Pittsburg State of Kansas.

Since he also can play defense, Gregory will have to decide whether he wants to play defensive back or wide receiver.

"I like them both," he said.

When Gregory's father played for Nebraska in 1965-67, he played on both sides of the ball as a halfback and a cornerback. Ben Gregory rushed for 1,062 yards during his three-year career.

If Gregory does remain at wide receiver, his varsity coach will be Gene Huey, who happens to be his father's cousin. Gregory said he is excited about the opportunity to learn from Huey.

"I know he's a good coach and he's put out a lot of good players," Gregory said.

Gregory said he has had an easy time adjusting to the Nebraska program, partly because his father told him what to expect.

"He knows the program pretty well," he said. "It's everything I expected it would be. I think that the team is going to be good, both the freshman and the varsity."

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ISAC Olympics to begin Saturday, will promote 'intercultural harmony'

The International Student Athletic Committee will sponsor the third annual ISAC Olympics from Sept. 13 to 21. The competition will feature 50 events in 14 sports.

According to ISAC Chairman Syed Feizal Syed Mohammad, over 500 participants are expected, almost double last year's attendance of 260.

"Sports promote intercultural harmony" is the slogan for the event.

The competition includes arm wres-

tling, badminton, basketball, billiards, bowling, chess, racquetball, soccer, softball, table tennis, tennis, track and field, tug-of-war and volleyball.

The opening ceremonies for the ISAC Olympics will take place at 11 a.m. at the Nebraska Union, one of the 11 on-campus event venues.

Syed Feizal Syed Mohammad may be contacted for more details at 475-1668. Rod Merta, ISAC Advisor, also can be reached at 472-3264.

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