

Neil Smith primed for second pro season

By Nick Hodge
Senior Reporter

With the pressures of his rookie season behind him, former Cornhusker All-American Neil Smith said he's anxiously awaiting his second season in the National Football League.

Smith, who led the Husker defense in tackles for losses as a senior in 1987, said the media along with Kansas City Chief fans and coaching staff placed unrealistic expectations on him last season by demanding immediate success.

"I feel a lot better because I don't have as much pressure on me," Smith said Saturday



Smith

night after playing in a charity basketball game at Lincoln Southeast High School. "This year, I should go in their feeling a little bit more comfortable and hope to have a better year."

Smith and nine other members of the Chiefs played a team of Lincoln Downtown Optimist Club celebrity all-stars to promote the "Just Say No To Drugs" campaign. The Chiefs defeated the Celebrity All-Star team 84-83. Smith scored 18 points, slammed two dunks and blocked two shots.

Five members of the Celebrity All-Star team have played or coached at the university: Tony Samuel, assistant football coach; Angela Beck, women's basketball coach; and former Nebraska basketball players Amy Stephens, Amy Bullock and Henry T. Buchanan.

Smith said he was relieved to finish his rookie season because neither he nor the Chiefs

had the type of season that the fans expected. He said occasional boos from the fans make him glad to get on with his second season.

"I'm just so glad that I got my rookie year behind me, because I was a high draft choice and the pressure was on me being the second guy chosen in the draft," Smith said. "I guess the fans and coaches and everybody were expecting too much out of me as being too much of a superman guy."

Smith, a 6-foot-6, 285-pound defensive end, used his 4.5 speed and his 7-foot arm span to become the No. 2 pick in the 1988 NFL draft. The first player selected was Aundrey Bruce, an outside linebacker from Auburn who was drafted by the Atlanta Falcons.

Smith said he will improve this season because Kansas City will be a better team.

"I feel that whatever I did last season wasn't

really authentic because the team was struggling all year," Smith said. "With a new coach, I hope to come back and have a better year."

Smith said he was disappointed by his performance last season.

"I was expecting more out of this year," he said. "But some goals I did reach and some I didn't. The ones I didn't reach -- I'll try and come back and get them this year."

Smith said the talent of NFL players affects his performance.

"The biggest change from Nebraska to the NFL is probably the difference in the guys in height, speed and weight," Smith said. "There are bigger and faster guys in the NFL. When you go against the 10-year guys with more experience, you just have to learn from all your mistakes through the year."

Cornhusker diving coach continues career at Indiana

By Jeff Apel
Senior Editor

An emotional Jeff Huber ended his 11-year reign as the Nebraska diving coach when he was named to the same position at Indiana.

Huber said his decision to leave Nebraska in favor of Bloomington, Ind., was a tough one because he has enjoyed his coaching career with the Cornhuskers. He said his career climaxed when he broke into tears while telling the Nebraska men's and women's swimming and diving teams about his decision.

There were some tears shed, Huber said.

"It was a very tough decision because I had a lot of fun here and I feel this is my program," he said.

Huber said he surprised himself when he accepted the Indiana job because he didn't think he would be leaving. He said Indiana approached him when Hobbie Billingsley, who coached the Hoosiers' divers for 30 years, retired.

Huber said he was offered the Indiana job four weeks ago, but waited to announce his intentions because he wanted to inform his team members and Nebraska Athletic Director Bob Devaney.

"I tried to do everything fairly," Huber said. "That's how I've been treated here -- fair."

Huber said he will have several advantages at Indiana because the Hoosier athletic department is constructing a \$16 million swimming and diving facility. He said the facility will include a diving tower, which the Bob Devaney Sports Center lacks.

Huber said tower diving is an important event because it was scored at the NCAA championships



Huber

for the first time this year. He said it is also an important event internationally.

Huber said he doesn't know if he can accomplish the same type of success at Indiana that he had at Nebraska. During his Husker career, Huber coached 14 All-Americans, 23 Big Eight champions and has been named the Big Eight diving coach of the year four times.

The Nebraska men's swimming team, behind a 5th-place finish by senior Lewis Meyers in the platform diving competition, finished 10th at this year's NCAA championships. The Husker women, behind a 5th-place finish by Julie May in the 1-meter diving competition, were 29th.

Nebraska women's swimming coach Ray Huppert said Huber will be missed.

"The writing is on the wall," Huppert said. "Jeff Huber is the premiere diving coach in the country."

Huppert said he doesn't anticipate Huber's departure to cause any problems even though the spring signing date for swimming begins Wednesday. He said the athletes that Huber was recruiting will continue to be courted by Nebraska.

"Jeff is loyal to the program," Huppert said. "He's not trying to recruit anyone away."

Meyers said Huber's departure will cause him definite problems. He said he was planning on staying at Nebraska and training, but doesn't know what he will do now.

"I'm extremely upset," Meyers said. "It throws a big loop in my plans."

Huppert said he and Nebraska men's swimming coach Cal Bentz will join Devaney and form a search committee for a new coach. He said he does not know when a successor will be named.

"We need to sit down and talk because we are not going to rush in so fast that we make a hasty decision that we regret down the line," Huppert said.



Shaun Sartin/Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska's Frankie Jernigan slides safely into second base, despite the efforts of Sooner second baseman Mark Cole.

Huskers split double headers with Sooners

By Jerry Guenther
Staff Reporter

It was a case of double header deja vu for the Nebraska baseball team Sunday afternoon as they dropped the second half of a twin bill to Oklahoma.

On both Saturday and Sunday, the Cornhuskers won the first game and led or tied Oklahoma late in the second game before losing to the nationally-rated Sooners.

Saturday, the Huskers won 10-4 in the first game and lost 3-1 in the second. Sunday, Nebraska won the opener 3-2 and dropped the night cap 2-1.

"It was a fickle four-game series," Nebraska baseball coach John Sanders said. "Both teams were very opportunistic during the four games."

Oklahoma coach Enos Semore

said he was pleased by his team's ability to come back throughout the series.

"We had our backs to the wall to the end," he said. "All the games were tough."

Nebraska is now 15-13, and Oklahoma is 22-9.

In the second game on Sunday, neither team scored until Bruce Wobken's single to right field scored Jeff Allen, giving Nebraska a 1-0 lead. Wobken's hit was the only one for the Huskers during the contest.

The Sooners came right back, scoring both their runs in the sixth inning on two walks, a hit, a wild pitch and a ground out to take a 2-1 lead.

"Give them credit," Sanders said. "They bounced back. It was a game where one or two runs could win."

Dale Kistaitis, 2-3, was the los-

ing pitcher for Nebraska. He pitched five innings and faced two Sooners in the sixth inning before being relieved by Joe Purvine.

Kistaitis gave up five hits, two runs, six walks and struck out four. Purvine pitched two innings, giving up two walks without allowing any hits or runs.

In the opener Sunday, Nebraska picked up single runs in the third, fourth and seventh innings and managed to hold off a two-run Sooner rally in the ninth inning to win 3-2.

Offensively, the Huskers were led by Ken Ramos and Frankie Jernigan who each collected two hits.

Mike Zajacki, 3-2, pitched 8 1/3 innings, allowing two hits and two runs. He walked and struck out seven to pick up his third win.

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Nee's basketball team continues to 'grow'

By Mark Derowitsch
Senior Reporter

The Nebraska basketball program reached the infant stage this season, Coach Danny Nee said.

Nee said the Cornhuskers, who finished with a 17-16 record, are making progress.

"Last year, we were in the embryo stage," Nee said. "But we're not there any more. We moved into the infant stage. We're starting to walk."

Nee said keeping the program consistent is the key to success. He said having upperclassmen playing a big role is important to a team.

"In the Final Four, there weren't too many (young players) out on the floor," Nee said. "Take Seton Hall. They had no real superstars but they were all juniors and seniors who

knew how to play as a team.

"You have to establish a team with good development. The good teams are consistent -- they do the same things year in and year out."

The Final Four had four consistent teams that made it one of the best in history, Nee said. Michigan, Illinois, Duke and Seton Hall played in the Final Four in Seattle. Michigan defeated Seton Hall 80-79 in the championship game.

"It was one of the best I'd ever seen," Nee said. "I really felt that there were no losers at the Final Four this year. But there were four different type programs. Duke and Seton Hall went through some lean years but they stuck with their coaches and ultimately became successful. And Michigan and Illinois are two great, consistent programs. When they

played (in the semifinals), it was like an NBA game."

Nee said Michigan's win was a "Cinderella story," because interim Coach Steve Fisher took over for Coach Bill Frieder before the tournament began. Frieder accepted the coaching job at Arizona State, and was subsequently told by Michigan football coach and athletic director Bo Schembechler that he would not be coaching the Wolverines.

"They'll talk about that for 20 years," Nee said.

Nee said the Huskers "have to get a break" to make it into the Final Four.

"We need one player now or in the future to really stand out," he said. "But to get in a position where you have a chance of going every year, we have to develop consistently. I think

we're on the right track."

To develop even further, the Huskers are trying to recruit a point guard. Allen County (Kan.) Community College guard Carl Weldon visited Nebraska last month.

Allen County coach Neil Crane said Weldon was impressed with Nebraska's program.

"He liked Nebraska," Crane said. "He likes the fact that he would have an opportunity to play right away."

Weldon, a 6-foot-3, 185-pound sophomore, averaged 15.1 points and 6.2 assists for the Red Devils. Crane said Weldon also plans on visiting Virginia Commonwealth, Karsas, Boston College and Seton Hall.

"His quickness is just super," Crane said. "I've never seen anyone go from first to fourth gear as fast as he does."

The Huskers have two scholarships to give, since Jed Bergen and Eric Dolezal decided to leave Nebraska.

"I talked with Jed, and we both decided that it would be in his best interests to play elsewhere," Nee said. "And Eric and I discussed the situation, and he decided to try to find somewhere else to play. We're trying to help him anyway we can."

Nee also said that assistant coach Arden Reid resigned last week. Nee said Reid is trying to find a job at another college.

"It was a very complex situation," Nee said. "We both felt a change was needed. After discussing the matter, Reid resigned. I think he's a really good coach and a fine person. I'm sure he'll be a good coach wherever he goes."