

South African swimmers far from home

By Tim Hartmann
Senior Reporter

Nebraska football coach Tom Osborne is known for recruiting players from all over the country, but Cornhusker men's swimming coach Cal Bentz goes one step further.

Bentz said he has recruited swimmers from all over the world during his nine-year coaching career at Nebraska. He said he has had swimmers from Australia, Hong Kong, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, South Africa and Taiwan on the Husker roster.



Bentz

Bentz said this year's squad includes three swimmers from South Africa: sophomores Sean Frampton and Jaco Kruger, and freshman Peter Williams. Frampton hails from Capetown, Kruger is from Pretoria and Williams is from Port Elizabeth.

Frampton said one reason Nebraska and other schools can recruit South African athletes is the country's government downplays the role of sports.

"It is illegal there to go to school on a sports scholarship," Frampton said. "The only type of scholarships are for academics."

Frampton said he decided to attend college in either Europe or America because of the limitations placed on South African athletes. He said he received collegiate scholarship offers from Southern Illinois, Texas and Nebraska.

Frampton said he thought it was a joke the first time the Nebraska coaches called. He said he thought the call was from "Telephone Time," a South African television program like "Candid Camera."

"I said, 'Who is this really?'" Frampton said.

Frampton eventually discovered it was the Nebraska coaches calling. He said it was their interest that helped him decide to attend Nebraska.

"Nebraska would call me once or twice a week and sent me lots of correspondence and had members of the team call me, while the others didn't do that," Frampton said. "They really made me feel welcome."

Bentz said the Huskers use the phone a lot when they recruit athletes from far-away places like South Africa. He said other

schools, such as Southern Methodist, Alabama, Louisiana State and Southern Illinois, use the same strategy.

"Southern Illinois has a raft of outstanding swimmers from South Africa," Bentz said.

Bentz said Nebraska has just begun recruiting in South Africa.

"A year or so ago we got some inquiries from various coaches and swimmers," Bentz said. "We got a good group last year, this year we got another good swimmer, and in the future we plan to continue to recruit there."

Bentz said recruiting foreign athletes is easier "if you have someone in common" with them. For example, he said, Frampton first talked to Williams about Nebraska.

"Anybody who asks me, I'll talk to," Frampton said. "Some people get the wrong idea. They say, 'Who's he, trying to tell us where's he's been?' But Peter was very receptive, and Cal thought he was a good swimmer."

Kruger said he was recruited differently than Frampton or Williams — he contacted Nebraska.

"I saw their address in a swimming magazine and basically I talked to people I knew from South

Africa who were on the track team," Kruger said.

Kruger said he didn't know much about Nebraska, but decided to come to Lincoln because he didn't want to go to a school in a big city.

"I had a friend that was attending the University of Miami, but he got into drugs. So that persuaded me not to go there," Kruger said. "One by one I started eliminating schools."

Kruger said Americans live a more hectic lifestyle than South Africans do.

"It is much more liberal, free, and the American people are very outgoing," Kruger said. "The pace is quite fast; everything is bigger and better."

Williams said he has not recognized a difference between the two countries. He said the people in America and South Africa are similar.

Both Frampton and Kruger said some differences between the two countries aren't obvious.

"The weather is a big factor," Kruger said. "We don't have snow there."

"We all speak English," Frampton said, "but a number of the phrases are different."

Last season Frampton set a school record and earned All-America honorable-mention honors in the 100-yard breaststroke. He also earned Big Eight Champion honors in that event and the 200-yard breaststroke.

Kruger swam four events for the Huskers last season and was a Big Eight Champion in the 500-yard freestyle.

All three South African swimmers agreed their swimming has improved since coming to Nebraska.

"Obviously, the best thing is the amount of people behind swimming here," Williams said. "At home it isn't that big of a thing."

"At home I more or less swam in a squad of two or three people. Training here with others who are as good as me will really help me, whereas at home I was more or less isolated."

One of the only problems the swimmers see is that they don't get home very much.

"We get breaks in the summer and at Christmas, but over Christmas we have all the big meets, so you can't go home then," Frampton said.

Smith doubtful for game

By Mike Kluck
Staff Reporter

Senior Nebraska defensive tackle Neil Smith may not play in Saturday's game against Iowa State because he suffered a bruised leg during Wednesday's practice.

Nebraska football coach Tom Osborne said although Smith's injury caused him to leave practice, he was pleased that the two-year letterman from New Orleans was able to walk off the field. Smith was injured when a player fell on his leg.

Osborne said quarterback Steve Taylor is also doubtful for the Iowa State game because the junior from Fresno, Calif., is still bothered by a shoulder injury.

Osborne said wingback Hendley Hawkins and I-back Jon Kelley are

also doubtful for the Iowa State game because of shoulder injuries. He said center Jake Young and I-back Ken Clark, who both are suffering from knee strains, will probably suit up for Saturday's game.

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