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Age, inexperience don't slow Big Eight football newcomers

By Jeff Singer
Senior Editor

So far in the 1993 season, youth has reigned in the Big Eight.

In past years, having true freshmen and new transfers starting football games was unheard of, but now it has become a trend in the conference.

Oklahoma running back James Allen and Kansas State quarterback Chad May are components in their teams' undefeated seasons.



May

And Nebraska I-back Lawrence Phillips and Kansas running back Charles Henley have stepped into their programs and excelled like tested veterans.

What do all of these players have in common? They are all newcomers who have become key cogs in their team's offensive success this season. Allen, a true freshman from Wynnwood, Okla., is fourth in the Big Eight in rushing with 78 yards per game, including an 102-yard performance in the Sooners' 38-17 win over Texas on Saturday.

May has been equally impressive. The transfer from Cal-State Fullerton is third in the league in passing with 1,044 yards. He has completed 55 percent of his passes and thrown for five touchdowns to help the Wildcats to a 5-0 start, their best in 62 years.

May, who's from West Covina, Calif., said coming from the now-

““

It's really exciting to come in and play as much as I have. I've been very happy with the amount of time I've gotten.

— Phillips
Nebraska I-back

defunct Cal-State Fullerton program and starting as soon as he was eligible at Kansas State was a surprise.

“I had to sit out a year, and this helped me improve a lot,” May said. “I think my confidence is what has helped me come in and play right away.”

NCAA rules required May to sit out one year after transferring.

Phillips, also from West Covina, has quickly moved up Nebraska's depth chart at I-back since arriving in Lincoln in August.

Calvin Jones' knee injury early in the season allowed Phillips to get plenty of playing time, including a career-high 137-yard performance against UCLA.

Phillips, who is fifth in the conference in rushing with 74 yards per game, said being able to play as much as he had as a true freshman had been a unique experience.

“It's really exciting to come in and play as much as I have,” Phillips said. “I've been very happy with the amount of time I've gotten.”

Another true freshman making his

name known in the league is the Jayhawks' Henley. The Columbus, Ohio, native leads Kansas with four touchdowns while splitting time in the backfield with L.T. Levine.

Henley said one of the reasons he left Big Ten country to attend school in the Midwest was because he knew he would get a chance to play early in his career.

“I expected to play—I just didn't know this much,” Henley said.

Phillips said it was easy to understand why most of the notable newcomers in the league were running backs.

“I-back is an easier position to learn, so it's easier to come in and play right away,” he said. “Positions like quarterback and offensive line have a lot more things they have to know.”

However, Henley said, players' dedication to playing right away is the main reason why many younger athletes are starring for their respective teams.

“It's on the player himself,” he said. “You can do whatever you want if you work for it—you've just got to have your mind set on it.”

Loss

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won the game on their seventh game point.

The fourth game was all Nebraska's as they scored six unanswered points to begin the game. Colorado didn't come close as Nebraska won 15-5.

But Colorado took charge in the fifth game. With rally scoring in effect, the Buffs jumped out to a 7-3 lead before Nebraska tied it at eight. Colorado then scored six straight points to seal the Buffs' first-ever win in Boulder against Nebraska.

Recruit

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“His work ethic is just exceptional. I think he will eventually develop into a solid player at the college level.”

Knowing his strengths, Nelson said, he thinks he could fit right into the Big Eight conference.

“I like to play hard and physical,” he said. “I think the Big Eight conference is a very physical conference. That really appealed to me.”

NOTE:

— Nebraska coach Danny Nease said Wednesday that he would not comment on whether any disciplinary action would be taken against senior forward Bruce Chubick and senior guard Eric Piatkowski.

On Sept. 31, Chubick was arrested for public urination, assaulting a police officer and resisting arrest. A Nov. 2 trial date is set.

In an unrelated incident, Piatkowski was cited for public consumption of alcohol in September.

ESPN

Continued from Page 7

end Trumane Bell flashing a sign with their left hands. The athletic department said it was a fraternity sign. Smith said Muhammad told her it was a sign of the Pyru Bloods.

Muhammad and Dixon also make the hand sign in Nebraska's football poster.

“We were very careful to identify Abdul's kind of involvement,” Smith said. “He admits to flashing the sign of the Pyru Bloods in the media guide. He says it shows love and support to the Pyru Bloods.”

“It's not a fraternity sign. I asked him if he is in a fraternity; he said he is not.”

Muhammad said Wednesday he would not comment any further on the matter.

Nebraska coach Tom Osborne, who said Tuesday that the athletic department was told the story would focus on recruiting, said he was reluctant to permit the interview.

“I wasn't real enthused about anybody coming in here in the first place,” Osborne said. “(The story) didn't go anywhere near like we'd been led to believe.”

Smith said the story's focus was recruiting and that nothing negative was meant to come from the report.

Finley

Continued from Page 7

Bruce Chubick to the position of high priest of hoops is obvious. But the only question is when we need him.

I say there is no time to waste. We

““

Our story, I think, was very positive and compelling.

—Smith,
ESPN reporter

“It was about recruiting,” she said. “It was about kids in the inner-city and recruiting. We never misrepresented ourselves.”

“We apologize if it caused his family any embarrassment. The point of the story was to show the bigger problem of inner-city gangs and their connection to college athletics.”

If she could speak to Muhammad, Smith said, she would tell him not to change his way of life, but to continue to be strong.

“He's a young man who is courageous, yet he's still loyal to his guys back home,” Smith said. “I would tell him to stay strong, because he has been strong. Our story, I think, was very positive and compelling. In no way at all did I mean to make anyone think anything less of him.”

“I would tell him not to have anything to be ashamed of. I found him to be a very stand-up young guy. He has a lot to be proud of.”

have to have that admirable standard of excellence now.

And then, we can sadly wave goodbye to “Air” Jordan and hail in the new era of “Ground” Bruce.

Finley is a first-year law student and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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