

Arizona athlete will play at NU

By Mitch Sherman
Staff Reporter

In the eyes of the Nebraska football team, good things come to those who wait.

So the Cornhuskers waited. More than five months after the national letter-of-intent signing day, Kenny Cheatham, a three-sport star from Phoenix South Mountain High School, signed with Nebraska on July 6.

In addition to catching 28 passes for 880 yards last season, the 6-foot-4, 185-pound wide receiver was also a star on South Mountain's basketball and track teams. Cheatham visited Lincoln on Jan. 14.

Husker football coach Tom Osborne said Nebraska offered Cheatham the opportunity to play more than one sport next season.

"That was a factor," Osborne said. "He told us that if he was going to play football, he would come here. But, at that time, he was undecided about football or basketball."

South Mountain football coach Cleveland Dansby said Cheatham had the athletic ability to make an immediate impact at Nebraska.

"I think Nebraska just signed one of the best receivers in the west," Dansby said. "If there was an award given to the top athlete in the state of Arizona, he would have won it last year."

As far as playing more than one sport, Osborne said, that decision will have to be made after the football season.

"He'll definitely play football in the fall," Osborne said. "What he'll do after that, I don't know. Of all the recruits we signed, nobody would excel in three sports better than him."

Nebraska basketball coach Danny Nee said Cheatham was welcome to attend basketball practice if he was interested in joining the team.

"We'll have to wait and see what happens after football season," Nee said. "It would be difficult to do, but we've always wanted to leave that

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option open." As a sophomore, Cheatham was the fastest Arizona high school athlete in the 200 meters. He has been clocked at 10.4 seconds in the 100 meters.

Bobby Burton, who is a consultant for National Recruiting Advisor, based in Austin, Texas, said Cheatham was a prize recruit for the Huskers.

"He's a great athlete and adds a lot to their class," Burton said.

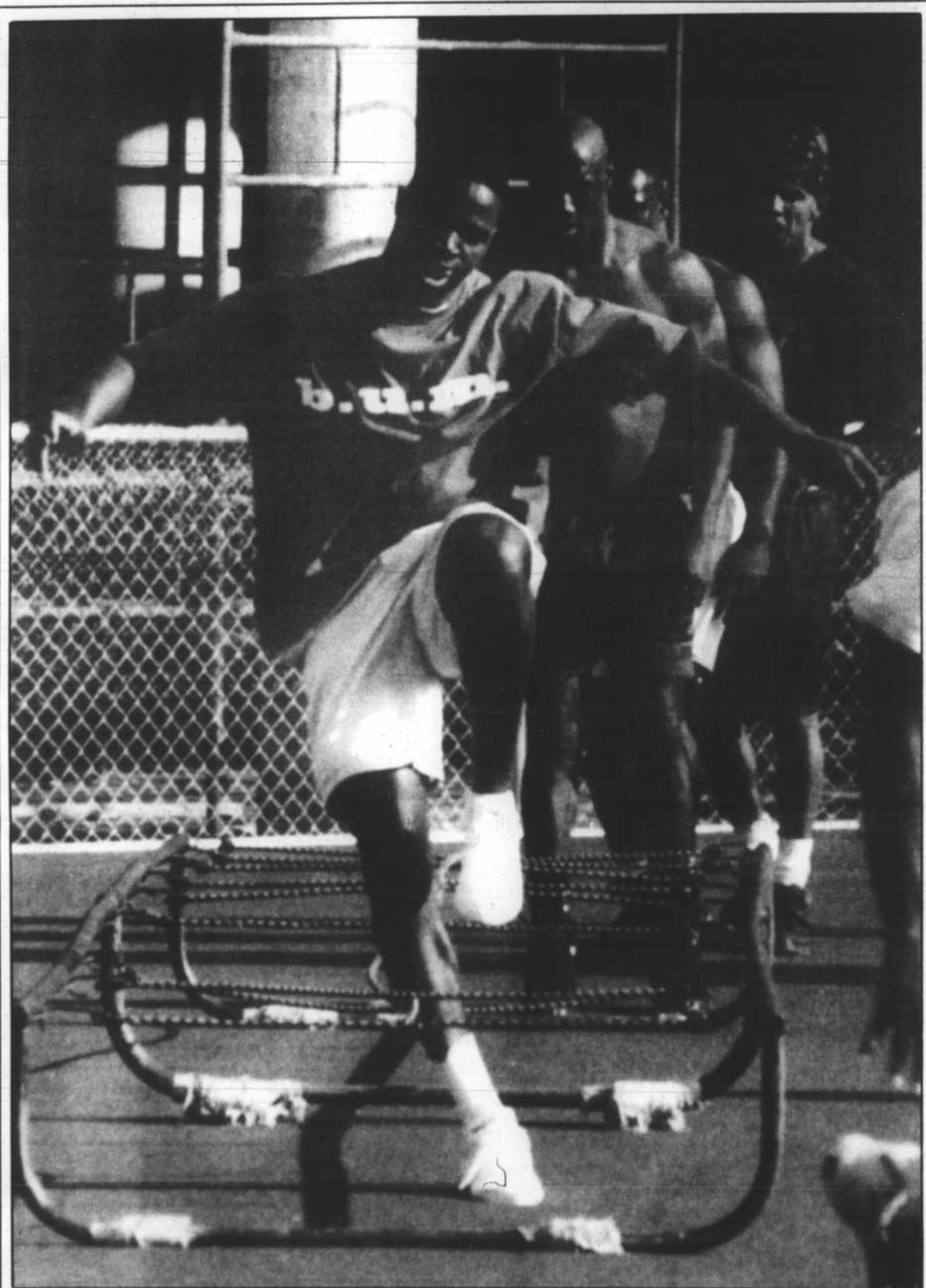
The Huskers could also reap future benefits from South Mountain High School, Burton said.

"If they can establish a connection, it might really help down the road," he said.

Three players widely regarded as Division-I prospects will be seniors at South Mountain this year, Burton said. Included in that group is Dansby's son, Cleveland, Jr., who is the team's quarterback.

Cheatham chose Nebraska over Tennessee. He also considered UCLA, Colorado, Arizona and Arizona State, Dansby said.

Cheatham's signature brings the total number of Husker football recruits to 18. Two additional players— kicker/baseball player Darin Erstad and John Livingston, a wide receiver transfer from Arizona State— will be placed on football scholarship in August.



Sedric Collins tries to stay on his feet as Clinton Childs and others watch.

Jason Levkulich/DN

Piatkowski rests easy after being picked in NBA draft

By Derek Samson
Staff Reporter

Finally, Eric Piatkowski could breath a sigh of relief.

The former Nebraska forward was taken by the Indiana Pacers in the first round as the 15th pick overall in the National Basketball Association's draft.

The selection, announced by NBA commissioner David Stern, ended weeks of preparation and anticipation for Piatkowski.

"When I heard my name I was very excited, but even more relieved," he

said. "It (workouts for the NBA teams) was fun, but I was ready for that part to be over. It was like a huge load was taken off my back when I was chosen."

But the "Polish Rifle" couldn't relax very long.

Soon after the draft, Piatkowski was traded to the Los Angeles Clippers in a deal that involved five players.



Piatkowski

Indiana traded Malik Sealy and Pooh Richardson to the Clippers for Mark Jackson, while the two teams also swapped draft picks.

Piatkowski was exchanged for Greg Minor of Louisville, who was drafted by the Clippers, also in the first round.

Piatkowski said the important thing was that he was drafted.

"As far as I'm concerned, anywhere I go, it's going to be a good situation," he said. "Fifteen is still 15 so I'm just happy where I was drafted. ... I'm not a hard guy to please."

Piatkowski was the first of four players taken from the Big Eight.

Oklahoma State's Brooks Thompson was the final first-round pick, selected by Orlando, while Oklahoma's Jeff Webster went 40th to Miami and Missouri's Jevon Crudup was chosen by Detroit as the 48th pick.

Piatkowski was also the first Husker taken in the first round since Rich King was drafted by Seattle as the 14th overall selection in 1991.

"Being drafted is one of those dreams that you put in the back of your mind, but it's always there," Piatkowski said. "I have thought about this day for such a long time and I just feel fortunate that it arrived."

Piatkowski averaged 21.5 points and 6.3 rebounds a game last season to finish his career as the only Husker to score over 1,000 points, pull down 600 rebounds and dish out 300 assists in a career.

But for Piatkowski, his four years at Nebraska didn't seem as long as the hour and a half he waited and watched players one through 14 being selected in the draft.

"The first ten or so didn't seem too bad, but from then on it just seemed like an eternity," he said. "When it got around 12, 13 and 14, I thought my time would never come."