

Guard makes successful switch to Husker basketball

Success in transition to Cornhusker court doesn't surprise Wald

By Todd Walkenhorst
Staff Reporter

Nebraska junior guard Tom Wald has made a quick and easy transition onto the Cornhusker basketball team, but his success has not been a surprise.

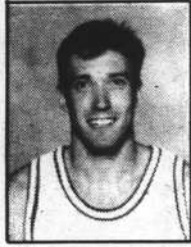
"It's been a year and a few months since I have been here," Wald said. "If I had started playing like this right away without redshirting, I would have been surprised."

Wald transferred to Nebraska before last season from Mankato State, where he was a first-team All-North Central Conference selection as a sophomore. Wald redshirted last year since he was ineligible to play as a transfer.

Wald scored 29 points in two games in the

Ameritas Classic last weekend, where the Huskers won their seventh consecutive Ameritas Classic. Wald shot 70.5 percent from the floor and earned all-tournament honors.

Despite winning individual honors, Wald said that the Huskers' wins were a full team effort.



Wald

not in the game.

"It affected me because I had to sit on the bench for the first five minutes of the half," he said, "and I can see what's going on, and

it seemed like we lost intensity."

Wald said that even though many fouls were being called on the Huskers, the Huskers could not let that affect them.

"Referees are human, and they'll call fouls on you if you're showing them up," Wald said, "and once we stopped doing that, we started playing ball. I think that's what turned it around."

Nebraska raised its record to 4-1 against what some may call weak teams, but Wald said that those teams deserved more credit than they've received.

"I believe that both of those teams we beat this weekend," Wald said, "are going to beat a lot of teams this year. Idaho State will probably win the Big Sky and go to the NCAA tournament again."

"The only way I'd say they were easy is because we came out and played well," he said. "We very well could have come out and played lackadaisical and had a tough game

"Team unity is ten times better this year, but not perfect. It's hard when you come in with 15 high school players that were all stars."

TOM WALD

Nebraska guard

against both of them, but we came out and took care of business right away."

Nebraska's lone loss came to Virginia Tech in the San Juan shootout. Wald said that the Huskers would continue to use that loss as a learning experience.

"It's kind of like Appalachian State last year," he said. "It would have been kind of nice to have it."

KU coach tests his team early

By Todd Walkenhorst
Staff Reporter

Kansas basketball coach Roy Williams has a plan for getting his squad ready for the NCAA tournament. That plan is to play the best you can. And this year is no different for the Jayhawks, who may play one of the toughest schedules in the country.

Kansas, currently ranked No. 4 in the Associated Press poll, defeated top-ranked Massachusetts 81-75 last Saturday.

In the next 12 days, the Jayhawks will play four games, including Florida and North Carolina State at home and at Indiana. Also in the middle of the Big Eight conference schedule, Kansas will play Connecticut at Kemper Arena in Kansas City.

But Williams looks at his team's tough schedule as a tool to make his team ready to compete in the NCAA tournament.

"We try to get them ready for conference play," Williams said in Monday's Big Eight coaches'

teleconference, "and hopefully we're ready for the NCAAs if we're good enough."

Kansas was very fortunate to come up with a victory over a talented Massachusetts team this early in the season, Williams said.

"It was very early in the year to come up with a victory like this," Williams said. "I'm very pleased."

Kansas sophomore guard Jacque Vaughn was suffering from a stomach injury, but he and the rest of the team may have benefited from the game being on television.

"I think that the long timeouts helped out," Williams said. "The 2 1/2-minute timeouts helped. I don't think any of our players got tired."

Williams said that he was not concerned with the statistics of his team through the early part of the season.

"My two best free-throw shooting teams had losing

records," Williams said. "I don't give a flip about statistics, just the bottom line, and the bottom line is that we have to win our games."

Along with this year's Jayhawk team, Williams is excited about future Kansas squads.

Williams said that he was happy with the quality of the high school recruits, including T.J. Pugh from Creighton Prep in Omaha, that Kansas has signed.

"They're all good students," he said, "as well as doggone good basketball players. They give us players that can step on the court and do the things we want to do to win."

But Williams realizes that they do not have the corner on great players and that trend has led to parity in the Big Eight, as well as in the entire country.

"There's a lot of parity because there are a lot of good players in the country," Williams said.

Women's basketball team to face a grueling week

By Derek Samson
Senior Reporter

Only six games into the season and Nebraska women's basketball coach Angela Beck is already hoping to see a different Cornhusker team when Nebraska plays the University of Buffalo at 7:00 tonight.

After losing to Indiana State in the opening round of the Duke Invitational, Beck and her 4-2 Husker team are glad to be back in the Bob Devaney Sports Center tonight.

"The first half of our season is grueling," Beck said. "I didn't know really what to expect from this team. I thought we'd probably be 5-1. The Duke Invitational didn't exactly end up like I thought it would, for a couple of reasons."

"We didn't play well on that trip, and I think I realize that we're lacking a little bit on the inside. The trip just didn't turn out like I thought it should."

Even though Buffalo is in the Mid-Continent Conference, Beck said beating the 3-0 Bulls wouldn't

be a simple task.

Another detriment for the Huskers could be the forced day off on Monday, she said.

"They have a pretty good player (5-foot-8 guard Brenna Doty) that just scored 36 points the other night, and she's pretty tough," Beck said. "I think they'll challenge us. We're taking a day off prior to playing a pretty tough team. So that should be an interesting deal."

Buffalo has three returning starters off its 20-9 squad from a year ago, including Doty — who leads the team in scoring as only a sophomore.

The Bulls are just the beginning of a busy week for the Huskers.

Nebraska has three games in five days, including a road trip to Michigan Thursday.

"This is a critical week for us," Beck said. "People wonder why we have so many games, but to get 27 games in your schedule and then to take finals week off, this is how you have to do it. If we get past this week, we should have a pretty easy schedule until after Christmas."

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