

Moore wants to fill big role

By David Wilson
Staff Reporter

Nebraska center Mikki Moore would like to play every minute of every game.

"I want to be a player like Big Country (former Oklahoma State center Bryant Reeves) was, play 30-40 minutes every game."

Although Moore said he hated sitting the bench for almost half of Nebraska's 87-69 win over UMKC Wednesday night, the 6-foot-11 junior said he understood why Coach Danny Nee did it.

"They wanted the other players to get more reps," Moore said. "He doesn't want me to get tired with three crucial games coming up."

The Cornhuskers will travel to Stillwater, Okla. to face Oklahoma State on Saturday, then they will play host to Missouri and Kansas.

Moore, who was a key player for the Huskers in their first two Big Eight games, said he wished Reeves still played for Oklahoma State.

"I wish he was still there because playing against a great player will make you great," Moore said. "It would help me get ready for the Big Eight Tournament."

After only averaging 8.6 points in the Huskers' first 14 games, Moore has turned his season around, scoring a season-high 16 points in each of Nebraska's two Big Eight matchups.

"We can't play like wimps down there. We've got to show them who wants it the most and we have to take it, point blank."

MIKKI MOORE
NU center

Moore said his improvement this season had to do with getting a feel for the ball early in the game.

"If they get the ball to me toward the beginning of the first half, and I hit a shot or get a good rebound or get a blocked shot, everything starts flowing for me," Moore said. "It just sparks me."

Along with junior forward Bernard Garner, Moore has significantly improved the Huskers inside game.

"Me and Garner think a lot alike, and he has good eyes," Moore said. "He can pass very well."

Moore's four blocked shots Wednesday night against the Kangaroos moved him into a three-way tie for the Big Eight lead with Kansas' Scot Pollard and Kansas State's Gerald Eaker. Moore's 112 career rejections currently ranks third on Nebraska's all-time list behind Derrick Chandler and Rich King. Moore needs 32 blocks to tie Chandler for second place.

Although Moore started all but

four games for the Huskers last year, he did not earn the starting spot to begin this season. He was forced to miss Nebraska's two exhibition games and played sparingly early in the regular season after being suspended for violating the team's new point-system rules.

Moore didn't regain a starting position until the sixth game of this season. Since then, he has started in 11 of Nebraska's past 12 games.

Over the past three games, Moore has shot 85.7 percent from the field, improving his team-leading field-goal percentage to 67.4 percent. That percentage would lead the Big Eight, but Moore's 3.5 field goals per game doesn't meet the minimum requirement of five.

Moore, who has shot over 50 percent in each of Nebraska's past 13 games, should pose a threat against Oklahoma State Saturday.

"We can't play like wimps down there," Moore said. "They're not going to give it to us. We've got to show them who wants it the most and we have to take it, point blank."

Harrington

Continued from Page 7

overtime setback that left Colorado's record at 5-9. Colorado is 0-3 in the Big Eight with losses coming to Kansas State, Nebraska and Missouri.

Athletic Director Bill Marolt, saying he, too, was disappointed with the direction the basketball team was going, announced the appointment of assistant coach Ricardo Patton as interim coach through the Big Eight tournament in March.

Harrington, in the middle of his sixth season with Colorado, said he told Marolt on Monday he was going to announce his resignation, and told his players of his plans just before the Southern Utah game. He had announced his decision shortly before that to a group of about 100 alumni boosters.

The program, Harrington said, is in better shape now than when he came to Colorado.

"I think it's a good program, but I think it will be better with me not coaching," Harrington said.

Marolt said he would start a national search for a coach. Patton, Marolt said, will be a candidate.

"There was a lot of selfish play going on. I don't think it was so much players not respecting the coach. It was players not respecting players."

Nebraska coach Danny Nee, whose team beat the Buffs 79-74 on Jan. 10, said he was disappointed Harrington quit.

"Joe Harrington is a friend of mine," Nee said, "a coach that I really like. It's the pressures of the job. I was really shocked, the timing of it and how it happened because I think he might have one of his better teams."

UMKC

Continued from Page 7

half on an Erin Washington 3-pointer to make the score 49-35. Washington led all scorers with 24 points.

The Huskers responded with a 14-3 run to give Nebraska its largest lead of the evening at 67-41.

When the reserves came into the game, many of the 6,785 fans — a Bob Devaney Sports Center season-low — headed for the exits as an ice storm began to pound Lincoln.

"Andy Markowski's playing with a really difficult situation with that pad on his hand," Nee said. "Getting Leif and Chad any kind of minutes, I really think is going to help them."

Nebraska outshot UMKC 53.1 percent to 37.1 percent, sending the Kangaroos home with a 4-7 record. The Huskers will resume conference play on Saturday night against Oklahoma State in Stillwater, Okla.

Nebraska improved its all-time record to 7-0 against the Kangaroos. The two teams have met each of the past seven seasons. Nee said he was thankful for the opportunity to get some rest for his starters before a rough stretch of conference games.

Nebraska will face Oklahoma State, Missouri and Kansas in its next three games.

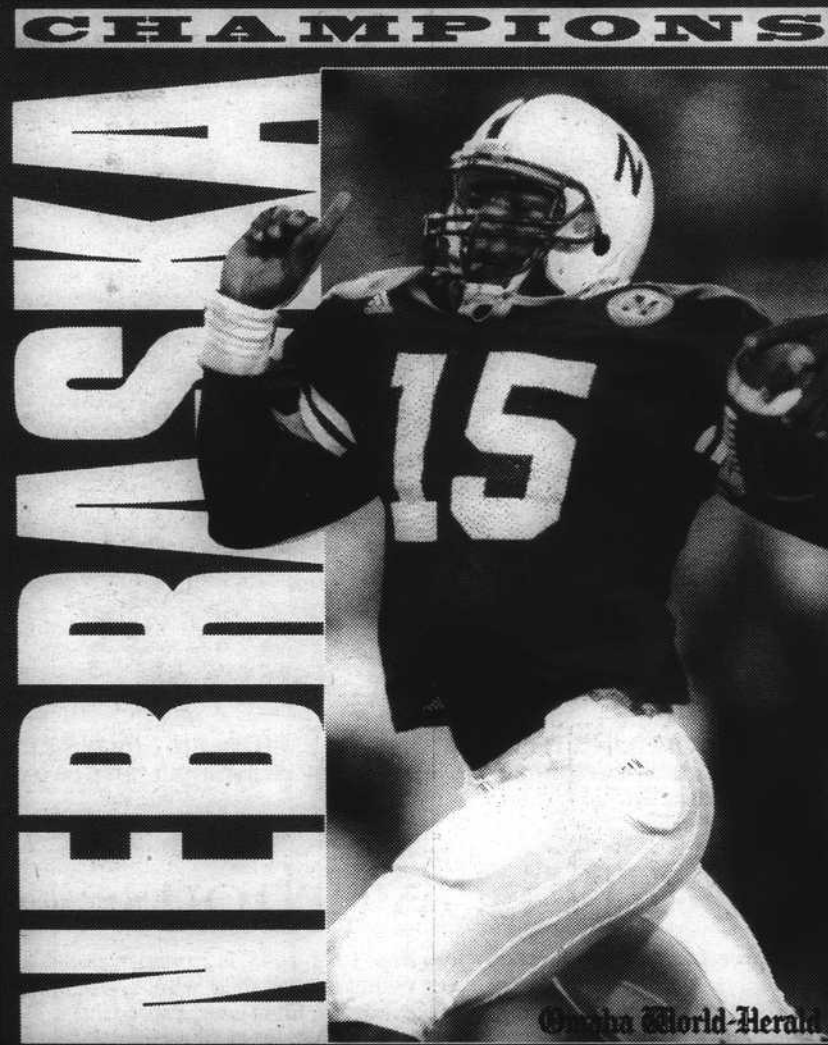
"I felt we did everything we wanted to do," he said. "I was pleased with the outcome."

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