

NU recruit looks forward to next year

By Mitch Sherman
Senior Reporter

Any Cornhusker fans roaming the stands of the Bob Devaney Sports Center last week not only witnessed the boys' state basketball tournament, but also caught a glimpse of a future member of the Nebraska backcourt.

When Omaha Burke took the Devaney Center floor last Thursday against Lincoln Southeast, the Bulldogs were led by senior guard and Nebraska recruit Alvin Mitchell. All the 6-foot-1 all-stater did was score 10 fourth-quarter points and 23 for the game, leading Burke to a 78-70 win over Southeast.

The following day, Mitchell played his final high school contest, scoring a game-high 25 points in Burke's 71-68 loss to eventual state-champion Lincoln Northeast.

More impressive than Mitchell's point totals this season, Burke coach Gary Graner said, has been his presence on the court. A three-time all-state tournament selection, Mitchell has often drawn double teams from opponents as a senior.

"He's a complete player," said Graner, who has coached the Bulldogs to three consecutive state tournament berths. "He does a lot more than score 20 points per game."

Graner said Mitchell's defense and court vision had improved dramatically since his sophomore year, his first season as a member of the varsity team.

"Alvin's got great court sense," he said. "And he's got a knack for getting the ball to the open guys."

He also has a knack for coming up big when an important game is on the line, Graner said. More often than not, he said, Mitchell has produced while playing at the Devaney Center.

As a sophomore, he hit a game-tying jumper at the buzzer during the state quarterfinals, propelling Burke to the state championship game.

A year ago, he scored 44 points, including a state-record 10 3-pointers in the Bulldogs' loss to eventual state champion Omaha Creighton Prep in the quarterfinals.

"I have to step up in big situations and put up the points," Mitchell said. "It isn't anything special about this building, but I do like to play in big games. When it comes to times when we play down here, seniors in high school have to play like freshmen in college."

Mitchell, who is still awaiting his college entrance exam results, said he expected to sit out the 1995-96 season as a redshirt. He was one of two players — along with Western Nebraska Community College power forward Bernard Garner — to sign a letter of intent with the Huskers in November.

The Huskers expect to sign one player this

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The avenger



Scott Bruhn/DN

Nebraska swimmer Penny Heyns will try for a first-place finish in the 100-yard breaststroke at the NCAA meet, which starts this Thursday. She hopes to avenge her second-place finish last year.

Husker plans to dive right in for win

By Trevor Parks
Staff Reporter

This weekend, Nebraska swimmer Penny Heyns is hoping what comes around goes around for her toughest competition.

Last year, Heyns lost to Arizona State's Beata Kaszuba in the finals of the 100-yard breaststroke at the NCAA Championships.

The two will compete again in the 100-yard breaststroke at the NAAs in Austin, Texas, on Friday.

All Heyns has to do is swim her kind of race, and she'll win, she said.

"She (Kaszuba) is really good on the turns, and that's why she causes me some problems," Heyns said. "I know I'm faster than her in my swimming, because when I lost last year, she beat me on the turns."

"If I can prevent her from gaining on me, then I should be fine."

Kaszuba has a season-best time of 1:01.40, while Heyns leads her with a time of 1:01.29.

Kaszuba set an NCAA record and a U.S. record in the breaststroke last year.

Now Heyns is the one looking for the record.

The junior from Amanzimtoti, South Africa said another goal she had was to be the first person in the world with a time of less than 60 seconds in the 100-yard breaststroke.

For that to happen, Heyns said, she would have to swim flawlessly.

"The perfect swim would do it," Heyns said. "I need to control my stroke and concentrate on myself and not getting distracted by anyone else before or during my race."

If she keeps herself under control, Cornhusker coach Cal Bentz said, no one

I don't know if anyone can beat her. But if they do, they would have to swim really fast to do it.

■
CAL BENTZ

Nebraska swimming coach

would beat her.

"I don't know if anyone can beat her," Bentz said. "But if they do, they would have to swim really fast to do it."

Heyns also leads Kaszuba in the 200-yard breaststroke with a time of 2:12.27.

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NCAA Tournament predictions easy without Huskers

The next four days — Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday — are my four favorite days of the entire year.

Nothing compares to the first two rounds of the NCAA Tournament. And as the columnist selected to share my opinion on the day prior to beginning of the Big Dance, I feel obligated to make a fool of myself.

As soon as the pairings were announced Sunday night, I knew this was going to be my year. You see, Nebraska didn't make it this time. Every year I pick the Cornhuskers to win a couple of games.

Unfortunately, that always equates to two losses right off the bat. So this year, I am starting on level ground with the rest of the public. Before revealing my selections, however, I must first review a few ground rules.

● **When in doubt, pick the ACC.** It's a sure-fire way to avoid major problems down the road. The nation's best conference will have the best showing in the tourney.

● **There are always more upsets on Thursday than on Friday.** As evidenced by the Big Eight Tournament champion's lack of success in the recent tournaments, it's difficult to recover from a great weekend and play on Thursday. At least one high seed will lose.

● **Good coaches make a difference.** Denny Crum, Eddie Sutton, Rick Pitino, Jud Heathcote, Bob Knight, Rick Majerus, Roy Williams. These guys know how to win. Period. Notice Duke, which has played in three of the last four championship games, is not even in the tournament this season. Gee, I wonder why?



Mitch Sherman

● **One great player can carry a team a long way.** Remember Danny Manning. This year will be no exception. Shawn Respert could do it, and Lou Roe and Joe Smith have the same type of potential.

Now for the picks. In the Midwest, Kansas is a big favorite playing the regional finals in Kansas City. Just ask Connecticut what the Jayhawks can do at Kemper Arena. Anywhere else, I would have to go with defending

champion Arkansas over Kansas, but not in K.C.

The best matchup of the first round could be Michigan, which has made it to the final eight three straight years over a good Western Kentucky team. Take Virginia over Arizona, with or without Damon Stoudamire and Ben Davis. Louisville coach Denny Crum can beat Memphis, but not Purdue.

Regional winner: Kansas

Kentucky, fresh off an impressive win over Arkansas, should take the Southeast, which is probably the most difficult region in the tournament. Kelvin Sampson did a great job in his first year at Oklahoma, but the Sooners will lose to 25-4 Manhattan in the first round (Thursday upset special).

Georgetown's Allen Iverson is the best freshman in the country, but he doesn't have enough experience to beat Michigan State

and Respert, the best senior in the country. Iowa State, tired from the Big Eight Tournament, will lose to Florida on Friday.

Respert (ground rule No. 4) will carry the Spartans over a thin and injured North Carolina team in round 16. The regional final in Birmingham, Ala., will pit Kentucky against Michigan State.

Regional Winner: Kentucky

In the East Regional, Wake Forest is the weakest No. 1 seed in the tournament. The Demon Deacons will be exhausted from an incredible performance in the ACC tourney last weekend. Oklahoma State is hot and can beat just about any team in the field if Randy Rutherford and Bryant Reeves are on at the same time. Look for the Cowboys to topple Wake Forest in the third round.

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