

# Kansas-K-State game has gained importance

By Derek Samson  
Senior Reporter

The annual Kansas-Kansas State showdown not only is one of the most heated rivalries in the Big Eight, but also has actually had some importance in the last few years.

The two most rebuilt football programs in the Big Eight will meet tonight in Lawrence, Kan., to fight for bragging rights in Kansas in both teams' Big Eight openers.

The nationally televised ESPN game should add even more pressure to a couple of programs trying to break up the "Big Three" monopoly that Nebraska, Colorado and Oklahoma have on the conference.

In the Big Eight teleconference Monday, both Kansas coach Glen Mason and Kansas State coach Bill Snyder commented on the importance of the game.

"When you start talking about Thursday night games, if you're a football fan, you're going to watch this game," Mason said. "(Tonight) We have one program that's having a pretty good year and another that's having a great year."

Snyder said he hoped for a big national audience to tune in, because the game matched the 4-0, 19th-ranked Wildcats against the 3-1, 27th-ranked Jayhawks.

"The No. 1 reason I want to believe (people will watch) is the national perception," Snyder said. "There are two pretty good football teams that are playing on a Thursday night, and everyone is going to see them play."

It's an audience that only five years ago would have laughed at the thought of a Kansas-Kansas State game being televised across the country.

"We're awful pleased with the fact our program was able to make some progress," Snyder said. "We take a great deal of pride in the fact that we brought our program to this level."

Snyder used Nebraska as an example of a program that Kansas State and Kansas were trying to duplicate.

"There is a matter of consistency involved," Snyder said. "If you get to the top — how long can you stay there? Nebraska has been at the top of the Big Eight since I was a child,

*"When I go recruit, and I'm sure it's the same with Bill Snyder, nobody is talking about if we can win games at Kansas and Kansas State. That's not the case anymore."*

**GLEN MASON**

Kansas football coach

and that was a long time ago. Now that's great consistency."

But Snyder and Mason are off to a good start.

Snyder was hired in 1989 after the Wildcats were 0-21-1 during the previous two seasons.

In his first season, Snyder's Wildcats went 1-10 and were named as the worst college football team in America by Sports Illustrated.

During the next four years, Kansas State has posted a 26-18-1 record, including a Copper Bowl victory in 1993.

Mason took over the Kansas program in 1988, and after finishing in the bottom half of the Big Eight in his first four years, the Jayhawks had back-to-back winning seasons in 1991 and 1992 and claimed an Aloha Bowl victory in 1992.

Throughout the 1980s, Kansas and Kansas State combined for a 29-104-6 record and finished 7th and 8th in the conference during four of those years.

In the 1990s, the Sunflower state's Big Eight schools posted a 28-31-2 record, and tonight's game will produce the 29th win of the '90s — equalling the 1980s win total.

Mason said the struggling 1980s were in the distant past for the two schools.

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# Teams' finish in invite surprises happy coach

By Derek Samson  
Senior Reporter

Less than a month into the season, Nebraska cross country coach Jay Dirksen has already seen some pleasant surprises.

The Minnesota Invitational last weekend gave Dirksen a better idea of where both the Nebraska men's and women's teams stand. And at Minnesota, they stood tall.

The Husker women finished second behind Oregon.

Senior Julie Mazzitelli, who transferred from Northern Iowa last season, won the women's side by completing the 5,000-meter course in a time of 17:12.

"After Minnesota, we know we have a genuine No. 1 runner in Julie Mazzitelli," Dirksen said. "She beat several outstanding athletes with great ability up there. She's risen to the level that she will be an outstanding No. 1 runner for us."

"I never expected that she would be that high. I was just hoping that she'd finish in the top 10. There haven't been that many people to finish with that good of a time in the

history of that race."

Dirksen wasn't disappointed in the Husker men's performance at the Minnesota Invitational either.

The unranked Nebraska men's team faced four rated teams and still managed to finish in fourth place.

Kevin Miller and Brady Bonsall finished 14th and 15th, respectively, while teammates Balazs Tolgyesi and David Draheim came in 25th and 26th.

"Our men really ran well last weekend," he said. "Going into the season, I thought we'd have a strong team. The three teams that beat us (in Minnesota) were in the top seven in the country, so we did a really fine job. Our men could be pretty good by the end of the season."

Dirksen said he is getting a little better idea of what is in store for the Nebraska cross country teams the rest of the season.

"I think that Minnesota Invite was really important for us in a lot of ways," he said. "It shows we have a strong team. But right now, these meets are more of just preparation for the championships that are down the road."

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