

Wildcat coach wins Big 8 honor

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Kansas State football coach Bill Snyder was named the Associated Press Big Eight coach of the year for the second straight season Wednesday.

Snyder coached the Wildcats to a 7-4 record this season to match their highest win total in 37 years and mark only their fifth winning season since 1936.

Snyder received seven and one-half votes from a panel of sports writers and sportscasters who regularly cover the Big Eight. Colorado's Bill McCartney got three and a half votes. Tom Osborne of Nebraska had three votes and Glen Mason, who led Kansas to a 6-5 finish for the Jayhawks' first winning season since 1981, got two votes.

Nelson

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duals because of leg injuries and never fully recovered, posting a final 14-14-1 mark.

But in October 1988, Nelson was in a car accident that could have ended his life.

"The car somehow went into the shoulder, and we tried to pull back onto the interstate too fast," he said. "The car went into a spin and then rolled into a ditch."

After the car stopped rolling, Nelson got out as fast as he could. When he walked away from the car, he felt a sharp pain in his neck.

He knew something was wrong. X-rays at the hospital showed that he had broken his neck in the acci-

dent, and he was forced to wear a "halo" head restraint for three months to keep him from moving his head and complicating the injury.

Nebraska Coach Tim Neumann said Nelson was fortunate to return to wrestling after a neck injury.

"Neck and back injuries end more careers," Neumann said. "At first, I was reluctant to let him try to come back."

Nelson and Neumann traveled to California to meet with Dr. Robert Watkins. After performing surgery to fuse two of Nelson's vertebrae together, Watkins gave Nelson the green light to continue with his wrestling career.

"He said Chris would have the strongest neck in Nebraska now," Neumann said.

After spending a redshirt season to rehabilitate his neck, Nelson returned

to post a 21-2 dual record in 1990.

That same year, Nelson finished second at his first Big Eight championship meet and finished fifth at the NCAA championships.

This season, Nelson said, his goals remain the same. In his first meet of the season — the UNO Open in Omaha on Nov. 23 — he won his weight class.

"I'm planning on winning it all this season," he said. "I want to win the national championship. . . . That's what I've wanted from the start. I'm ready to tear into the season."

Neither his neck injury nor last year's broken fibula affect him now, he said.

"When I'm out on the mat, I'm so focused that I don't really think about anything but what I have to do to win," Nelson said.

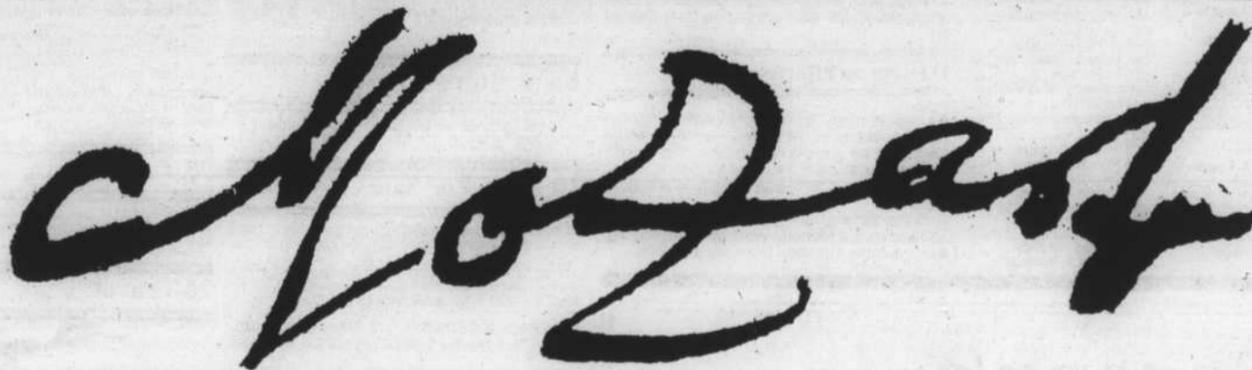
Cooper

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And never mind that Engelbert had a season-high 10 tackles against Colorado's All-Big Eight center Jay Leeuwenburg, while Steed was held to a single-digit total during the Nov. 2 match-up. Head on, Engelbert was better when it counted. And his leadership of a young defense was phenomenal this season.

Steed can say "merci" to the voters for that honor.

Cooper is a sophomore news-editorial major and the Daily Nebraskan sports senior reporter.



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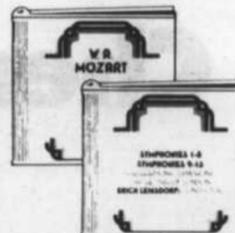
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