

Smith still succeeds after switching sports

By Mike Kluck
Staff Reporter

Heather Smith's athletic career at Nebraska can be described like that of a prize fighter — she's down but not out.

Smith, who came to Nebraska on a track scholarship, was forced to abandon her career as a high and triple jumper and join the Cornhusker basketball team after sustaining an injury to her left knee during her sophomore season.

Smith, who set a Nebraska and Big Eight record in the high jump with a leap of 6-foot-1 that earned her All-American status as a freshman, said she was disappointed about leaving the track team because it meant giving up her goal of going to the Olympics.

But Smith said she was still pleased to have an opportunity to play basketball.

"I kind of gave up on track because my goals were to be in the Olympics, and after my injury I gave up on my goals," Smith said. "Basketball gave me a second chance, and I'm really happy I took the other route. Basketball has always been my favorite sport, but coming out of high school there weren't too many opportunities for women in basketball. Since I had big goals like the Olympics, track was my favorite."

Nebraska track coach Gary Pepin said he was disappointed that Smith had to quit the team. He said Smith had a good chance of representing her native country of Jamaica in the Olympics before her injury.

"It was a tremendous disappointment not only for our team but also for her," Pepin said. "She was not only a great high jumper but was also a great triple jumper."

Smith said she could have made the Olympics because she won the last Olympic Trials she competed in with a jump of 5-foot-7. She said she ac-

complished that despite being hampered by the knee injury.

"I feel if I was still healthy and kept jumping I would be jumping 6-4 now," Smith said.

Nebraska women's basketball coach Angela Beck said Smith has played a key role for the 12-2 Huskers this season.

"Smith has added great depth to our inside game," Beck said. "She should be one of the major factors in the Big Eight and should be one of the top post players. She has been doing phenomenal coming back from her knee injury. She is a quick, powerful player and has been developing her moves near the basket."

Smith has maintained her record-setting performance with the Husker basketball team by setting Nebraska records with a 27-inch vertical jump, a 1.63 time in the 10-yard dash and a 3.84 time in the 30-yard dash.

Smith said Pepin supported her decision to join the basketball team.

"She is a really gifted athlete and was a really good basketball player in high school," Pepin said. "I talked to the basketball coach in the hope that if she couldn't do anything in track she could do something in one of the other sports. I told her to at least give it a try."

Smith said she has enjoyed playing basketball even though she has had a tough time adjusting.

"Last year was really tough because I came in about half way through the season and I had to learn 50 plays all at once," Smith said. "I was really frustrated, but then again it was my first time in three years that I have played. My timing and everything was off, so I stayed here last summer and worked really hard in the weight room and played basketball. Now my timing and everything is back."

"I feel really good right now because I'm doing something I like. Basketball gave me a second chance

and I'm having fun doing it. I feel like I'm needed because I'm helping the team and I'm just not sitting there thinking about what I could do."

Beck said she has worked hard with Smith in hopes of making the senior forward's adjustment to basketball easier.

"She is the type of player who gets really frustrated when she isn't doing well, and that's the way she was last season," Beck said. "We have limited her needs to where she is a goal-tender and blocks shots. She has never worked this hard in her life."

Smith said her knee has given her no problems this season.

"I had surgery on my takeoff leg," Smith said. "In basketball you aren't just depending on one leg, so I'm not putting as much pressure on my knee. It feels about 95 percent back to full strength."

Smith said her goals as a basketball player are more team-oriented.

"My main goal is to help lead the team to a Big Eight Championship any way I can," Smith said. "This year we have a really strong team and we have a good chance at winning the Big Eight."

Smith said her track career may continue after the basketball season.

"Coach Pepin said that as soon as basketball is over he's coming after me because he wants me to come back out for track," Smith said. "I don't know if I would high jump because I really haven't jumped for two or three years. If I do go out, it would be like starting all over again. I haven't made up my mind yet, but if I do, I'm thinking about running."

Pepin said Smith's knee may rehabilitate enough through basketball that she could high jump again.

Smith said she will make a decision later about whether to compete in track. She said she just wants to enjoy basketball now.



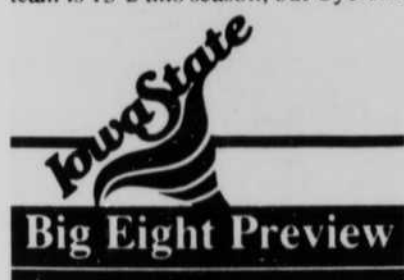
Nebraska's Heather Smith attempts to block a shot by Missouri-Kansas City's Lisa Dougherty.

J.P. Caruso/Daily Nebraskan

ISU's Orr unhappy despite Cyclones' No. 14 ranking

By Tim Hartmann
Senior Reporter

Iowa State's men's basketball team is 15-2 this season, but Cyclone



Brian Barber/Daily Nebraskan

coach Johnny Orr isn't satisfied.

Orr said Iowa State needs improvement in every aspect of its game. He said although the No. 14-ranked Cy-

clones have played well at times, he wants to see them play well all the time.

"I thought at the beginning of the year we played super," he said. "We had big wins at the preseason NIT and against Iowa and Drake, then we went into a little slump. But we came back and got a big win against Kansas."

The Cyclones lost 96-89 to Florida in the preseason NIT and 78-76 to Butler in the Blade City Classic at Toledo, Ohio.

Iowa State opened its Big Eight season by defeating Kansas 88-78 to give the Cyclones a 1-0 record in the conference.

Orr said the victory over Kansas was a big one, but he still wouldn't label Iowa State as the top team in the

Big Eight.

"I would say Oklahoma is the favorite," Orr said. "Even though they lost earlier this season, I still think they're the team to beat. They've played as well as anybody in the United States."

Orr said Oklahoma's schedule, which forced the Sooners to travel to New Orleans to play Louisiana State and then to Manhattan, Kan., to face Kansas State, was "very difficult to do mentally." Oklahoma is 14-2 after dropping consecutive decisions to the Tigers and Wildcats.

Senior forward Jeff Grayer leads the Cyclones with an average of 25.2 points and 10.2 rebounds per game. Grayer scored 32 points and recorded 24 rebounds in a 123-92 victory over

U.S. International on Saturday.

"Jeff's been tremendous," Orr said. "He's played well at both ends of the floor."

Orr said senior center Lafester Rhodes has also sparked Iowa State. Rhodes, who scored 34 points last season, has averaged 23.1 points per game this year.

"I'd be lying if I said I wasn't surprised with the play of Lafester," Orr said. "He's played very well."

Orr said Iowa State's small front line forces the Cyclones to rely on their quickness. Iowa State's front line is composed of the 6-foot-5 Grayer, the 6-8 Rhodes and 6-5 Elmer Robinson.

"We try to keep up-tempo the whole game and cause turnovers off

our defense," Orr said.

Iowa State starts 5-9 Terry Woods, who averages 6.6 points per game, and 6-3 Gary Thompkins, who averages 12.5 points and 3.5 rebounds per game, at the guard positions.

Orr said he doesn't know if Iowa State will try to run with Oklahoma, which has averaged over 100 points per game this season.

Orr said it's too early to compare this year's team to the 1985-86 squad that advanced to the final "Sweet 16" of the NCAA tournament.

"I'll be able to do that when the season is over," Orr said.

Nebraska will travel to Ames, Iowa, to face Iowa State Wednesday night. Tip-off is scheduled for 7:00 p.m.

Baack is back in basketball, but things have changed

By Mike Kluck
Staff Reporter

Tom Baack is back on the basketball court, but things have changed since the last time he walked onto it.

Baack, who spent 13 years as an assistant coach and player at Nebraska under former Cornhusker coach Moe Iba, is now coaching the Bulldogs at Concordia Teachers College, an NAIA school in Seward.

Baack said he was upset with the way things were handled at Nebraska during his last season in 1985-86. He left the Husker program after Iba resigned following Nebraska's 67-59 loss to Western Kentucky in the first round of the NCAA Tournament.

"I didn't know what was going on the whole year with Coach Iba," Baack said. "I didn't know Moe had resigned until after he had turned in his resignation. All I ever asked was to be dealt with fairly and honestly, and if somebody doesn't want me around, I

won't stay. It is just unfortunate the way things were handled."

Baack said his experience during his last season at Nebraska gave him a bitter taste. He said he has since overcome that feeling because of his previous good feelings for the Nebraska athletic department.

"I have a great deal of care and respect for the school and have been associated with some great teams," Baack said. "Those feelings are still left with me. I also played at Nebraska and most of my good friends and best friends have come from my years at the university."

Baack, who played for Nebraska from 1965-68 under late Husker coach Joe Cipriano, was a three-year starter and is fifth on Nebraska's all-time scoring list.

Baack also went to the NIT Tournament as a player in 1967, a graduate assistant coach in 1978 and a full-time assistant coach in 1980, 1983, 1984

and 1985.

Baack said he wasn't surprised about the success of last year's Nebraska basketball squad. The Huskers, while operating under first-year coach Danny Nee, advanced to the Final Four of the NIT Tournament in New York City's Madison Square Garden.

"I wasn't surprised by their success because they had some good athletes returning," Baack said. "When a new coaching staff comes in, their success depends a lot on who's in the program. If you lose a lot of players, you have to wait until you get your own players in to be successful."

Baack said he wished Nee the best of luck at Nebraska.

"Nebraska is a good job and I hope he does well," Baack said.

Baack said he's happy at Concordia even though the Bulldogs are 5-12. He said he plans to stay at the college for a long time.

"I enjoy being at Concordia very much. It's an enjoyable position,"

Baack said. "I'm happy here, but a few more wins would make me a lot happier. When I was hired here, they said they wanted someone who would stay here and not move on, and I said I would. My father and sister both went to Lutheran schools, so I know how and like the way the school operates."

Baack said the public pressure that the Nebraska program was under during his last year with the Huskers allowed him to get used to the tension that arises with any coaching job. The public pressure at Nebraska arose after the Huskers were found guilty of conducting early basketball practices, which was a violation of NCAA rules.

"There are pressures in any program, but it's just a different kind of pressure," Baack said. "In Division I, the public causes most of the pressure for a team to win and be successful. The public caused most of our problems at Nebraska. In our division, the pressure comes from the academic

level to have every recruit of ours graduate. If we go 2-20, academic success is always the top priority, no matter what. I think at the academic level, all financial help should not be treated differently."

Baack, who also serves as the dean of students at Concordia, said his goals are different now than they were at Nebraska.

"I really wanted to be a Division I coach," Baack said. "With my wife and son I had to make a decision whether I wanted to be a coach or if I wanted to be with them. Being a coach at Nebraska, I was gone a lot and I really like to be around my family."

"I want to build as competitive as a program as I can here," he said. "We don't have the finances here as they do at other schools in our conference like Nebraska Wesleyan and Hastings. Whether we can compete or not I don't know, but I am going to work to build a program and stick with it."