

Johnson readies for first Husker season

Basketball coach 'reloads' men's team



Matt Van Horn gets his basketball signed by Clifford Scales of the Nebraska men's basketball team during photo day at the Bob Devaney Sports Center Wednesday.

By Kent Endacott
Staff Reporter

The face, the sparkplug build, they're just the same.

Nebraska's Eric Johnson, a 6-foot-2, 190-pound guard, looks almost identical to his older brother, Vinnie, "The Microwave" of the Detroit Pistons.

Nebraska Coach Danny Nee said Johnson has the same kind of talent that made Vinnie one of the NBA's best sixth men.

"He's just a real talented kid, he can do a little bit of everything," Nee said.

Johnson, a highly recruited guard at Franklin Roosevelt High School in Brooklyn in 1984, followed in his brother's footsteps by signing with Baylor. At Baylor, Johnson started his freshman year, averaging 9.3 points a game and then 8.7 as a sophomore. But after his sophomore year, Gene Iba was hired to take over the Bears' basketball program.

Rather than play Iba's controlled-tempo style, Johnson decided to transfer.

He called Nee, who had recruited him while he was coaching at Ohio University and had known him since he was a high school sophomore. Nee told him he was going to accept the coaching job at Nebraska, and offered Johnson a chance to come along.

Johnson transferred and sat out the 1986-87 season. He said he's looking forward to helping the team this season. At times this season, he said, Nebraska fans might think they're watching the Microwave himself.

"I can score, but I can also play defense," he said. "A lot of people say we have a similar type of game. I feel like I can pretty much score when I have to."

Nee said Johnson, who will play both guard positions, and Peter Manning, a 6-8 transfer from Seminole (Okla.) Junior College, should have an immediate impact.

"We're counting on Pete to come in and contribute right away," Nee said. "He could help us drastically on the boards. His forte is rebounding, and that's probably our biggest weakness."

Last year, Manning averaged 10.3 rebounds a game at Seminole.

Nee said the recruits need to develop and contribute this season to offset the losses of Bernard Day and Brian Carr.

One of the key recruits is Clifford Scales. Scales, an All-State guard at St. Joseph High School in Westchester, Ill., said he chose Nebraska over DePaul because he wants to play right away.

"I'm really going to enjoy it," he said. "Playing time is my practice time, and Coach Nee has the confi-

dence in me that I can do the job for him."

Nee also signed Richard Smith, a 6-7 freshman from Chicago who played on the same high school team with Marcus Liberty, the nation's top high school player last year.

"I'm really high on my Chicago kids," Nee said of Scales and Smith.

Nee said he has not decided whether to redshirt Richard King, a 7-2 freshman from Omaha Burke High School, and Kelly Lively, a 6-11 freshman from Torrington, Wyo. Beau Ried, a 6-7 redshirt freshman, is also expected to play right away.

"Kelly Lively and Richard King give us size which we haven't had in the past, but I don't know if they're going to be ready this year. We're going to have to build them up."

Nee said guard Henry T. Buchanan and forward Derrick Vick need to provide leadership. As a junior, Buchanan, a 6-1 point guard, averaged 8.2 points a game and dished out 83 assists. Vick, a 6-6 forward, averaged 11.1 points and 5.6 rebounds a game last year. He was also named to the NIT All Tournament Team.

"We're going to have to build around them," Nee said. "No two players contributed more than Buchanan and Vick going down the stretch and in the NIT. They were both big-game players for us."

Buchanan, 27, said he is looking forward to his role of team leader.

"I'll be more or less a role model," he said. "I'll be showing the young people how to work hard, and try to instill confidence in them. The freshmen have a lot of talent, but there's a difference between having talent and being able to convert it over to the college level."

The only other two returning lettermen are Jeff Rekeweg, a 6-6 senior, and Richard Van Poelgeest, a 6-9 sophomore from Ryswijk, Netherlands. Van Poelgeest played in 24 games as a freshman, averaging 2.7 points and 1.9 rebounds a game. He scored 10 points against Oklahoma in Norman.

"Van Poelgeest is one of the keys," Nee said. "He has a chance to step right in and play. I think his year of adjustment to the American style of play, the culture and the academics is over."

Nee said the Nebraska basketball program is in the "legitimate rebuilding" phase.

"I hate using the word 'rebuilding,' I'd rather say 'reloading,'" he said, "because I don't want the fans to think, 'Oh, here he comes. They're rebuilding again for the 52nd year in a row.'"

But, he said, no matter what phase his program is in, he thinks his team will always have a chance to win in the Bob Devaney Sports Center.



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17. Rock salt spreader
18. Worm farm container
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25. Jello mold (why not?)
26. Cupcake mold (weaker)
27. Foul ball baseball catcher
28. Martini shaker
29. Mini butter churn (some assembly required)
30. One quart measuring system
31. Small time capsule
32. His and hers toothbrush holders
33. Bird feeder
34. Sugar cookie cutter and rolling pin set
35. Frisbee distance markers
36. Marble sack (drawing not included)
37. Bobber (for optimistic fishermen)
38. Sand castle mold (beach not included)
39. Paul Bunyan shot glass
40. Needle point thimble (Posy Grier model)
41. Barrel (for small polka parties)
42. Replica of Leaning Tower of Pisa (lean not included)
43. Maracas (pebbles not included)
44. Dumbbells (for lightweights)
45. Donation cup (for best results, remove lid)
46. Spittoon
47. Rain gauge (for best results, remove lid)
48. Trombone mute
49. Daytime flashlight (batteries not included—or needed)
50. Quiver (for short arrows)
51. Two-in-one circle template
52. Powdered sugar doughnut caddy
53. Emergency football
54. Ice bucket (for small parties)
55. Windsuck (for all-plastic airports)
56. Dance hat (for people who don't eat at Valentino's)
57. Emergency spin-the-bottle substitute
58. Backgammon dice cups
59. Bell (clapper not included)
60. Nighttime denture holder (for people who work nights)
61. Daytime denture holder
62. May basket
63. Easter basket
64. Portable sand pile (sand not included)
65. Kite string winder
66. Duck call (cut out bottom, call "here duck")
67. Portable finger bowl (water not included)
68. Fire extinguisher (water not included)
69. Tiddly wink goal (professional model)
70. Rain guard (for outdoor ash trays)
71. Big top for a flea circus
72. High rise art farm
73. Combination muzzle/lead bag for your Doberman
74. Unbreakable firefly residence (airholes required)
75. Barbie and Ken hot tub (redwood deck not included)
76. Emergency backup fitz (a real lifesaver on parade day)
77. Bathub buoy (to mark place where soap went down)
78. Jellybean dispenser
79. Paperclip depot
80. Thumbtack warehouse
81. Tack and brad caddy (tacks and brads not included)
82. Hypochondriac's pillbox
83. Saving stamp depository
84. Monkey barrel
85. Pasta canister
86. Leftover pasta container
87. Dual purpose rain/snow catching and storing device
88. Paint bucket
89. Water balloon safety transporter
90. Microwave cookware
91. Lunch box for kids
92. Christmas tree ornament
93. Ink well
94. Dresser caddy
95. Pudding shaker
96. Self-contained fishing gear organizer
97. Bookends (for light reading material)
98. Birdbath (for reclusive birds)
99. Portable shower (punch holes in bottom)
100. Reusable drinking cup (now we're getting silly)
101. ???



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Gundy



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TRIPLETS from Page 13

Dolphins' quarterback Dan Marino, stands 5-11 and weighs 180 pounds.

When Gundy replaced Ronnie Williams as Oklahoma State's starting quarterback last season, Jones called Boston College coach Jack Bicknell to see what type of plays he used to help former Eagle quarter Doug Flutie, who stands 5-9.

"Basically, they thought I had some ability in the same areas as Doug Flutie," Gundy said.

"It's very challenging — I don't have a 6-4 frame or a strong arm. I try to use other things, and each year I try to get better."

Gundy is ranked 13th nationally in total offense with an average of 225.8 yards per game, and is eighth in pass efficiency with a pass efficiency rating of 140.8.

Gill finished with a rating of 152.7 in 1983.

"I think Mike is probably more talented than people think," Jones said. "He's been highly successful in every sport he's competed in since he's been a little boy."