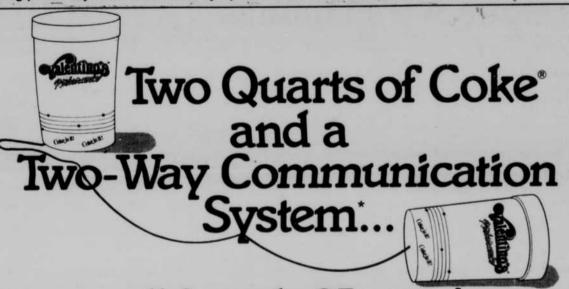
Johnson readies for first Husker season

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.



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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 high school player last year. dentical to his older brother, Vinnie, "I'm really high on my The Microwave" of the Detroit Pis-

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

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

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 trans-

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

Nee said Johnson, who will play both guard positions, and Peter Man-ning, 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 weak-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 row.

said. "Playing time is my practice will always have a chance to win in the time, and Coach Nee has the confi- Bob Devaney Sports Center.

dence in me that I can do the job for

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

"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 33 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

"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 Nee said the Nebraska basketball program is in the "legitimate rebuild-

ing" phase.
"I hate using the word `rebuilding,
"I hate using the word `rebuilding," he said 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

away.
"I'm really going to enjoy it," he his program is in, he thinks his team But, he said, no matter what phase





Gundy



Gundy better, not bigger

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."